

going to point at the menu for me, but I was forced to learn things very quickly. It was good for me.

Outlooks: Where did you traverse the world's most dangerous road?

Archer: That's the Bolivian road from Le Paz to Coroico which was before the Amazon lowlands, I believe. It's this cliff with a narrow road with only one lane for traffic but they allow two-way traffic up and down it, meaning every curve in the road is life-threatening. If you run into a truck coming the other way you just hope you can stop in time. There's an accident once every two weeks! You might be backing up to let the other truck through and your vehicle just goes over the edge and everybody dies. You see crosses and memorials all along the way. It's the scariest ride of your life! It's hard to notice the beauty when you're fearing for your life. (laughs)

Outlooks: Who was the 'Pink Lady' and I don't mean the popular gin cocktail?

Archer: Oh, her name is Patricia and I really wonder what happened to her. I hope somebody that reads the book goes back down to Puerto Natales in Chile and finds her to see how she's doing. She's a Chilean woman who runs a hostel out of her house which is made of aluminum and she's painted it all pink and her clothes are all pink even her platform shoes are dipped in pink paint. She was very different and vibrant—not just because of the colour—in a land

where people are very conservative in the way they dress and act. She certainly didn't have many friends in the town and gay travellers certainly identify with Patricia!

Outlooks: Speaking of gay travellers, what special memories do plantain bananas have for you?

Archer: (laughs) It was a brief torrid affair....(laughs again) They definitely had me running out of Bolivia. It's pretty desperate when you haven't had sex in so long that you actually go to the local market and hit-up the produce section. (laughs) And then the lady that's selling the fruit tells you not to molest her bananas. You know how people knock on cantaloupe to see if it's ripe? Well I was just groping her bananas! (laughs)

Outlooks: Obviously you kept a journal while you were travelling but how did this transition to your new book?

Archer: It was interesting. When I got back I was writing a few stories that were like encapsulated vignettes from the journal. Some of them were so important and poignant for me that I wanted to be sure I never forgot and the stories were a good way to do that. I only imagined a few travel essays here and there. Then I met an editor, Michael Luongo, who suggested I put together a book proposal. So I did that and actually it turned very easily into a book. They are vignettes and you can read each chapter as a complete story by itself. When I did put it all together it was interesting to see the over-arching memoir from the beginning with Zane and to the end where he showed up again, completing the circle.

Outlooks: You've acted in several movies but *Slutty Summer* seems to have been a surprise success for all concerned. Was it really shot in two weeks in New York?

Archer: Yes, oh yes. And the spin-off *A Four Letter Word* was shot in seventeen days. When you have a low budget and you have locations for free you have to use them overnight and it's a lot of sacrifice and sleepless nights but it's worth it. Otherwise it wouldn't be made. There's no money in independent films. It's all about one take and hurry along.

Outlooks: Your character Luke was a part written for you by Casper Andreas and it could be said that Luke puts the 'Slutty' into the title. How much of Luke is Jesse?

Archer: Oh! (Laughs) I've heard this question before...I'm flighty and I like to get around, I have issues with 9-5 and growing-up or responsibility, so I think Luke is

Jesse and Walter in Machu Pichu



somewhat like that. I also don't feel—as does Luke—that intimacy necessarily has to do with being in a monogamous relationship or even knowing somebody's name. I think society has made monogamy into something it doesn't have to be. But I differ from Luke because I don't think he would cut worms out of the bottoms of his feet while travelling in South America. (laughs)

Outlooks: The spin-off movie, *A Four Letter Word*, you co-wrote with Andreas and how did that come about?

Archer: At the end of *Slutty Summer* my character Luke says '...of course everybody wants to fall in love...' so in the new screenplay we wanted to sort of expand on that. I wrote a bar scene and Andreas liked it and said, 'great let's continue together.' So

we did. We didn't want a typical Hollywood ending but Luke definitely falls in love and the rest you have to watch the movie to find out!

Outlooks: Now in this movie you co-star with *Outlooks* columnist Charlie David. How was that?

Archer: Oh, Charlie's fantastic! He's a pro, he knows all his lines and even though I wrote them, sometimes I didn't even know my lines. (Laughs) To know Charlie is to love him!

Outlooks: You seem to be a free spirit and unencumbered by materialism, yet Ayn Rand with her capitalistic viewpoints is one of your favourite authors. How does that fit with Jesse?

Archer: I don't know, maybe I'm a contradiction! (Laughs) But contradictions are interesting, right? I do enjoy her work and it was ironic as I was reading her book *Atlas Shrugged* along the Amazon. I appreciate her philosophy that if you take care of yourself first then everybody would be alright. And she's also very into the importance of being a productive member of society. I try to be productive, follow-through on my projects and achieving goals. Whether that's writing a book or running a marathon. It's an important principle to follow.

Outlooks: Rumour has it that your theme song is Celia Cruz's 'Life Is A Carnival'—True or False?

Archer: True. I love that song. It's upbeat, it's fun and with the trumpets it's alive! Life is a carnival and actually that's one of the chapters in my book. I love the ups and downs, it's a roller-coaster but I love it!

Outlooks: Your favourite actress is Rosalind Russell, is that because you identify with Auntie Mame?

Archer: I most certainly do! (Laughs) Yes, I love her. If I were to be anyone I'd want it to be Auntie Mame, yes, but with a big dose of Mae West! Gotta love her! Life is a banquet and enough good people are starving to death!

Outlooks: Years ago Hollywood casting directors thought that you were too gay for gay roles in movies so what would you say to them now?

Archer: I would say to them what I would say to anyone...just be yourself and make it happen for yourself.

Outlooks: So what's next for Jesse, kayaking the arctic passage or another Luke movie?

Archer: I look forward to an unscripted future. I'm going to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves and if they don't come my way I'll make some for myself. (Laughs) ▼

For more information or to order a copy of Jesse's book *You Can Run* visit: jesseonthebrink.com

