Fifteen minutes of fame times four

When Faul Thomas
Anderson, the director of the
Academy Award-nominated
films Boogle Nights and
Magnolia, wrote the new film
Punch-Drunk Love, he did it
with two things in mind. First,
he'd write the seriet for Adam
Sandler who would play the
lead character, Barry Egan, a
hardworking, offbeat and,
oftentimes, erratie guy who is
hen-pecked by his seven sisters,
entangled in a phone-sex conversation gone awry and, somehow, manages to find instant
love with Lena Leonard, played
by British actress Emily
Watson.

That's the second thing
Anderson had in mind, writing
the role of Lena for Watson,
What he didn't have in mind
was who would play Sandler's
sisters. Anderson knew he
wanted non-actors - no diwa,
no pre-conceived actor
methodologies - just regular
chicks who could banter with
the best of them at a big family
dinner seene, while heekling
and putting down their brother,
as "regular' siblings often do.

SIX DEGREES OF

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Enter Aaron Weinberg, a 36-year-old independent film pro-ducer, who grew up in West Bloomfield and now lives in L.A. Instead of six degrees of L.A. Instead of six degrees of Kevin Bacon, these days, it's more like six degrees of Aaron Weinberg. For, you see, Weinberg and his wife, Blasi, are friends with Paul Thomas

Weinberg and in swie, Blass, are friends with Paul Thomas Anderson's easting director's brother. Tole brother told his sister, Casting Director Cassandra Kulukundis, that Weinberg had some non-acting sisters who could probably pass for Sandler's sisters. Kulukundis called Weinberg's older sister, Lisa W. Spector, and asked to meet with her and Spector's younger sister. Mia Weinberg, And, over coffice and snacks at Min's LA. Apartment, the three met for two hours, talking about growing up in a large, close-knit family in Michigan. They showed pictures of every family member and just chalted casually. That chatting led to an audition with Paul Thomas Anderson and other sister pagencia.

Anderson and other sister prospects.
A few weeks later, Spector got the call: "You and your sister, Mia, are in the movie." "It was completely hilarious, because I'm not an actress," laughs Spector, age 37, who is prominently featured in the dinner scene as well as one



Adam Sandler and his seven "sisters" in the new movie Punch-Drunk Love.

phone conversation with Sandler. "I live in L.A. with tons of people around me who are in the business or want to be in the business and we get called that we're in this major film with Adam Sandler, It was so exciting, and funny at the same time."

A SHEAR DELIGHT

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Even more funny, and very ironie, is that while the Weinberg siblings - Lisn, 37; Aaron, 36; Mia, 34; and Matthew, 32; used to be in the high school and camp plays, it's their mother, Henrietta Hermelin, who's been an award-winning, professional actress since 1938. Hermelin currently stars as a wealthy Grosse Pointe socialite in the whodunit comedy Shear Madness at the Gem Theatre in Detroit.

At age four, Hermelin started studying ballet. It was as a dancer that she got her professional Actors Equity union card. Growing up, Hermelin recalls, she and her brother David Hermelin, the former U.S. Ambassador to Norway who passed away in November 2000. would spend Saturdays

U.S. Ambassador to Norway who passed away in November 2000, would spend Saturdays watching double features at the Fox Theatre. And, at family functions, you could always find Henrietta and David gathered around the piano, performing songs from musical comedies, with their nine kids and David's wife, Dorcen, ssinging along.

and David's wite, Doreen, singing along.
"When I had to go in for the audition with Paul Thomas Anderson, I was freaked out because I get very nervous read-ing in public - which is obvious-ly not a Weinberg/ Hermelin rait," said Mia Weinberg who was told by Sandler that she

looks very much like Sandler's actual sister. CAN WE BE FRANK

Once the easting for the sisters had been completed, Spector got a call a few weeks later from the easting director that they needed to replace some of the sisters and could she call Spector's first cousins, Julie Hermelin Frank and Karen Hermelin Borman, who grew up in Bingham Farms. By the time the original dinner seene was shot, Lisa Spector was in it with two of her children, Mason, 6 1/2; and Isane, 4 1/2 and her housekeeper, Ma Weinberg; Julie Hermelin Frank and her housekeeper; Ma Weinberg; Julie Hermelin Frank and her daughter, Maddie.

The first dinner scene was cut (along with Mitchell Frank and Maddie Borman) and later reshot to what audiences will see when Punch-Drunk Lore opens in Michigan Friday, Octopens in Michigan

was born a few weeks later on February 10, 2001.

"Because Lisa was pregnant, she got a star trailer with a couch in it. So Julie, Karen and I would congregate at Lisa's trailer and wed all sit around and talk about everything and laugh; said Mia, who is single and a gemologist in Los Angeles. "Can you believe that we're in his big Hollywood movie?" they'd ask themselves thetorically. "We have friends who are actors who would give their learn to be in Paul'Thomas Anderson movie and here we are - the non-professionals."

SEVEN SISTERS FOR ONE BROTHER

Spector and Weinberg say that Anderson is an excellent director to work with - very focused, hands-on and very

focused, hands-on and very much into reality. Each day, the 'sisters' would receive daily scripts, with very few lines. Anderson would set up the scene - a bunch of sisters who have teased their brother (Sandler) for his whole life and who have called him names, laughed at him and embarrassed him. From there, Anderson wanted improvised raw conversations, overlapping and rapid-fire - just like the family dinners that the Weinberg/Hermelin's were very familiar with. Anderson went so far as to

familiar with.

Anderson went so far as to ask Spector specifically what she makes for her Friday night dinners, which now include her blended family of five kids and husband, Neal. With Spector's input, they had chicken and rice for the actual dinner scene. I really got a sense that Faul appreciates the real part of life: said Spector, who was told that they should come to the shoot

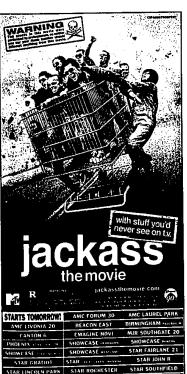
dressed as they would for a normal, everyday dinner - minimal makeup and all. That's part of his cruft and why, I would imagine, that he really wanted non-actors for the roles."

So far, Punch-Drunk Love has received tremendous reviews and substantial box office grosses in its limited-run opening and, for Spector, the impact of being in this film is finally starting to sink in. "I wasn't nervous until I saw myself on the big screen," she said after seeing herself fea-

tured in television commer-cials, on The Today Show and in previews at the movie the-ater. "Now that it's being advertised and other mothers and the librarian from my kids

and the librarian from my kids' school are coming up to me, it's just a blast --something we never expected would happen. 'I was star struck the whole time, added sister Mia. 'It was an amazing experience.' Meanwhile, they're not quit-ting their day jobs. But they're well-beyond their 15 minutes...





STAR LINCOLN PARK STAR ROCHESTER

STAR TAYLOR UA COMMERCE STORE

UA WEST RIVER

