



ICE - Making Predictions

What do the lines,

- “What if everything is an illusion and nothing exists? In that case, I definitely overpaid for my carpet.”
- “Sex without love is an empty gesture. But as empty gestures go, it is one of the best.”

and,

- “When I was in school, I cheated on my metaphysics exam: I looked into the soul of the boy sitting next to me.”

all have in common?

The answer is that they were all conceived by writer, actor and director Woody Allen (see Figure 1¹).

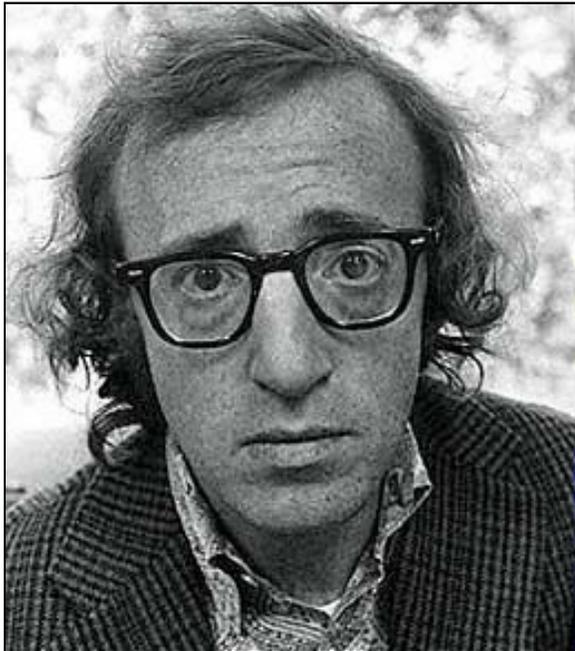


Figure 1: Described as a “pale, bespectacled, 120 pound neurotic,” Woody Allen has written, directed or starred in (sometimes all of the above) more than 40 feature films during a career spanning almost than 40 years.

Born Allan Stewart Konigsberg on December 1, 1935, in Brooklyn New York, he adopted the name “Woody Allen” in 1952 - a year before graduating from high school. Allen enrolled in NYU and astonishingly (given his long and critically acclaimed career as a film maker) failed the class on motion picture production.

After graduating from NYU, Allen made a career as a comedy writer for television programs such as “Your Show of Shows” starring Pat Boone (see Figure 2²).

¹ Image source: <http://www.ibiblio.org/mal/MO/phlim/woody/>

² Image source: <http://pages.prodigy.net/dianamorris/feat1k.htm>

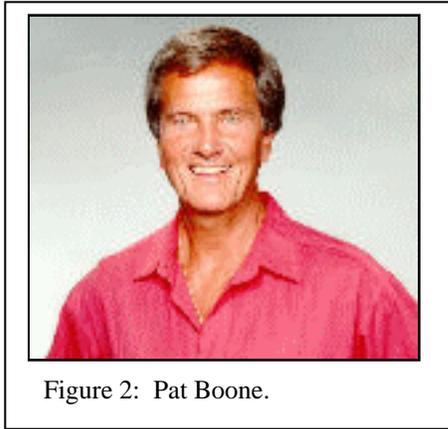


Figure 2: Pat Boone.

Allen made his first professional appearance as a comedian in 1960, and between 1964 and 1965 released three comedy albums that were enthusiastically received. Also in 1965, Allen's first motion picture "What's New, Pussycat" was released. The film was written by Allen who also played the character Victor Shakapopolis (see Figure 3³). Allen



Figure 3: Woody Allen as Victor Shakapopolis in "What's New Pussycat?"

made his directorial debut with the 1969 film "Take the Money and Run," which he also wrote and acted in.

A perennial feature of Allen's more recent films are multiple love interests for the characters that he plays. Table 1⁴ (below) gives the release years, budgets, American box office totals and actresses portraying love interests in some recent films.

Film	Year	American box office (\$ millions)	Actresses
Small Time Crooks	2000	17.1	Tracey Ullman Elaine May
Sweet and Lowdown	1999	4.2	Samantha Morton Uma Thurman
Celebrity	1998	5.0	Melanie Griffith Winona Ryder Charlize Theron
Deconstructing Harry	1997	10.7	Elisabeth Shue Judy Davis Demi Moore
Everyone Says I Love You	1996	9.7	Julia Roberts Drew Barrymore Goldie Hawn
Mighty Aphrodite	1995	6.4	Mira Sorvino Helena Bonham Carter
Bullets over Broadway	1994	13.4	Dianne Wiest Jennifer Tilly
Manhattan Murder Mystery	1993	11.3	Diane Keaton Anjelica Huston
Husbands and Wives	1992	10.6	Mia Farrow Judy Davis Juliette Lewis

Table 1: Data concerning a selection of Woody Allen Films, 1992-2000.

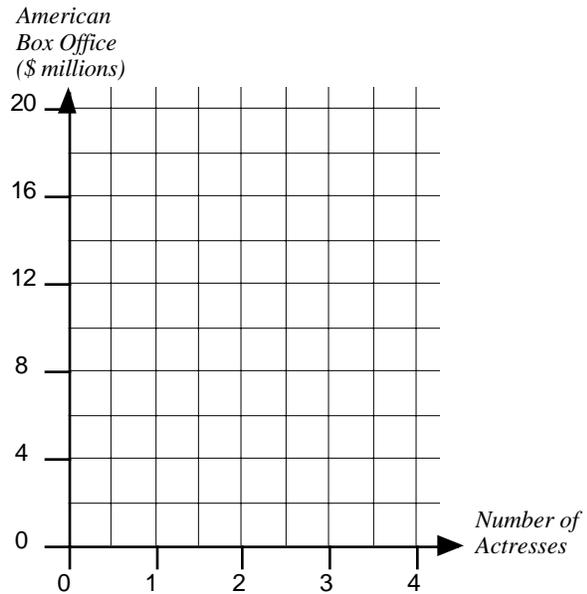
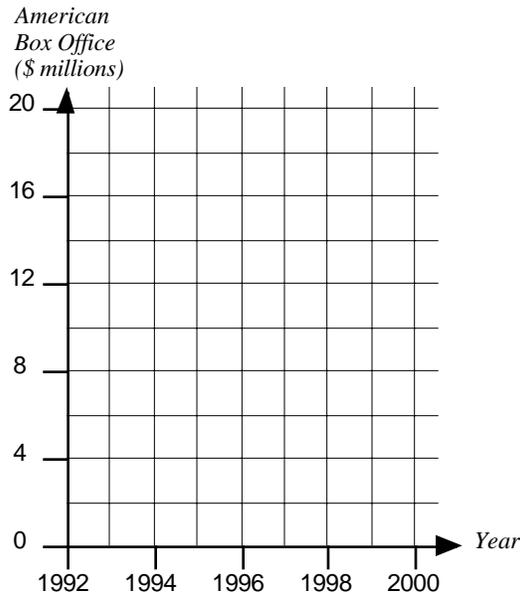
³ Image source: <http://www.woody-allen.de/pussy.htm>

⁴ Data sources: *The Economist*, September 1, 2001 and <http://www.upcomingmovies.com>

While studio executives are often maligned for their fiscal obsessions, the fact of the matter is that it is their job to worry about whether a movie is going to make any money or not. Generally speaking, the studio executives have a pretty clear idea of what the details of the script and plot of a movie are before the movie is released to the public.

- **Given the priorities of studio executives, which of the quantities listed in Table 1 would be most likely regarded as the dependent variable by studio executives?**

- **Two possibilities for independent variables are “Year” and the number of love interests that Allen writes for his character. Use the data provided in Table 1 to complete the plots shown below.**



- **Does either of the two plots show a relationship that could be regarded as a function? Explain what features of each graph lead you to your conclusion.**

- **If you were asked to estimate the American box office earnings of a new Woody Allen movie, which relationship would you prefer to use and why?**

On August 17, 2001 Woody Allen's latest movie "The Curse of the Jade Scorpion" was released in North America (see Figure 4⁵).



Figure 4: Movie poster for Woody Allen's latest movie.

The film was greeted by extremely mixed reactions from Movie critics. For example, John Anderson of Newsday described the movie as:

“The frothiest, funniest comedy he has made since Manhattan Murder Mystery.”

Terry Lawson of the Detroit Free Press was less than impressed, noting:

“In nearly four decades of filmmaking, Woody Allen has been hilarious, brilliant, maddening, contrary and unsettling. Never, though, has he been so ordinary.”

In the movie, Allen is hypnotized and falls in love with a corporate efficiency expert played by Helen Hunt. Charlize Theron also stars as a “...beautiful bad girl, sporting a Veronica Lake-like hairdo...” (see Figure 5⁶).



Figure 5(a, b): Actresses Charlize Theron (a) and Veronica Lake (b).

• Based on this information, how much do you think “The Curse of the Jade Scorpion” will make at the American box office?

⁵ Image source: <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/>

⁶ Image sources: <http://silverscreensirens.com> and <http://www.premiere.com>