

King Curtis's Echo

Max Thayer

After being drafted into the Army in 1966 and serving for three years, Max Thayer (b. 1946) decided to move to Los Angeles to break into the movies. With no acting training or Hollywood connections, he began studying plays and books on acting, and he performed with experimental and street theater groups. When he joined the Screen Actors Guild in 1972, he changed his name from Michael to Max, after a character in Harold Robbins's novel *The Carpetbaggers*. Thayer has performed on stage in New York and Los Angeles and has appeared in numerous action movies shot in Hollywood and around the world. Neither a stuntman or martial-artist, Thayer credits his love of sports and his childhood experiences with ice hockey, baseball, football, basketball, boxing, and swimming for helping him in his film work. In addition to numerous B-movies, Thayer has had small, background roles in *Pearl Harbor*, *The Man Who Wasn't There*, *Collateral Damage*, *American Gun*, *S.W.A.T.*, and *Terminator 3*. The following essay first appeared in the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* in 2005.

1 I don't know what made me do it, but I'm glad, in a strange way, that I did.

2 When I heard my neighbor call out "You can't park there," I knew what was going on. Someone had pulled into our single-lane driveway, which serves four apartments that sit atop a pawn shop and a Russian deli on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood. When I heard a muffled response and my neighbor's more urgent "No! Someone is coming. We need to keep that space clear," I jumped up to look out my window.

3 Despite the no parking signs, deli customers routinely park in the mouth of the driveway, blocking exit or entrance, though most of the time a simple request to move is met with sheepish compliance. But today a man in his