



## Get Caught Listening Winners Announced

By Adam Boretz -- July 27, 2011

The [Audio Publishers Association](#) recently announced the winners of their [Get Caught Listening](#) Video Contest. You may recall that the contest entered [Phase II](#) last month, with the APA narrowing the field to [10 Finalists](#) and then opening voting up to the general audio public. Well, the people have spoken and the winners are as follows:

- FIRST PRIZE: Get Caught Listening – To Audiobooks! Submitted by Joel Moss Levinson
- SECOND PRIZE: Forbidden Passions. Submitted by Jared Wheeler
- THIRD PRIZE: Get Caught Listening – The Twins. Submitted by Samantha Villegas

The three winners take home \$5,000, \$2,500, and \$1,000, respectively. And, we here at *Listen Up* caught up with the first prize winner, Joel Moss Levinson to chat about audiobooks, his winning video, and the somewhat unusual way he makes a living.

### **1. How did you come up with the concept for your video?**

*Well, honestly, when you own a gladiator costume, you're really always looking for excuses to put it on, so that was the starting place. Also, I just finished a book about Spartacus so that was fresh in my mind, and I thought: Perfect, that's the exact book this guy should get caught listening to. Same thing with the baby footage, I thought, this contest requires views, and people certainly love looking at babies on YouTube, maybe I'll throw in some footage of him looking cute for good measure!*

### **2. On your blog, you describe yourself as “a man just trying to survive by winning contests for a living.” How did that start? And how’s it going? How many contests have you won? How much money have you won? And would you recommend this as a way of life?**

*I started doing contests for a living when I put together a few wins in a row while I was busy working a front desk graveyard shift at a 24-hour fitness [center] in Hollywood — not the most glamorous job in the world. So when I thought I had a shot at putting together a living doing just the videos that I was having so much fun with, I quit the job and gave it a shot. At that point, I had \$25,000 in credit card debt, so it might not have been the safest decision. But it felt right and I'm so grateful that it's worked out for me. I think it was one of those leaps that you just have to take ... I'm not sure how many I've won. Probably somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 to 40, some as small as an iPod, some as large as \$100,000 — which after taxes and credit card debt was just about enough to get a nice new computer and camera to help improve my future work! ... This is an absolutely great way of life, assuming someone doesn't need to know where their*

next meal is coming from or where they're going to be next month. It can be very stressful, but for me, it's a perfect fit. It's constantly exciting.

**3. A lot of your videos and contest entries are musical. Do you have a music background? A comedy background?**

*I do have a musical background and a comedy background. Classical piano for five years, improv/jazz for one, the rest has been the love and pursuit of instruments and music. I wrote my first comedy song when I was 12 ... I also made a living singing music with kids and traveling around the country for years, from preschool to high school, as a "songleader," which is a fantastic gig if you like to act like a five year old, jump around like an idiot, and scream — all of which I love doing! I think it helps make me a better parent to our baby, but I have a feeling he won't think it's so cool when he's 14 and his dad is still dressing up in costumes and screaming silly songs all the time.*

**4. Are you an audiobook fan? If so, what are some of your favorite titles? What are some of your favorite narrators?**

I am an audiobook fan, though I'm just recently getting into them. I'm super excited that I have a big cross country road trip later this month, for which I'm loading up on some new stuff. As an over-the-top [Harry Potter](#) fan, I'm obviously infatuated with [Jim Dale](#), whom I'd say is my number one. Other than that, I love listening to comedians reading their own work. I bought the audio version of Tina Fey's [Bossypants](#) for the road trip. I LOVE Stephen Colbert — and everyone else — reading [I Am America And So Can You!](#)

**5. What are you currently working on — in terms of contests or other stuff?**

*I've got a couple contests in the works, and a few that need votes. One — to win \$10,000 and a chance to be in a Hoosier Park Casino commercial — features some very awkward dancing to show how I ["celebrate winning"](#) ... Speaking of dancing, I thought this contest was funny. It's to win a trip for two to Cyprus, which sounds amazing. However, it's specifically to win a trip to this beach which is the "party central" ... which is a hysterical place for a family with a newborn to try to win a trip. Still, my wife and I put this [dance routine](#) together to an existing track of music (as per the requirements) and we did our best to make it look serious enough that to the unknowing eye, people wouldn't be able to tell if we were joking or not!*

**6. When you're not entering contests, what else do you do?**

*Contest entering is totally fun and gives me a chance to be creative, but it is still a day job. My dream is, as it has been for many years, to create comedy TV shows. The nice thing about contests is that I get to show my sense of humor and produce creative stuff. Hopefully it will help get me a chance to make some of the shows I want to make. My brother is my writing partner and together we created an animated show starring Jonathan Katz ([Dr. Katz](#)) and Marc Maron ([WTF Podcast](#)) that we're shopping around. And we're working on a new animated show that is about a six-year-old wanna be rock star that will be ready to be shown around this fall.*

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