



The Traveling Years: A Memoir of Puppets, Porno & Penury

Leo Eaton

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Leo Eaton is today a respected American documentary filmmaker. THE TRAVELING YEARS, A MEMOIR OF PUPPETS, PORNO & PENURY follows his adventures for 16 years prior to settling in America, during which time he traveled the world as (in chronological order) one of the youngest television directors in Britain, a tequila-soaked lotus eater in Mexico, a boat builder in Canada, a pornographer in Los Angeles, an aspiring novelist back in Mexico, a university instructor in Texas, and a plumber and starving writer in Greece and Portugal. After escaping from a childhood spent in English boarding schools, Leo joined the British film industry at eighteen on Roger Moore's *The Saint* and within five years was directing iconic 1960s puppet series' produced by Gerry Anderson, including 'Captain Scarlet & the Mysterons', 'Joe 90' and 'The Secret Service'. After a passionate but disastrous love affair with a Hollywood starlet, he sailed by cargo ship to Mexico where he lived until his money ran out, hitchhiked to Canada where he worked as a boat builder and railroad baggage handler before taking to the road again and hitchhiking to Los Angeles where he wrote for a Mafia-run pornography publishing house and shared an office with cult filmmaker Ed Wood Jr. (played by Johnny Depp in Tim Burton's biopic of the same name). Returning to Mexico as an aspiring novelist and promptly falling in love, Leo followed his future wife Jeri back to the University of Texas in Austin where he persuaded them to take him on as an instructor, teaching script writing and film to the same graduate students who made 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre'. After two years the University discovered he had no degree so Leo and his wife returned briefly to England before settling in a small Cretan village as the only foreigners. For three years they were part of the village, making their own wine and raki (the fiery local spirit) and helping fellow villagers with everyday tasks like dynamiting septic tanks and shearing sheep. Only when tourism began to intrude on the village did Leo and Jeri, along with their two Cretan dogs, move on to a mountainside in Portugal where they lived through a bitter winter in an old peasant farmhouse with dirt floors and no bathroom, power, running water or glass in the windows. It was the final chapter in the Traveling Years before the desire to return to some semblance of comfort brought Leo and his wife back to America, where he has been making award-winning documentary films ever since.

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