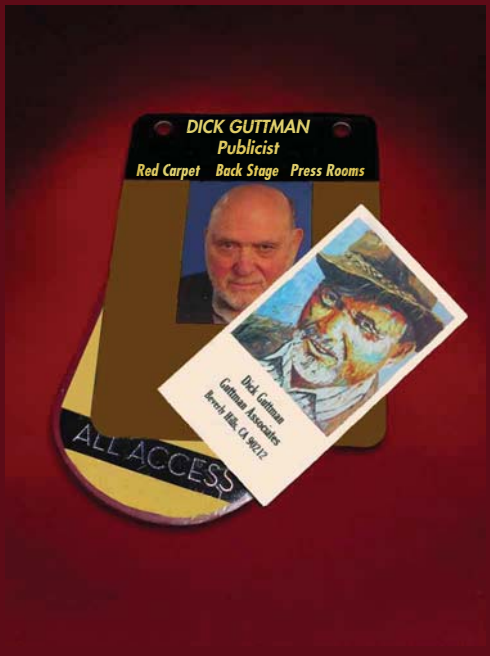
Starflacker

Inside the Golden Age of Hollywood



Dick Guttman

A Bedside Reader for People Who Love Movies

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R Guttman
Associates, Inc.

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To TCM and Robert Osborne who bear continuing
and loving witness to the great films and the great stars

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Contents

Flack: *n*. A press agent; a publicist. — *v. intr.* To act as a press agent. *tr.* to act as a press agent for.

—(American Heritage College Dictionary)

Star-flack-er: *n*. One who acts as a press agent for stars [deriving from the transitive verb *flack*, to act as a press agent for]

—(Monika Robertson)

Preface

I thought I would write a book about my friend Warren Cowan who so powerfully shaped our business of independent entertainment publicity. Although he lived 90 years, Warren did not live long enough to tell the tale. My own escapades with the storied stars and the storied press agents of the Golden Age of Hollywood were impatient. They kept lining themselves up for my attention as I outlined the Warren Cowan story. The whole challenging and privileged adventure of being a press agent seemed to be the point, precisely because it's been told up to now primarily by writers who found flacks an easy target for satire and disdain.

Instead of speaking for one PR pro, I found myself speaking for all of them, all the publicity guys and gals of my brief 60 years on the job.

PR people lead essentially similar lives. It's just the improbable narrative anecdotes which vary from flack to flack. Here is an introduction to mine and to the rules of the game which I've recognized along the way. Many of the extraordinary people who enriched my career, people who made you love movies, are gone. I sifted through my experience to provide those stories which allow these remarkable personalities to introduce themselves to you and, in the process, justify the secret, improbable and wild-ride world of PR.

To set the mood:

Somewhere in the 1970s when we were all too young to think of death, at the most vulnerable wee hour of a deep sleep I was awakened by a phone call from an Associated Press writer in New York asking me to confirm a report that Michael Caine had been killed.. automobile accident. It was a Sunday morning, too, when I got the call about Sharon Tate, and so I mumbled, "What?" It couldn't happen

twice. It would, in fact, happen on sad occasion over the years, but Michael… I rejected the thought. Maybe I misunderstood. However, he repeated it. "Where did this story originate?" I asked. "Radio station in Long Island." "Shouldn't they be getting the story from AP and not the other way around?" "Whatever, but we need your response or your checking it out." On a hunch, I asked if anyone else was injured. "No.. single vehicle accident, no passenger." "I can verify right now," I told him, "that Michael Caine was not killed in that accident." "Yeah? How's that?" he demanded skeptically. "Because Michael Caine does not know how to drive, so he doesn't."

A life in PR entails a lot of rude awakenings. With some of them, you actually can go back to sleep.

Within the thousand tales and many more in this writing is one which made it very clear to me why I undertook what proved to be a five year (I have a day job) venture in remembering and evaluating and sharing:

At one point in the wide-eyed year of 1956, I, an ingenuous 23 year old press agent working in Paris on Billy Wilder's romantic comedy "Love In The Afternoon," arranged for Gary Cooper to be interviewed one evening at the actor's Hotel George V suite.

Peer Oppenheimer, the editor of Family Weekly, a major American Sunday supplement magazine of the time, and I arrived at the appointed hour to the apparent consternation of Cooper's valet. After a half hour, the door to Cooper's bedroom opened and Coop, immaculately dressed for an evening… looking like Gary Cooper, super dooper… emerged preceded by two tall and gloriously beautiful women dressed as though they were about to step onto the Balmain runway. "Gentlemen," Coop said, 'I apologize. I recall having set the interview for tonight, ignoring that I had prior commitment. Peer, if you'll pardon the inconvenience, I'd love you and Dick to be my guests for a wonderful dinner tomorrow night, and I promise to make up something that will give you a good story."

Fifty-five years later, Cooper's two guests at that epicurean dinner at Calvados compared their recall of the events. The memory was a very warm one for Peer. 'I was very flattered that Gary knew that I would never reflect in my story the circumstances of the night before," Peer said. "He never mentioned it. He trusted me."

Peer's remark reminded me that in a time before blogs and Facebook when newspapers, magazines and radio were the sole and blindly trusted intermediaries,

a very legit and independent media understood its function as one of the three conjoined sides of the basic triangle of stardom. An important connective tissue of shared society, stardom is compounded of *A. stars, B. media reportage of those stars and C. the public's image of the stars*. That long period's intense esteem and affection for movie stars, which helped power our optimism through wars and economic woes, was influenced to some degree by PR and by a media focused on building stars rather than exploiting them. To a greater degree, of course, those stardoms were constructed of the qualities and traits the public recognized in each of those stars, and of the dreams they invested in them. The stars did their part with winning and moving performances and by living up to the images and charm quite accurately ascribed to them.

That was it. That's why I began this writing… and continued with it and further continued with it until I was written out. With their wit and scalawag ways, those Golden Age legends illustrate the inner workings and delights of a Hollywood which exists no more. It's a story which was captured as well in the memories of my fellow flacks of the period, the other people who similarly connected those stars to the media and public or protected the stars *from* them. Far too many of those memories have already been laid to rest with a stone on top to secure the silence. So "Starflacker," the crowded recollections of one PR pro, speaks for them all, reflecting the strange but common experiences which entice every press agent through a day or through a career. And here's the driving premise… those indestructible , imperishable stardoms we flacks polished and brandished were a national treasure… and *Hollywood has sadly lost its ability to generate such legend*.

The Golden Age of Stardom was and no longer is. What made that time so different? What made its stars so bright and eternal? Those stars and their celebrity were, above all, the hallowed dreams of their audience. Today the public doesn't dream because it doesn't have to. It has the instant gratifications of digital babble and at-your-fingertips porn and worst-case scenarios. Every scabrous thing you want to know about anyone… true or probably and expectably not… is yours for the online asking. Today's public feeds on the miseries and foibles of its celebrities. Back in the golden day, nobody chortled over Judy Garland's struggles. They loved her.

If you've selected "Starflacker" for your reading, you will be joining me in the improbable adventures of life in a much-maligned and under-estimated business.

I think you'll find my all-star companions of the road as amusing and amazing as I did. This all is written with abiding affection for those with whom I traveled that road. Perhaps my peers, the people with whom I share this profession, will discover that my experiences correspond to their own. They share with me the intriguing challenge of *serving artists in an industry whose first purpose is no longer that of creating great stardoms*. Not that fine roles in fine films don't come along. But that's the problem. They no longer pour forth. They merely come along.

I particularly hope this PR diary's revelations meet the expectation and justify the devotion of that other intended audience, the people who share my love of the Golden Age and its stars and its films… people who, as do I, check the TV listings each morning to see what's on TCM.

These star-flacking experiences did actually occur as described… all quarter million and more words of them, all however many hundred pages of them, 600 or perhaps 800. This count in the e-book world varies with the type size you choose. Ask yourself what kind of deranged mind could possibly have *made up* all this stuff or imagined the thousands of dialogues? Every anecdote happened, however Kafkaesque some may seem. This is your visitor's pass to Hollywood with its hair down… the All-Access-Pass Hollywood of any press agent's existence, but in this case that of my own past six decades.

During the Oscar campaign for 'The Artist" I had insisted into its strategy that we emphasize the relevance of that admittedly-French film's being the only award contender that was made in Hollywood that year. I called for a double dose mention of that element in a TV promo. But Harvey Weinstein responded, "No, we'll say it once. We're not all ADD like Dick Guttman." An astute editor had once instructed me to "tell 'em what you're gonna say, say it, tell 'em that you've said it." *While that doesn't always work in the minimalism of a news story, it's a good general rule of effective communication*. And, since I don't have to have an editor for this diary (a circumstance I deeply cherish… this is just me talking to you, no editors' polish or contrivance) here is advance notice of some of the concerns you may find recurring in this, my unspooling of a life in PR:

Long Before Tabloids And Twitter, Stars Had Mystery, Stature And Staying Power. Hollywood publicists (press agents, PR gals and guys, flacks) were an important part of that equation… intimate witness to the hundreds of stars and stardoms whose glories remain undiminished by age or even death. *Stars then were*

built for style and built to last. But Hollywood doesn't care about that anymore. They're happy with whoever is trending.

Gone Are The Days: but how and why and is it irreversible? We'll explore how THE NEW HOLLYWOOD, THE NEW PUBLIC AND THE NEW MEDIA HAVE REMOVED THE LADDERS NEEDED TO REACH LEGEND.

STARDOM THEN AND NOW: Reality TV has, of course, produced some true talents, but when select personalities peddling little more than their notoriety, are the priority appetite and focus of both public and media, it's time to rescue fame from its sorry devaluation. The legends of the past served us well, and we need to continue the tradition. "Starflacker" surveys not only the ingredients but also the how and the why of legendary stardom.

THE BAD BOYS (AND GIRLS) OF PR: This confessional memoir is the frank, funny and proud revelation of a derided profession which critically influences our obsessive interest in entertainment and its over-large influence on our lives. PR Hollywood style. Along with its capture of the wit and idiosyncrasies of legendary Hollywood figures, observations unique to a flack's eye view, *this diary reveals an unusual profession which shared and shaped the glory days of Hollywood and of its golden stars, a profession which flourishes still, swimming upstream against the changing and diminishing standards of fame and glamour.* Folded into this rich mulch are The Rules of Publicity which are also a guideline to the widely useful skills of persuasion.

Chapter 1

A Life In Pr

Cary Grant called one morning. He was the only person who could coax two syllables out of my first name. "Di-ick, this is Cary," he announced crisply. Never any danger of mistaking the voice we all knew better than our own. Funny how easy those stars were to imitate… and how impossible to replicate. I asked how I could help him. For a press agent… a flack, a publicity guy or gal,… three out of four calls are asks. How-can-I-help-you? cuts to the chase. "You know this fellow Vernon Scott, don't you? United something," Cary began. "United Press International." "That's the one. I wonder if he would write a story for you… something I'd like to clear up." Cary liked to clear things up. He'd called me early in our association to clear up the matter of the English muffins at New York's Plaza Hotel. It was widely rumored for decades that he once had called the manager of the hotel (in some reports it is Conrad Hilton whom he called) to find out what had happened to the other half of one of the two English muffins on which his eggs Benedict were supposed to have arrived. The rumor had it that he had requested that the other half be brought up to his room since he'd paid for it. That, he had told me on the prior call, was nonsense. He had merely inquired if the other half became part of someone else' eggs Benedict or if it was wastefully discarded. He was told it was put to good use, and he was fine with that. "Do you want me to quash that rumor?" I'd asked during the muffin call. "No, I just wanted you to know. It's too late now. That muffin has done its damage."

But this time, it was clear that he wanted me to take action. "What's the problem, Cary?" "One of those women's magazines," he said, "they've printed

this story quoting me as having said that I never loved any of my wives." "That's pretty rude. Did you ever say that… or anything like it?" "LIKE it, yes… yes , I did. I once commented that I had never LEFT any of my wives. They all left ME. Do you think you can get friend Vernon to speak to me to tidy that up?" "Cary," I said, "this is one I think I can sell."

There's a winding road leading to almost every association in our business. Here's the one which led us to Cary Grant. I came clientless into my own business. My longtime boss and teacher, Warren Cowan, thought it would be rude if I departed his company, Rogers & Cowan, with some of his clients in my pocket. With my middleclass Midwest ethic, I actually agreed, although many of them were there because I was doing a good job on them. So naked came I to partnership with Jerry Pam. The distinguished writer and producer Leslie Stevens, taking pity lightly salted with belief, demanded that Warner Bros. hire the newly hatched, not quite fledged firm of Guttman & Pam to represent Leslie's new adventure series starring Hugh O'Brian and Sir John Gielgud. This led to our representing Hugh who, along with Cary Grant was on the board of Faberge which, as direct result of Hugh's intervention, we very shortly represented as well. Such are the domino forces of Hollywood good fortune, and so we came into the delightful custodianship of Cary Grant's publicity needs, underwritten by George Barry… Jerry developed a close bonding with George Barry, the head and driving force of the Faberge beauty products empire. My wife very early in the game cautioned me not to use the word "friend" to describe a business contact. In the first place, it presumed. More relevantly, she insisted that in any relationship in which money is exchanged, "association" is a safer assumption than friendship and a truer stone on which to stand. Since lasting relationship has been pretty much the theme of my life in PR, I think some friendships have crept in.

George Barry was bored when he wasn't doing at least twelve things at once. Energetic, restless, he was tasteful, eclectic, a song writer as well as beauty industry genius. We very shortly helped him get an Oscar nomination as a tunesmith. He was fascinated with film-making and glamour. The latter, of course was his business. Cary Grant and Hugh O'Brian were very active board members and closely involved in our work to build Barry and Faberge into real powers in the film world. We helped George market a number of good films, most notably the Oscar-nominated "A Touch Of Class." Other relationships developed from the

Faberge connection, particularly with that life force known as Glenda Jackson, who achieved the Best Actress Oscar for that light romantic comedy.

Occasionally a news story will refer to some press agent as being famous or even powerful. That is delusional. "Persuasive," "perceptive" and "persistent" maybe. They are the p-driven adjectives which feed a PR gal's or guy's family and put the kids through school. *Fame is what you sell, not what you seek*. The fame you help your clients achieve will enrich both their careers and yours. Content yourself with that. Power is the number of doors to which you acquire the keys. Your skill set must contain, above all, your up-to-date knowledge of the evolving media and whatever hard-won trust you have managed to get the media to accord you. Sharpen these with your audacity and polish them with techniques and instincts honed from campaigns triumphant or bitter. It doesn't hurt if you know how to write. You are judged by your batting average, although most often you will be the only one keeping count of your home runs. So don't fixate on those or on your strikeouts. Learn from each. if you help bring awareness, continuity and dignity to enough careers, a useful kind of reputation grows on you like ivy on college walls.

By those rules, to which I've always subscribed, writing a memoir is high treason. There is, on the other hand, the prospect of freeing up all the space these recollections occupy in the brain and the faint hope of offering reasonable explanation as to what might hold one to a profession so often and dismissively impugned, disdained and even distrusted. The writing, no small incentive, is also evidence that you have held off cerebral ravage for one more year and offers the possibility that you can revisit it all on paper when you can no longer revisit it in mind.

Being a press agent will infect your life, because people… even friends, even wives or husbands… will give your every utterance bitter analysis for sincerity, the old did-he-mean-that-or-is-he-just-*saying*-it? I love to compliment my wife. Gisela is in so many essential ways complimentable. Often I bring forth something from deep within my wonder, and she says, "PR." One night, driving home, I determined to bestow upon her an expression of love so deeply from the soul as to certify irrefutable devotion. At a proper moment when I thought I had her attention, I said, "Darling, there are other women with whom I could have spent my life, but you're the only woman I could not have spent my life *without*." There

was a long pause. Naturally, I understood she was stunned by such protestation of love. Then she looked deep into my eyes and said with great and earnest intensity, "Who were they?"

At a Beverly Hills Hotel lunch event hosted by People Magazine, I was standing with three other veteran press agents, all well deserving of their superb reputations. Pat Kingsley (the once-and-always empress of the craft,) Stan Rosenfield (who has kept his clientele very starry and his sense of humor buoyant, each of which achievements qualifies as heavy lifting in our game) and Dale Olsen (who brought a lot of dignity, suave and journalistic skill to a steamy trade.) PR vets tend to hang together in the chatter part of an event because our experience is alien to that of everyone else in the room. We are as set apart from the world as hit men must be. Our shop talk would seem in code or, if comprehended at all, brutal to tender ears.

Our business, like that of the hit man, is immaculately clandestine if done well. You and your clients are best served if a story does not read or play like a press agent plant. The trick is to make publicity seem the natural consequence of the clients' accomplishments and talents, which by and large it is, while your having generated the story is nowhere evident. The fine Italian hand of the press agent should never be seen, although sometimes that is quite impossible. No one should know any stories about you… unless you are foolish enough to write a book to sum it all up or to justify your erratic experiences and the pleasure you took from them.

So, I was surprised when Stan said to me, "There's a story I've heard about you, and I always wanted to know if it's true." "What kind of story?" "That Paul Newman asked you to watch the latest cut of a new movie with him, just you and him. And when it was over, he asked you to tell him straight out what you thought of it, positive or negative. And that you did, and that when you got back to the office, you were told that you'd been fired off the film." He had me. I couldn't remember that, at least not until I realized WHY I couldn't remember it. The way Stan had heard it and related it made it sound as though Paul had gotten me fired, and that simply wasn't true. That wasn't Paul Newman. He was as straight-up and honest a guy as he was an actor. It was something about which I hadn't thought for decades, but it snapped into place and made me laugh. It's a PR guy's perverse sense of humor that gets him or her through. "'WUSA'," I said.

Paul was a vivid guy to be around. That was 1970, and he sort of trusted me or at least my judgment because a few years before that I'd done a pretty good job as PR point man on his directorial debut, "Rachel, Rachel," which meant a lot to him. It had received four Oscar nominations, including Best Film and Best Actress for his wife, Joanne Woodward. All of us working on it at Rogers & Cowan loved that film, and the publicity showed it.

It wasn't a big surprise that Paul asked to show this new film to me alone. We talked movies from time to time. When the lights came up, he said, "So give it to me straight… what you thought… no holds barred." Even though the film was packed with people I cared about… Paul, Joanne, Larry Harvey, Tony Perkins… I had problems with it, and I assumed he did, too, or why else the screening and the uncommon request? It was evident that he cared about "WUSA." The film had a lot on its mind, a powerful and prescient examination of the encroachments into our politics that right wing radio was about to introduce. The self-preservation part of my brain said "lie and then run." So I did the semi-honest thing and changed the subject. "Well, you know, Paul, what I think will really help us sell the film is all those songs by this Neil Diamond kid… 'Sweet Caroline' and… wow. And it captures the feeling and, hey, here's what we can do… I can have you and Joanne send out his album to all of the film critics saying how you…" By now my voice was high and fast like your voice gets when you're speeding out onto a limb. And Paul was looking at me with a kind of disgusted impatience. "Cut the crap," he said… "what you THINK about the film… straight… I won't get angry. I want to hear, and I don't want to hear what you think I WANT to hear." "Yeah?" "Yeah." "OK, who am I PULLING for in this film?" I said, and it was all I had to say. He nodded gravely. "Thanks."

It was twenty-five minutes from Paramount back to the Beverly Hills offices of Rogers & Cowan, the entertainment industry's pre-eminent public relations firm, the company Warren Cowan and Henry Rogers had made the daddy of all big Hollywood PR firms. and where I had worked the first 16 years of my career, with a couple of years off for bad behavior in Europe to find out who I was… As I walked in the front entrance, the receptionist said, "Mr. Cowan wants to see you." Warren Cowan was not merely my boss. He was my friend and he had been my mentor, but I was reaching that point where you start to perceive yourself as your own mentor henceforth. Warren looked up at me as I came into the office and he said dryly, "Congratulations. You're off the film." "Are you telling me

that Paul…?" Clipped, controlled anger, "No, it wasn't Paul." "Then who…?" "It doesn't matter… one of the producers." OK, I was content that Paul had kept his word. He'd gone back to the production office and asked "Who am I pulling for in this film?" And then they'd checked who was the idiot he'd just shown the film to and called Warren to tell him they were bidding me goodbye. The company wasn't off the film… just I. "What the hell did you do?" Warren asked, putting spaces between the words… "Do? He showed me the film." "And because of that they called me to cut you loose from it? What the hell did you DO? " Warren insisted, his calm almost rigid now. "Paul asked me to tell him… well, insisted, really…" "What? He asked you what?" "To tell him exactly what I thought of the film." Warren sat there for several moments, looking at me as though I'd been speaking in tongues. "Asked me to tell him what I thought of the film," I repeated. Suddenly, Warren came up out of his seat like a rising fog, his hands waving at the ceiling, his fingers running scales on the air. It was an Elmer Gantry moment. "And… you… TOLLLLD… HIMMM?" he roared.

Postscript. I related the above story not too long ago to Peter Bart, the respected and sometimes feared (maybe because he tells it straight) editor of Daily Variety and the second in command to Bob Evans at Paramount at the time of "WUSA." It was at the Comic Con convention in San Diego, and I was having Frank Miller, the reigning and originating icon of graphic novel super-hero films, guest on one of the television interview shows Peter does with Peter Guber for Bravo. Bart listened to my tale and then said, "I never got so much flak for not liking a film as I did from the producers of 'WUSA." At least I was in good company. I did do a lot of work on the film… anonymously from my office… and we did have Paul and Joanne mail out the Neil Diamond album from the song soundtrack.

It hadn't occurred to me, until Stan mentioned having heard that story, that flack-related misadventures might be of interest to anyone but the mis-adventurers. Then I recalled my delight in Arthur Mayer's book "From The Long Chase To The Chaise Longue" in which that distinguished exhibitor recalled inspired PR stunts-that-went-wrong in the 20s, 30s and 40s like the plan to steal the Times Square New Year's Eve. The scam was for four tons of leaflets promoting some upcoming film to be dropped on the Times Square revelers just before midnight, perfectly timed to hit the crowd as a blinding blizzard of movie promo just as the ball started to drop. At the precisely-timed moment, the leaflets were poured

into the void from the ramparts atop the highest building looming over Times Square. The crowd below didn't know what hit them because… nothing ever hit them… The torrent of leaflets had descended about ten feet from the point of release before catching a wind that gave them a free ride directly out to sea. Subtract the wind, and that would have been a winner. Publicity ideas that work are often counter-intuitive. Try to explain the rationale of a good idea, and you probably find that you can't. How do you describe a gut feeling?

Our planet should only be as green as I was behind the ears when I tried to explain movie star age to Audrey Hepburn. It was *her* birth year we were talking about, granted, but it was *my* professional judgment that was involved. Audrey Hepburn was the classic movie star. She would have been regal even if she hadn't first blossomed before our eyes as the escaped princess in "Roman Holiday," winning the Best Actress Oscar in her initial starring role. She had performed in a film first in 1951 with a single line, glowingly delivered, at the end of Alec Guinness' "The Lavender Hill Mob." Two years later she was on the Oscar stage accepting the Best Actress trophy, the queen of the western world or, as she was even more suitably swathed in our affections, the princess of the western world.

I worked with her two years later on the filming of Billy Wllder's "Love In The Afternoon" in Paris. That was 1956. Subsequent to her "Roman Holiday" ascension to the throne, her title role in Wilder's "Sabrina Fair" and her Natasha in "War And Peace" had further established her reign. There is no young actress currently functioning who begins to approach her starry perch. She was 26 and I had just turned an ingenuous 23, much lacking in worldly wisdom, newly arrived in Paris for a crash course. These numbers have some pertinence in this little parable about one of publicity's most important rules. The moral of the parable, in fact, is that age does count.

I was the assistant unit publicist, pretty much the most insignificant team member on a location shoot, but Audrey Hepburn treated me with the same generous, genuine and smiling cordiality she did her co-star Gary Cooper or a lighting technician, for that matter. My great good fortune was that my boss, the unit publicist, recoiled from dealing with the stacked deck of iconic legends who peopled that set… Wilder, Hepburn, Cooper, Maurice Chevalier, France's greatest international star. So I was the point guy, and I had just enough experience and more than enough audacity to do it. The "press book" on every film has to contain

the bios, the summation of the life and career of each star. The writing of Audrey Hepburn's biography and the clearing of it with her fell to me.

So one morning I saw her in the cold, grey great hallway entrance of the Studios de Boulogne and I said, "Miss Hepburn, did you have a chance to read your bio?" "Yes, Dick, and it's fine. Oh, except you didn't put in my birthdate." "May 4? I didn't put that in?" "Well, yes, but not the year." "Miss Hepburn," I said, and you have to remember that I had just turned 23 and therefore 26 seemed pretty ancient to me, "You're twenty-six, which is, you know, a nice age. But someday… someday you're going to be THIRTY-six." I stopped, letting the full weight of that inevitability seep in. She was looking at me with a quizzical smile, a bit amused and willing to see where this went. "And?" she encouraged. "And let's say there's this role, Anna… and the script says 'Anna, 30, and some producer says 'Audrey Hepburn is 36'… you see what I mean?" "Well," she answered, "it seems very silly to me, but you do as you see fit."

Exactly twenty years later, she was promoting "Robin And Marion," teamed with Sean Connery in a mature telling of the Robin Hood romance But the producers didn't want it to be too mature, so when I read an interview with Audrey Hepburn, I was interested to see that she was the same age as I. It was nothing that she stated, just an age that must have been established in the press book. If she even knew that, which I sincerely doubt, I'm sure the producers had said "Audrey, audiences are getting younger and younger. Two middle-aged lovers getting all mushy?" To which I'm sure she would have said, "Well, it seems very silly to me, but you do as you see fit."

A little less than twenty years after that, she was the ambassador for UNICEF. Working for the endangered children of the world is what absorbed her, and not making films. Barbara Walters was interviewing her for one of her Oscar night specials, and it was established by Ms Walters that Audrey Hepburn was, once more (as only I might have noted,) three years older than I. As soon as she had escaped the tyranny of Hollywood's delusions as to what is important, Audrey Hepburn was very happy to shed things she found silly but that others thought fit. She was royalty until the day she died and right on into eternity.

Paparazzi are the guys who chase name stars and teeny boppers from store to store or who hide in lone wolf ambush to get some compromising or unattractive photographic or video shots. When I was appearing before the House Judiciary

Committee to urge passage of a bill protecting privacy of stars, I was asked why we tried to have it both ways… protect our clients from them in those coercive situations, but court paparazzi coverage on our red carpets. I had to explain that they are two different breeds. The feral shutter-clickers, the paparazzi, don't show when stars are glammed up and prepared, all smiles, coiffure and haute couture. The good guys, the "event photographers," look for the most complimentary shot, and without their flashing lights, big events would not feel like big events. Age is a big commercial consideration for paparazzi. They target the celebs du jour who are young enough and mindless enough to matter to the young and selectively mindless prowlers of the internet gossip world. Or they can always make a buck by grabbing a shot that makes a legitimate talent and star look cruelly more than his or her age. Or disappointingly his or her age.

In consideration of paparazzi/stalkerazzi hunting habits, I tried to talk a client out of throwing his big bash 50th birthday party on the beach in front of his house. Beaches can't be defended against the hoping-to-make-you-look-bad camera guys. Everything from the mean tide-line to the water is public property, so if the tide is out, so is a privacy-seeking star's luck. Hollywood movies and Hollywood careers each rely on the willing suspension of disbelief. Why tag some age label on yourself? The paparazzi got their shots, and the word "fifty" was in every story or caption. Not too long thereafter, age seemed a very key factor in the evaporation of a crucial project. Age doesn't need an invitation to your party… he knows where you live. On the other hand, I have never actually stipulated a false age. It was too easy to acquire the truth from the Department of Motor Vehicles before or, now, in eight thousand places on the internet. No lie ever held back time, but clean living habits, a good constitution and benevolent genes sometimes slow the impetuous passage of years. Anno domini is not always the most accurate reflection of one's age. Some lucky few of us have a painting growing old in the attic.

I take love for granted. I am, I think, a good press agent, but I've been a lousy matchmaker. At one of our earliest celebrity pro-am ski tournaments, I had Natalie Wood paired with the hot upcoming skier Spider Sabitch and Claudine Longet with Olympic silver medalist Billy Kidd. Claudine asked me if they could switch, and Natalie said it was fine with her. The first part of the trade worked out quite well. Photos of Billy Kidd skiing down the hill backwards instructing Natalie as she snowplowed her first trip down the course, these ate up the whole front page

of the LA Times sports section and were widely syndicated. Claudine and Spider did well in the competition and not so well afterwards when their friendship and his life ended in an argument involving bullets. Less dire was the end of Kim Cattrall's friendship with and engagement to "Murder One" star Daniel Benzali which commenced when I arranged for Daniel to attend the premiere of Martin Scorcese's "Casino." I suggested he do so in the company of a beautiful actress and did I have the girl for him! It was love at first sight for these two clients and the opposite at first fight. End of an engagement for them and of two friends and two clients for me.

For a press agent, numbers add up to… news. Warren Cowan loved to employ promotable numbers relating to clients' careers. He never met an anniversary he didn't like. It was always good for a week or so of promo. Tony Curtis' 20th year as a top ten box-office star, Frank Sinatra's 30th gold album, Shirley McClain's 15th number one boxoffice hit. The one number Warren never celebrated was age. "Age closes too many doors," he reasoned…

I once sat in a casting meeting in which two venerated but just-turning-venerable macho stars were suggested for a new action film. "Great," the producer said dismissively. "You want to do the big chase scene with wheelchairs or walkers?"

I make a point of NOT knowing my clients' ages. I feel actors don't have age. They have *range*… I usually make that clear to a new client up front. Don't tell me your age, but let's agree on your age range. Jack is 38 to mid-forties, Jane is 26 to 33. That way, when a journalist calls and asks an age, I honestly can say I don't know, but I can give them the range appropriate to that performer. It widens role opportunities, and, amazingly, some of the press respect that an actor need not get carded for a role. The truth is that you are not necessarily your chronological age. Sissy Spacek was 38 years old when she won the Oscar for playing a 14 year old in a substantial portion of "Coal Miner's Daughter."

On the other hand, the number of years a client has been acknowledged as best, most attractive, biggest boxoffice, sexiest…. That isn't age. That's STATUS. Clint Eastwood was never too young or too old. He was always Clint Eastwood. Gable was Gable courting Mae West at the beginning or Marilyn Monroe at the end. Katharine Hepburn just went on being Katharine Hepburn. That process

was perhaps easier in the 30s on through the 60s, those old-fashioned decades when you bought a chair to last. Now when obsolescence is built into everything, staying young is just a little more important. A performer has to take measures against letting nature's sunset clause abbreviate his or her career.

Media like to play gotcha with evidences of plastic surgery, but it is such a common recourse now that stars today sometimes feel they need to consider enhancement simply to maintain competitive equity, let alone advantage. Many feel that, since there is now such default assumption that it has been done, why not just go ahead and do it? I had a reflection of that when Clint Eastwood was preparing "The Bridges Of Madison County" and I asked him to consider Jacqueline Bisset. He said that it was already pretty much set with Meryl Streep. He added, "plus, I really want someone who's never done any 'work.'" Plastic, of course. "Jackie has never even thought of it," I said with certainty." "You're kidding," he commented in amazement. He said she had made and sent in her own screen test for it, but on the rote assumption that she couldn't possibly have let God play out his plan and still look that gorgeous, it hadn't been viewed. The Streep deal was done as had been pretty much ordained from the beginning, but Clint went back and looked at Jackie's tape, and he called and said it was great.

On a recent visit Bisset made to the Today Show following her winning a Golden Globe, the interviewer commented on Jackie's perpetual beauty and her well-known refusal to have plastic surgery. "I don't think it makes you look younger," la belle Jacqueline responded, "… just different." Her Golden Globe acceptance speech trended on twitter because she was rushed to the stage not knowing that she'd won… and it showed. People remembered it above all others because it was delightfully whacky, but what women remembered more was her comment that "forgiveness is the best beauty treatment." Coming from so renowned and unfading a beauty, a lot of effort to forgive issued forth among the nation's fair ladies.

Marlon Brando was a star who proved that being an icon is never bad. It paints age, when it eventually arrives, in more interesting colors. A performer of whichever gender is who he or she is now, but in a way he or she also is all of variations of self to which we had been attracted from the beginning on. One of Hollywood's great treasure chests is filled with Golden Age stars who acted their age across the years, the successive ages over successive decades of stardom…

Spencer Tracy, Henry Fonda, Fredrick March, John Wayne, Melvin Douglas, Bette Davis, Olivia de Havilland, Shirley MacLaine, Walter Huston, Anthony Quinn, Dietrich, Cagney, Nicholson, Lemmon, Martin Landau, Eli Wallach, Jimmy Stewart, certainly Clint in anything over the past few decades. "Gran Torino" was a kind of elegy to that idea. Or Gable summing up his whole career in "The Misfits," Hepburn and Bogart brandishing and culminating their ripe vintage in "The African Queen" summing up the rugged courage and style that coursed through their extraordinary careers. Gene Hackman certainly would be part of this awesome group, except that at the time he began his long hiatus from acting at the start of his seventies, he had retained the vigor of forty years before and still was getting roles that powered through movies. "The Royal Tannenbaums," one of his last, was one of his most vital, youthfully gleeful and age-defying roles of all. More than other actors, he seemed never to have had an age but was always what was appropriate to the character.

In many films these long reigning stars served the function which Francis Coppola described to Mssrs. Guttman and Pam as "the yardstick." During the pre-production stage of "Apocalypse Now.", Jerry Pam and I had front row seats on Coppola's and his long-time producing partner Fred Roos' casting process. Francis kept his eye firmly on his intention of locking in Brando to portray Kurtz, the maddened hero/villain of the Joseph Conrad novel "The Heart Of Darkness" on which "Apocalypse" was based. Brando, he told us, had been his 'yardstick" when he was casting "The Godfather," filling the other roles with young actors who over the years were to become yardsticks themselves for other people's films. But Coppola had needed them to go toe-to-toe with Marlon frigging Brando to prove their substance to the audience. With Pacino, Duval, Jimmy Caan, Talia Shire, Diane Keaton and John Casale holding their own in the company of Brando at the Oscar-winning top of his game, audiences could appreciate how big league Coppola's new young stars were. (DeNiro, who was in "Godfather II," had no scenes with Brando for the simple reason that they played the same character.) So Coppola was single-minded about having Brando serve the same function for Marty Sheen and Fred Forrest and all of his "Apocalypse" discoveries. Yes, that was Harrison Ford in a brief role, as was the case in Coppola's "The Conversation. Coppola and Roos were grooming him. Then Roos gave him a practice breakout role in Lucas' "American Grafitti" and a real one in "Star Wars."

Brando, fully understanding the function he was serving, got a lot of "Apolalypse" money for not a lot of time.

Kirk Douglas was another actor who was a giant measuring rod… as well as a LIGHTNING ROD…against whose skills terrific new talent would be placed in balance and because of whose talent, courage and charisma terrific new films could get green-lighted. If it is the combination of intensity and special presence, as much as talent, that makes a great star, Kirk was Exhibit A. When he walked into a room, you could practically hear him ticking. His every thought or look was vivid. And, amazingly, it still is. He stole a recent Oscarcast with two words. Kirk Douglas literally opened the door to what would become my career when I, in my brief passage as an office boy, was delivering an envelope stuffed with clippings. It had never occurred to me until that moment that this Rogers & Cowan company for which I was office-boying had anything to do with movies. It quickly became apparent to me that Kirk occupied a major part of the mind and attention of Warren Cowan, king of press agents.

I never got it straight… the part about whether they had been roommates or not, whether they had met before or if it happened that Warren, a kid just out of the Air Force after World War II, simply started doing publicity for another kid bound for stardom, Kirk Douglas. But they were close friends, which didn't mean Kirk was shy about saying what he wanted and what he thought he should have had. Maybe that's what sealed the friendship that spanned decades and vicissitudes, the fact that they were two hungry Jewish kids from New York, each pedal-to-the-metal into their elected orbits. In an interview I covered, Kirk was asked to name the most important film of his already long career, and he answered, "Something I haven't made yet, I hope." The two projects he cared about at any time were the one he was making or selling and the great one down the road that would make everyone forget all the others. He inculcated this sense of present and future urgency in Warren and, eventually, in me.

Kirk was a client whom Warren approached with the manic dedication of friendship, and the kid gloves of a pro who needed to serve a smart, demanding superstar client impatient of any error or unexplored opportunity. With Kirk as ravenous and inspired a producer as he was an actor, opportunities abounded. He made them, and Warren sold them with equally insatiable fervor.

I wasn't as directly involved with Kirk during the tumultuous period before and during production of that Douglas opus major, "Spartacus," as I was during the film's re-release. Yes, re-release. Executive Producer Douglas and his long-time associate, Producer Edward Lewis, had bent the nose of an industry still bloodied by the black-listings which had so completely colored the 50s for the movie community, the anti-communist hysteria fed by the House Committee On UnAmerican Activities and the rantings of Sen. Joe McCarthy. "Spartacus" meant so much to Kirk… a story that clearly reflected his own lifelong challenge of oppressive authority… that he had changed directors in early stream, supplanting Anthony Mann with Douglas' "Paths Of Glory" director and cohort Stanley Kubrick. Douglas had, from the start, risked not only the film and his Bryna Productions company but also his entire career in hiring the black-listed writer Dalton Trumbo to script "Spartacus." That decision very specifically spat in the face of the still resonating anti-red phobia that had such grasp on the fearful creatures of Hollywood. I had spent plenty of time on-set because of the involvement of other R&C clients including Tony Curtis and Peter Ustinov

Douglas loved the sheer engaged-battle of the experience, taking on the regressive spirit of the industry leadership and wrestling it to the mat. He didn't just need to prove his point… he needed to prove it again and again, to rub it in because the stakes had been so gloriously high. Two years later he and Eddie Lewis gambled Bryna Productions' very existence again by bringing Dalton Trumbo back in to write that tone poem to independent spirit, "Lonely Are The Brave." Even the title of that film tells you everything you had to know about Kirk Douglas… a cowboy of modern times defying a period that had rejected the independent spirit of the West. In some ways, that film, with which I was very much involved to the extent of having my office at Bryna Productions on the Universal lot for a long while, was as important to Kirk as was "Spartacus," and it was carrying the same message.

The decision to re-release "Spartacus" very shortly after the initial release was Kirk's alone, and all pressures were on to make it work. The betting was against it, which was in itself a delicious challenge to Kirk. This re-release was handed to us by Kirk as a major (and some thought impossible and maybe relationship-ending) challenge for Rogers & Cowan.

First we had to think through how to present such an audacious and unusual thing. Johnny Friedkin was the head of Rogers & Cowan's New York office. He was the guy on whom his friend Neil Simon had based the character of the dedicated cynic and slob, Oscar, in "The Odd Couple." Johnny came up with the idea of calling Kirk's venture not a re-release but a "second wave." It was like a battle strategy from the film itself, the slave uprising which shook Rome like Kirk was shaking Hollywood. That metaphor increased the pressure because it made the crazy idea of attempting two fairly consecutive releases of the same film seem sane. But we needed more than a home run to give this effort the juice it needed, actually the juice Kirk felt had not been sufficiently extracted from the first release run of "Spartacus."

Kirk had bet the farm on it and all of the potential farms of his future when he hired Trumbo. The brilliant and principled and notably black-listed writer's very name had become a battle-cry of the push-back against blacklist mentality just as Spartacus' name had been the battle-cry of the slave revolt against the Roman Empire. One thing supremely evident with Kirk was that his political courage matched all the other daring feats of athleticism and courage of his life. The right wing fervors of the Black List and the House Un-American Activities Committee had cleaved the industry down the middle. The fearlessness of Kirk Douglas was needed to jumpstart regeneration from the political purge

This particular audacity had personal meaning to me. When HUAC, the House of Representatives' high court of inquisition of anything suspiciously left-wing, was planning hearings concerning UCLA… or The Little Red School House as some on the HUAC bandwagon called it…… I was given to understand that I would be subpoenaed. I came to college a life-long Democrat because I was born that way as most middle class Jews were then, but I was politically unsophisticated. I wrote short stories for the school's literary/humor magazine and also for the UCLA Daily Bruin when the paper was doing a theme issue. A prominent Film Department professor, Norman Dyrrenfurth, had just been part of the team that first scaled one of the planet's highest mountains, Annapurna, and this was to be celebrated with a special issue of the Daily Bruin… I was asked to write a "mountain climbing story." What I dreamed up was a tale of an Alpine village that held as gospel that the nearby mountain could not be scaled. It scorned other hamlets where the inhabitants assisted and guided climbing attempts. A local

shepherd of the village, however, thought he could reach the top of that peak. He disappeared for a week and everyone, including his fiancée, chose to believe that he'd drowned in the river rather than think that one of their own had headed up the impossible mountain. When he returned and proclaimed his victorious climb, he was ostracized and dumped by his fiancée who begged him to recant. But he held to his claim and lived the life of a pariah. As an old man, lying in the meadows with his flock, when the clouds cleared and he could see the peak, he was sure he could glimpse the mound of rocks he'd built there. So far so ok, but I needed a name for him… Engel… yeah, not bad… , Germanic, an angel trying to fly to heaven? Fine. First name? Friedrich sounded mountain-climby, Germanic as well, yodel-y, *and it had a certain familiar ring.* It didn't connect for me that Friedrich Engels co-authored The Communist Manifesto with Karl Marx. Even though the s of his last name was missing (a brilliant literary device some people assumed,) I was an instant celebrity. The left-leaners and fellow-travelers of my acquaintance thought I'd created a ringing indictment of right wing oppression. Some of my conservative friends thought I'd proven their point that Friedrich Engels was clearly delusional. People of either conviction loved or hated me according to their interpretation of the parable. What made it more inflammatory was that I had called it, for no reason whatsoever, "The Mound On Feather Peak." Maybe because it suggested a curved mountain, impossible to ascend. The symbol of student opposition to Joe McCarthy was a green feather. That seemed to have given it even greater political weight… The staff of the House Un-American Activities Committee, it seems, saw Red, and the Daily Bruin editor told me I was slated to be called before its kangaroo court because my story had proven what they felt was the commie-loving slant of the UCLA student newspaper… After a nervous few weeks during which I was afraid even to hint the matter to my parents, the editor called again to say I was off the hook. HUAC, it was concluded, hadn't been able to decipher if I was a raving commie or a right wing zealot patriot. There is something to be said for ambiguity.

But that gives you a slight sense of the times and the sheer gallantry and defiance of Kirk's choice of Trumbo. So "Spartacus" was coming around again, the idea of a "second wave" having been snapped up by Douglas and Universal. And we were about to launch it. The campaign had to have some giant, never-done-before linch pin, and it was Warren who decided to kick it off with a handprint ceremony for

Kirk in the fore-court of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. It was a powerful kickoff, but it wasn't entirely original because it had been done a hundred times before. Nobody was more aware of that than Warren, and he assigned me to think of something that would make it that most important word… "more." For Warren the whole world hung on each of these crucial challenges. That was his secret advantage… he never relinquished his sense of urgency or perhaps even jeopardy. . He and Kirk were so much alike in that. I went up to the Grauman's Chinese and walked around, studying the concrete footprints and handprints and signatures… all of those famous people… how to make this one special in the face of so much precedent. How do you make the precedented gesture unprecedented? When you're in your 20s, the world lies heavy on your shoulders.

I had not yet at that point in my life come up with the theory… the rule, the guideline… that would finally spark virtually every decision I would make in my career conduct and in every aspect of my life, "A PROBLEM IS AN OPPORTUNITY IN DISGUISE." Turn a problem inside out and it's the solution. The creative person, whether he or she recognizes it or not, loves problems. Problem and solution are the steel and flintstone of creative ignition. That is one of the first and most difficult tasks of maturing… learning to love and to embrace the problem.

As I walked that fabled courtyard, the fact that a hundred had preceded Kirk seemed to be not the problem but rather the answer. I would gather as many of the prior footprint honorees as I could to participate in Kirk's commemoration. The event would honor them, too, but they also would honor and give weight to the event. It wouldn't be "just another" footprint ceremony. When I put this to Warren, he asked "Why would they come out for him?" Well, in the first place, who deserved that tribute more than Kirk? Apart from saluting his art, a lot of creative people admired his audacity, his visible resistance in standing up to the blacklists. In the second place, for many of them the footprint ceremony had been the career highlight, one recalled now in their minds only. It would be a great second curtain call, especially for those whose bright star may have slipped a bit behind the clouds, a reminder of honors and stature past.

In the midst of organizing this, we had to arrange the shooting of a new theatre trailer with Kirk explaining the special reason why this film was coming around the track a second time. It was agreed that it would be Kirk talking into camera, talking directly to people, about why he made this film and the special circumstance of the "second wave" for "Spartacus." The morning of the shoot,

Kirk turned down the studio's draft, and I had to write a new version… and get it right the first time. We were shooting in three hours.

When I got to Kirk's giant dressing room at Universal, he was already with his make-up man and simultaneously meeting with some other men about the next film. The make-up area was a long extension of the suite, what we called in my Missouri childhood, a sunporch. Kirk talked to my image in the mirror and put his hand up to be filled. You have to keep in mind that this was well over fifty years ago, so I was still "kid" to him. "(Is) that the immortal prose, kid?" "We'll see," I answered, not very certainly. He read it. The others watched. Accustomed to awaiting Kirk's decisions, they had habits of rapt attention. He looked up at my mirror image without expression and then he read it again. Finishing it, he swiveled his chair around and leveled a look at me. "Dick," he started… I knew it was serious because he used the actual name, and it was in that clenched-teeth, back-of-the-throat growl we all know so well, "how long have you been in this business?" A crew was already set up on the soundstage to shoot this. "Mr. Douglas," I answered with what sounded, at least to me, like an unwavering voice, "long enough to know better than whatever it is you have on your mind." The others were a little startled by that and were waiting for his reaction … or eruption… as uncertainly as I. His eyes never left mine. Finally it came, "Ok then. Go over to the stage and say I'll be right there."

Now all we had to do was to make the handprint ceremony come off like none had ever come off before. We sent out the invitations to each prior inductee. I got George Jessel, the mandatory master of ceremonies for any event of consequence at that time, to be the interlocutor for this PR production. I sent the invitations from Sid Grauman, Hollywood's exhibitor extraordinaire and the guy who had been so kind as to put them all in his cement. The acceptances started to roll in, at first from some stars whose accomplishments had, with time, faded from appreciation. Then from that superstars' superstar, Bette Davis, and from other heralded names including both Roy Rogers AND Trigger, the only hoof-print honoree in that cement garden of fame. It was a starry and nostalgic group… 27 of them showed up to be interviewed by an Oscar night type turnout of press especially considering that there were only seven TV channels and three networks then. I had stayed up all night mapping out the specific responsibility of the ten staff members we had there… probably my only executive blueprint ever, since

I'm much better winging it. And it came off as Warren Cowan had hired me to dream it. Kirk topped the evening with a first for that fore-court. He emplaced his handprints by doing a handstand. And the "second wave" rolled in on another substantial wave of strategized publicity.

Kirk Douglas is and was serene… if that's a word that could ever be attached to Kirk Douglas… as long as he has the reins in his hands… that has always been Kirk. When I speculated about the root of that determination once, his wife Anne commented, "The only thing that could destroy Kirk would be if someone could prove he'd been poorer as a kid then Kirk was." His autobiography was called "The Ragman's Son." There must have been shades of those memories just beneath that smooth patina of control the world knows as Kirk Douglas. One time we stood outside the entrance to the American Room at the Brown Derby on Vine St. just before he addressed a small group. He suddenly grabbed me by the lapels and said, "Sure, it's easy for you. You just open the door and push me through it. I've gotta face them." I said, "Kirk, it's thirty film students from UCLA… they're giving you an award." He straightened my lapels and went in and knocked them dead. Kirk Douglas.

Much more recently, after his stroke, we were doing a press conference at the dedication of a new million dollar playground the Kirk and Anne Douglas Foundation was donating to a charter school (also on Vine St., coincidentally.) It must have been during some brief split between him and Warren, because Kirk's son Peter had asked us to do it. Kirk's speech was slurred but his mind still clear, and he still had a clear sense of how to reach the kids and feed the cameras. He started doing chin-ups on the equipment he and his wife were giving schools all over L.A. The kids and the cameras loved it. Such civic generosity he does not consider charity. In the keynote speech at an Israeli fund-raiser which I attended with him during that period, he was brilliantly articulate through the slur of his stroke. He explained that Hebrew held no word for 'charity." The applicable word for such sharing, he said, is "zedakah" which means "the right thing." When Jewish immigrants arrived penniless in a new land, the zedakah they received, if their neighbors could gather it, was the tools of their trade. Isn't that what he did for Dalton Trumbo with "Spartacus," give him back the tools of his trade? Certainly, "zedakah" is a word Kirk Douglas chose to live by, boldly and without concern for consequence. Kirk Douglas… damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.

Thanks to Kirk and his Bryna (his mother's name) Productions projects, I got to work on some of the greatest films of the fifties and sixties, "Lonely Are The Brave" and "Seven Days In May," among my favorites. I loved being part of the making of "Two Weeks In Another Town," too, because it re-gathered the artistic group that had created perhaps the best film ever made about Hollywood, "The Bad And The Beautiful." "Two Weeks" wasn't in the same league, but it was a class reunion.

I learned a lot from Kirk. In 1962, he had bought the rights to Ken Kesey's novel "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest" before it was published. He gave Rogers & Cowan five thousand dollars cash and told us to buy up a thousand copies within two days of pub date. (Yes, a hard cover was five bucks then.) With that rush of sales, the booksellers thought they had a big hit on their hands and pushed it like mad in their store windows. It's hard to buy a thousand copies without buying large quantities at a time, which would have been a dead give-away that someone was priming the pump. So I asked my mom to have each of her vast collection of friends buy one book in each of ten different stores. They could keep the books and give them to their friends. Some booksellers might have been mystified that middle aged Jewish women were rushing in to buy a book about patient abuse in an insane asylum, but it worked.

Kirk starred as Randle P. McMurphy in the stage version on Broadway to rave reviews, but didn't get around to taking "Cuckoo's Nest" to film. That task fell to his son Michael about a dozen years later, and because Michael was a client (of my own firm Guttman & Pam) by that time and because his co-producer Saul Zaentz had become my friend and, I suppose, believer through another client, Bob Radnitz, we wound up handling one of the greatest films of all time, one of the few ever to win all five key awards, Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Screenplay.

It also afforded me the casual acquaintance of the novelist, Ken Kesey, in whose daring life and brilliant writing was reflected his experimentation with such hallucinogens as LSD. He'd already left a massive intellectual footprint on the sixties and seventies, both on its literature and on the spirit of the times. In a way, he WAS the Zeit-geist of that period. When he learned that I'd been one of the first guinea pigs in the CIA's testing of LSD, the agency's Cold War exploration

of its "mind-control" possibilities, it engaged an unlikely kinship. Kesey had been introduced to the drug in the same test program three years after I was. This was before a class action lawsuit by survivors and congressional investigations brought the CIA/LSD program to wider and quite notorious attention. Some of its subjects, possibly quite a few, had committed suicide. Kesey's interest in the drug continued afterwards, while mine had stopped right after I'd tried to jump down an elevator shaft to get the demons out of my head. Kesey was intrigued that someone so resistant to any form of intoxicants as I had actually volunteered for the tests. Prior to taking that mind-bending jolt of lysergic acid with its two year hangover of horror and anxiety, I'd never sipped a beer, puffed a cigarette or had as much as a contact high. That I, a curious and evidently ignorant psych student, had wandered so wide-eyed into that blowout amused Kesey. I'd been told that the substance I would ingest was a "pseudo-psychotic," a ticket to the world of insanity… a return ticket, mind you. Manic/depressive, catatonic, schizoid, you name it, I tried each and every one of them on for size in that eternal eight or ten hours. Once you feel your mind buying into that chaos, you never really trust it again.

Learning From Your Clients

Actors are curious about how and why things work. In the process of doing the job, a press agent often shares with the client why a situation is approached in a specific manner. It is very constructive and instructive to have to articulate the "why" of things you do intuitively. And occasionally a client gives back to his publicist some insight into how and why publicity works. Here are a few good lessons clients have taught me:

Kirk Douglas provided a compelling illustration of A Problem Is An Opportunity In Disguise. Kirk and John Wayne were coming out in a film called "The War Wagon." Louella Parsons was the most affectionately regarded of the reigning triumvirate of female gossip columnists (Hedda Hopper and Sheilah Graham filling out the list) who ruled Hollywood, She had, on the specific morning in question, run a story about some nasty comments John Wayne was alleged to have made about Kirk. Louella and Hedda, especially, could undo a career or the prospects for a film with one negative item, and the rest of the media picked up from them. It was read-'em-and-weep for Warren Cowan when I laid Lolly's column of that day on his desk. He called Kirk and said he wanted to come over and talk about something, and then he and I drove up three blocks (three very long blocks, and

time is more than money in PR… it is advantage) to Kirk's Beverly Drive home so tastefully lavished with Chagalls and Picassos.

"What's up? Kirk asked, entering the room. Warren handed him the column, and, while he was still reading, Warren said, "Kirk we have a good idea how to respond to Louella on this." We didn't really, but In Hollywood PR, you grab the bull by the horns or else he takes you for a ride on them. Kirk looked up, "Hmmm? Respond? Hold on." He dialed the phone and said to whoever answered, "Tell him it's Kirk. (a few moments of waiting and then) Duke, it's… yeah… no, I know it's bullshit… No, you don't have to tell her it's bullshit, she knew when she wrote it… No, here's what we do. (Suddenly there was that big gleeful Kirk Douglas grin all over his face) I call her, mad as hell and I tell her that no-good right-wing sonovabitch can jump in the lake, and then you come back… Yeah, that would be great. Who knows what a western's gonna do right now. We'll build a fire under it and, wait a second, we have to figure out why we're feuding… oh yeah, that's great, as long as we have all the reins in our hands. If it's good enough for Jack Benny and Fred Allen, it's good enough for us. Ok, let it rip… let's have some fun." Kirk was giving us a master class in how to conduct a feud to drive a blast of awareness into your sails. *The effective rule he was teaching was that there is far more energy, far more active thrust in a negative story than in a positive one as long as you're controlling the story and it's not controlling you. You don't undertake anything adventurous without command of the variables.*

Barbra Streisand with her insistence on truth and that it not be embellished is a good influence on a press agent who may lean a little to the flexible side of that noble dedication. No press agent ever met an embellishment he didn't like. But you always implement anyone's career publicity exactly as they call it. With Barbra it's" just the facts." And only after they're checked and rechecked. We recently were involved in a news release that a three-disc DVD package of some of her concerts and previously unseen archival footage had debuted at #1 in the Billboard charts. The draft release contained the obligatory career achievement information for such stories including, in this instance that she was the number one (a recurring statistical reference in her case) album-seller in the US among all female recording artists. It's an especially impressive achievement when you consider that she is the only album-seller of any gender in the top ten who was not primarily a rock and roll or country and western performer, the two forms

of music which have dominated the past half century. The release was held up at her request until we checked and rechecked the RIAA listings to determine that this was still applicable, as it was by a very wide margin.

All other statistical mind-blowers, valid one and all, receive similar scrutiny. She also once requested removal of a line in her biography which pointed out that only Elvis Presley had achieved more gold records than she. That was and remains quite accurate, but she said that Presley's accomplishments were and always would be incomparable, that no artists could be compared to him because he had achieved them even though he died at age forty-two. It was a great reminder for me. *Facts can be true but misleading, and it is intrinsically wrong to cheat that.*

One of the most remarkable of these truth quests occurred upon the publication of one of the three dozen unauthorized Streisand biographies. These inventive works surface periodically. They tend to be so error-laden that comprehensive correction of each piece of misinformation would be a massive, even ludicrous, task. We had learned that by and large these books have a little flurry of publicity about their most outrageous unfounded tales, and that then they tend to sink under the weight of their deceptions and delusions. This one had some particularly nasty charges, and I asked Barbra if she wanted me to refute them. "Only one," she said, "where he says my stepfather beat me." I commented that it's very well known that her stepfather was very hurtful and mean to her. "But he never beat me," she said. "I would like that to be clarified."

Peter Ustinov enhanced my PR skills with a concept he passed along one day when I had him buried in interviews to sell his new book of short stories. I apologized for loading on so many face-to-face sit-downs with press. He insisted it was fine. "I love doing interviews," he said, "I find out what I think about things. I have all kinds of opinions I don't even know about until somebody asks me what I think about that subject. I look forward to new questions." What a powerful concept with which to prepare any client for the interview process! It has never failed me in orienting new clients to enjoy or, at the very least, endure with high spirits the interview process. You can't be very good at something you don't enjoy, and this is an approach to the task of being interviewed which makes it an exciting personal exploration. Thank you, Peter.

Gene Hackman is another legendary client who also was, for me, a pretty good teacher of my own craft. *The press agent equivalent of the shine on a salesman's shoes*

is the conviction in his sell. If you don't believe it, you can't sell it. Gene was on location for a film on which no one was crazy about the script. When he came down to breakfast one morning, he found two other cast members batting some of the day's lines around, making fun of them, giving comic readings, and they invited him into the game and pressured when he declined. Finally, he said, "You know what? Those lines you're mocking? When you say them in a movie theatre, your face is going to be twenty feet high. You damn well better find something in that dialogue that you can believe." A lesson in acting, a lesson in press agenting… a lesson in whatever it is you do. *If you want to sell a line, a product or a news story, you damn well better find something in it you can believe.*

From watching Warren Beatty, I gathered that *the only guarantee of success is a solid creative vision in both the production and selling of a film… or in the accomplishment of anything.* It became a target I tried then to apply to any PR task. When I was invited into the family of such films as "Bonnie And Clyde," "Shampoo," "Reds," "Heaven Can Wait," "Bugsy" and "Dick Tracy," I observed how he drew the other artists into his vision and drew from their creative ideas responding to that vision. Any filmmaker on that kind of a roll is doing something right, and, more likely, doing everything right.

Working for decades with Jay Leno has been an education in the importance of humility in effective pr., however counter-intuitive that may seem. Humility in pr is not a contradiction. It's an essential. And if a flack doesn't understand that, the client is endangered. Knowing when enough is enough is primary. Jay dominated the late night talk/comedy scene for over 20 years, notwithstanding the number of times NBC sought to replace their enduring number one guy in that time slot. But Jay constantly rode the brakes on our undertaking publicity to stress or celebrate that unwavering dominance. I think this modesty is one reason the largest audience evidenced such loyalty. Up until its final decision to replace him, it was NBC that did the number one flag-waving, And in that lame duck last partial year, he drew a lot of his warmest laughter from allusions to his departure. At Thanksgiving, he noted that he wasn't buying a turkey, he was just going to fry a peacock. In George W. Bush's heralded final visit with Jay, the former President noted that he'd always had a good relationship with NBC, and Jay responded that he was happy that at least one of them did, Jay's jabs deliver truth without rancor, that rarest of public behaviors, grace.

Another factor is that, behind all of his more lethal jokes about the presumptions and foibles of the famous or anyone of degrading stupidity, you somehow understood that Jay is a very nice guy. If I had a hundred bucks for every time I had to turn down an award for him, I would be writing this book from Tahiti. He understood that none of that means as much as a good joke. If his unfailing and unending dominance was referenced in the media, it was almost exclusively the function of journalists' desire to acknowledge the overwhelming fact of his number one ratings, quarter after quarter, year after year and for an astounding period without a single interruption. It wasn't the by-product of intensive promotion. It was simply the choice honestly made by a vast public. Bruce Bobbins, of Dan Klores' office in New York with whom I shared work on Jay, and I understood that, and we didn't want to disturb it with any braggadocio, however due. It's not like publicity does not have subtle ways of confirming and maintaining status. That's what it's designed and engaged to do. A key accolade here, the occasional prestigious award there. It has worked for others, mostly for those who deserved them. Jay must have set a record for crackerjack awards politely declined, any one of which had been earned many times over.

The public understands that comedians who need new material every night have writers. Many, like Jay, often reference that in their monologues and celebrate their writers. A loyal guild guy, Jay closed the show down for a month during the Writers Guild strike a few years back, and he kept paying his staff (other than the writers) long past the million dollar mark. To keep them working, he finally resumed the show the only way he could within Guild rules, by writing all of the material himself. And the show very evidently kept its sharp edge of humor. Following the strike, the Guild contacted me to say they had determined that everything Jay did was well within the Guild rules and that they wanted to apologize to him because some Guild members had denigrated his decision. When I referred this to him, he said, "Ask them not to issue an apology." "Jay, they feel obliged to." "Whatever."

Validating the public's perception of Jay's easy-going nature, his default response to anything is "whatever." When Conan O'Brian was taking his victory laps coming into the Tonight Show and his sympathy laps on the way out, Jay simply did not comment, even to refute charges that simply contradicted the truth. When Jimmy Kimmel tried to foment a feud, Jay didn't rise to the insults, and a one man feud eventually runs out of credibility. When it became evident

that Jay's turning over the show to Jimmy Fallon six months before his contract required would allow Fallon to launch powerfully out of the highly-rated NBC coverage of the Sochi Olympics, Jay agreed. But he required NBC to pay his staff for the remaining six months to ease the disruption of job loss. As it turned out, working on the show which nailed down the highest ratings for two decades made most of them top draft choices.

I think that one of the keys to Jay's enduring pre-eminence in one of the toughest ratings battlegrounds in television… even after the game ceased to be a three horse network race and became a network and cable marathon… was the fact that people saw that Jay was up to any moment he faced, the comedic with unfailing wit and the challenging with quiet dignity. The public has always perceived that he wasn't pr'd into his constant ratings eminence… and, even more importantly, that he could consistently stand on his own two feet without being wired for levitation. This came up when he was subpoenaed as witness in an excruciatingly public trial of a famous celebrity. The night before his appearance, we were talking in his dressing room, and he mentioned that the network wanted to send two very able public relations execs to accompany him. I told him that I had watched coverage of Larry King's arrival the previous day to testify at the same trial. "He had an entourage with him of six or eight guys. It looked like he was the defendant. I think the lesson is 'no frigging press agents,'" I said. It was apparent that Jay had already come to the same conclusion. The next day I was racing to the office to catch his arrival on the voracious TV news coverage, but an accident on Pacific Coast Highway had frozen traffic. The radio stations, however, were giving a play-by-play of everything TV was covering outside the court, and they reported a flurry of excitement when Jay arrived. "Look at that," the news anchor said with wonder, "he's walking in all alone, all by himself. What a guy!"

Chapter 2

Larger Than Life. . .

Over the past fistful of decades, the person who has been Larger Than Life in the walk-tall manner on which John Wayne had so long held the patent is, by unanimous decision, Clint Eastwood, who carved out a style all his own. I suddenly realize it's almost fifty years since the spaghetti westerns injected him into our feature film bloodstream. Seems like yesterday. It took Hollywood at least one of those decades, maybe two, to realize what a Renaissance hombre this guy was. They didn't see all the Oscars and films of substance coming, but the hints were there in all of his early work. Even when the product was strictly guns and saddles or guns and detective badges, he was giving it his own unique finesse. And he was doing so on both sides of the law and on both sides of the camera. Nobody carried a bigger badge or bigger gun than did Dirty Harry Callahan or a cooler, more laconic resolve than his Arizona sheriff Walt Coogan in "Coogan's Bluff."

And no one set his own nihilistic law or broke the conventional one more convincingly than his Man With No Name in the Sergio Leone horse operas or Will Munny, his killer for hire in "Unforgiven." Josey Wales was an outlaw only to the people who wanted him dead. The image of set jaw and steely stare through narrowed eyes is so powerful that it sometimes overwhelmed and delayed the acknowledgment of his acting range in "The Beguiled," "Honky Tonk Man," "Million Dollar Baby" and other films including most recently "Gran Torino," which was not grizzled grey Dirty Harry, but a deep and touching portrait of loneliness and estrangement and, finally, devotion. Clint so often was directing actors like Morgan Freeman, Gene Hackman, Hilary Swank, Sean Penn and Tim Robbins

to Oscars and many more to nominations, that he diminished the focus on his own powerful work in front of the cameras.

The only time Clint and Wayne actually worked together was in an ad concerning a proposition on the California ballot about the registration of guns. I don't intrude myself into the politics of my clients, except when the dedications of liberal activists like Warren Beatty, Barbra Streisand and Paul Newman or the environmental concerns of many others so closely correspond to my own. Hollywood is a politically varied town, and knowledgeable publicity professionals of all stripes have opportunities to help cherished causes. When Jay Leno's wife, Mavis, bravely headed the Feminist Majority campaign against Gender Apartheid, trying to draw world attention to the brutal oppression of women under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan long before 9/11 belatedly directed the public's eyes to it, I was honored to be allowed along for the ride. She and the Feminist Majority deservedly were nominated for Nobel Peace Prize consideration for their work. Clint and I never talked politics…. with one very embarrassing exception, the ballot issue on the registration of guns.

Clint had called me out to his office at Universal to go over ads for an upcoming film. Shortly into the process, one of his associates came in and said, "Clint, John Wayne's waiting for you on Stage 19 for that Prop Ten (pick a number) commercial." As Clint set down the half avocado out of which he had been spooning his lunch, I felt I had to speak up. "Clint, I've never imposed any of my politics on you, right?" "Yeah?" he said in a dead voice, feeling it coming. "Well," I stammered on, "I just think that Dirty Harry and Rooster Cogburn doing an ad on this proposition is a step over the line." He gave me that steely stare and in the calm, slow, deadly, raspy make-my-day whisper said, "Well, that just shows what a dumb asshole you are, because we're pushing this thing the same direction you would." And then he laughed like hell and strode out of the room.

It was only on the drive back to my office that I developed the strong suspicion that it had been a set-up, that I'd been brought out there for the scam. Among other things, Clint is a great showman with an unerring sense of where the laugh will be. He had, rather than just telling me he was doing the ad, staged the scene, knowing full-well what my reflex response would be when the guy came in and said his line. As a life-long practical joker, I know you share the laugh even when you get stooged. It was worth driving all the way out there for the show.

A press agent is always trying to figure out what it is that makes popular artists, individually, connect with their public. What is the personal quality, quite apart from the talent and physicality, which so electrically engages and melds with the audience? With Clint over the years, I read that variously… the guy who takes care of things, the guy you can rely on, deadly force, lifeforce. But there's a constant element through all of the phases of his acting stardom and his directing stardom as he evolved from the someone's-gotta-do-it violence of the early films to the humanism in this great-director stage of his career, this constant trek to the Oscar stage and time of speaking out in film for important values. His half-time pep talk to America in the recent Super Bowl ad was the culmination of that, sending us all back onto the field with the prospect of hard-earned victory atop our to-do list. Here's the compelling constant…. *with Clint Eastwood, you always got… you always get… the straight goods*. Whoever he was at any stage in his evolution as an artist, as a man or simply tending the garden of his philosophy, he told you straight out who he was and how he thought. He never bent to fashion or marketplace or presumed popular attitude. You always got pure Clint.

Paul Newman had his own specific aura. Even the way he ate a hamburger. There was a burger on the menu in the Paramount commissary that was about three inches high, and it was his standard fare for an interview lunch. He was the only person I knew who could not only get his mouth around it, but also could eat it with no loss of gentility, all the while carrying on a serious conversation. He ate a hamburger like he approached a film or like he raced a car, vigorously. And he didn't chat, he conversed. He even told jokes vigorously and enjoyed them immensely, and they always got bigger laughs than they deserved because he enjoyed them so much. One sticks in my mind because we all roared and then had to figure out what was so excruciatingly funny about it. A reporter is sent to interview a bee keeper who has over four million bees, a world record or something. He goes to the guy's farm but there's only this little shed. He asks the beekeeper, "Is it true that you have four million bees that you…?"… "Yep." "But how do you know that it's exactly…?" "All very scientific, how many acres pollinated in how many hours." "But where do you keep four million…" "In that shed." He leads the guy in and as his eyes adjust to the dark the reporter sees an empty shed, and knows this is a gag. Still, he asks, "But where…?" "Right there," and the bee keeper points to a shelf on which there are four one gallon jugs.

"They're all in those jugs?" the reporter questions. "A million each." "But aren't they all just like… *crushed* together?" The beekeeper nods and says, "Fuck 'em."

I think that sticks in my mind because it was a joke about indifference which struck the funny bone of one of the least indifferent men I ever knew. Paul was engaged long before his Newman's Own philanthropy. Most conversations with him were about urgent issues. Late in the 60s when Vietnam and Civil Rights had the town galvanized, Paul Newman and Warren Beatty poured massive effort into producing an all-star Anti-ABM rally (opposing a massive step-up in the Cold War arms race) which they presented at the Palladium in Hollywood and which re-ignited the industry's liberal base for the peace issues of that divisive period. They turned out a star-base rivaling an Oscarcast. Gisela and I jumped into that up to the waist and with full passion. These stars didn't squander their influence. They thought deeply and acted decisively. Paul insisted that Joanne was the deep thinker in the family, which was probably true, but he had a mind that was engaged and curious and passionate, the goofball jokes notwithstanding.

This issue-focus was evident during the filming of "Butch Cassidy." John Foreman had been Paul's main guy at the Rogers & Cowan publicity firm, head of the company's Paul Newman think tank. He then became part of Paul's management team, and he was at this particular moment a producer of "Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid," the film that would finally prove Paul as successful at comedy as he was with drama. His comedies before then hadn't added up to much, at least not in the light of his limitless talent. So you would think he would give some attention to the film's promotional needs, but most of our meetings were dedicated to his support of the presidential campaign for Eugene McCarthy. The only press he allowed us to call to the set were to promo McCarthy. Politics was serious obligation for him. While driving to a promotional appearance one night, he and I were discussing Jefferson's statement that democracy needed to refresh itself with a revolution every twenty years. Paul suggested that maybe Jefferson thought democracy could evolve into something even more effective as it adapted to changing conditions. "More effective? Than democracy?" I challenged. "I'm sort of attracted to benevolent despotism…" he said with a straight face… and then that grin… "as long as I'm the benevolent despot." I had a feeling he wasn't entirely kidding.

On another occasion, we were heading for UCLA for a discussion with a film school class after they'd had a preview screening of "Rachel, Rachel." Curiosity

is a dangerous indulgence for a press agent, but I was moved to blurt, "Paul, why do you do publicity?" "What do you mean?" "I mean you get first offer of almost every good role anyway." He thought about and then said , "Almost." It was a joke, but "almost" is powerful medicine and a reasonable basis of strategic motivation. My question wasn't quite as stupid as it may sound in this telling, because both Paul and I knew it was rhetorical. We both understood that Rogers&Cowan's prime area of service was to achieve the greatest possible success of each film to the greatest possible benefit of his career and the resultant awareness of this flow in the eyes of the industry, the public, the media… and, at least at the back of my mind, history.

The "Rachel, Rachel" screening was a hit with the film students, and Paul was a hit, but so was his VW with a Porsche engine which he'd parked just outside and which they wanted to see. The last quarter of the talk-around took place out by the car. They were all excited by the big engine, and I think Paul thought the wrong lesson was going down, because he said, "You know, you don't always have to show them everything you have inside. Sometimes it's best to let it out just on occasion… you know, surprise 'em?." I think he was letting them look at the motor inside of him, too, and the secret of why he was such a brilliantly economical actor and filmmaker. I felt like I was a student there again and damn glad I'd come to class that night.

Warren Cowan, the most superstar of all superstar press agents, was a larger-than-life-seeking missile. His genius was that he knew that his clients' stardom is what he *sold* and that their stardom is what sold *him*. His reputation for handling the biggest made him the biggest. Excepting the guys who head the major talent agency empires, there never was and never will be another career adjunct specialist handling as vast a chunk of the town's talent as he, and very often simultaneously. Just as an actor might feel rejected when someone else gets a role she or he wanted, Warren felt rejected if he couldn't land a massively big star. Well, he handled most of them, but it's always the ones that got away that keep you up at night. As a kid in New York, he collected baseball player autographs. For the ones he hadn't scored, he would track them to their hotels and slip into revolving doors with them, stopping the door-swing until he had it. The two star signatures he hadn't collected on a contract were Rock Hudson and Steve McQueen. Hudson was a yachting enthusiast, and Warren did everything but wear a sailing cap to get him.

He found rare boating books and sent them, but Hudson finally hired Dale Olsen who piloted him past the shoals and rogue tides of media in his final years, through the at-last-exposed waves of Hollywood homophobia and the countering nobility of those who fought it. This was evidenced in the manner in which Rock's tragic decline from HIV/AIDS engaged Hollywood in the struggle to achieve a cure under the inspired leadership of Hudson's close friend, Elizabeth Taylor.

Steve McQueen was equally elusive. He was very much in control of his own product and his own image. Finally, Steve's partner in Solar Productions, a company through which he wanted to make films with a conscience, gave us an appointed time to make a presentation to Mr. McQueen and his associates. We were told it had to be in writing (which was my job at R&C) and that the writer would have to read it. Aye, there's the rub. I read, even my own words, haltingly. So I set about putting as much of it as I could into blank verse. The meter of the verse can impose a certain clarity. But boring is boring, and I felt I was barely keeping them awake, even though I'd come up with some ideas relating to how Mr. McQueen's company was "solarizing'" the industry, whatever that means. At the end, it was very cordial, which usually means you didn't get the gig. On the way out, Mr. McQueen nodded me over to him. "Thanks for taking the stab at it," he said, "but let me ask you a question. Do I really look like a guy who doesn't know blank verse when I hear it?" "I'm dyslexic. I needed the edge." "OK, then," he said. But it wasn't ok, because we didn't get the job.

Warren didn't let me forget it. He was most often the good cop, liberally praising good accomplishment, but there was a prescribed incidence of bad cop, little or big nitpicks to keep the rest of it from going to your head or sparking visions in your mind of going it on your own. A frequent tool in this was his repeatedly educating me to the fact that "You know, Joanne Woodward never really liked you." It was entirely possible that this was true, but it was strange and finally funny how often Warren would slip it in when we were laying out some specific campaign for Paul and Joanne and he would just say it as a kind of mantra, sometimes just popping out of the silence when we were driving someplace. Another time, we were driving in the car with some other R&C staffers on board. I said, "Warren, you know what?" "What's that?" he responded. "Well," I said, "it's a fact that Joanne Woodward apparently does not like me." Warren glanced at the strangely surprised looks on the faces of the others and then he said with strong intonation of astonishment, "You're kidding."

When Yves Montand was making "Let's Make Love" I went to the set to have lunch and go over a few things with him. Yves was tall and toughened by his childhood in the Italian ghettos of rough-house Marseilles. But he was quiet in demeanor, and he carried himself with great dignity. We had lunch in the 20th commissary, always a very starry place, joined by Milton Berle and Tony Randall, also his co-stars in the film and also among my charges at Rogers & Cowan. For an actor who'd played some formidable tough guys, Yves had a striking elegance and decorum, and this was an irresistible target for Milton's monkey business. The conversation began pretty straight forward… "that line" this and "what the director meant" that. Milton suddenly went into an ecstasy over a pudding he had ordered. "Yves, you have to try this pudding." Yves gave a skeptical look at the plop of paste Milton extended to him on a teaspoon. "What eez that?" Yves asked with distaste. "Pudding. Milton said in obvious thrall. "Flan…" Tony offered, "… crème broule." "You HAVE to try it," Milton insisted. And with that he delicately inserted the spoonful into Yves' mouth… and then let go and turned to resume some point of discussion with Tony. Yves was left with a spoon sticking out of his mouth and, seemingly the entire room had been focused on the gag. Luckily, no one thought it funnier than Yves who, spoon still sticking out of his mouth, started to throttle Milton with a firm grasp around his throat. There was applause from nearby tables, and Tony orchestrated it with his hysterical high giggle. Milton had to recover the floor and started looking frantically under the table shouting "Where's my spoon? Who stole my spoon?" To which Yves added, "You better get up off the floor before you have eet steeking out of your esss."

The town just didn't know what to make of Simone Signoret and Yves Montand when they arrived in Hollywood together, each in his/her own vehicles of stardom. We knew them from the American sensation of two great thrillers by French director H. G. Clouzot. Simone took the town by main force in director Jack Clayton's "Room At The Top," wresting the 1959 Oscar from one of the starriest lists of nominees ever. It wasn't a complete surprise. We'd encountered her dazzling beauty and dazzling acting in "Casque D'Or" and "La Ronde." Everyone was into "foreign films" then, and her real impact had come in 1954 in Clouzot's classic thriller. "Les Diabolique." It was the kind of fare to which film school students

took dates. At the film's most diabolical moment of horror, I felt someone grab onto me frantically and then I realized it wasn't my date, but some guy sitting on the other side of me, out of his mind in terror. The year before, the hot foreign film had been Clouzot's "Wages Of Fear," which put Montand on everyone's map, a masterful tough guy under-actor a la Bogart or John Garfield with a franco-italo flare and masculine grace. Who knew that he was also one of the greatest live variety artists in the world… singer, dancer, lyric mime, impressionist… he could do it all at a level that chilled you with surprise. Simone knew, so she pressured him to make his American live musical performance debut in Hollywood. She wanted him to be discovered in all of his talents before he assumed his Hollywood stardom. It was work to get the big star turnout for the premiere night because of the who-knew? factor, but they were all pressing through the stage door to get to him after the show. Simone just smiled because it was nothing she didn't expect and everything she had expected.

Simone had become a special friend of mine during the "Room At The Top" campaign. She and Yves, royalty in Europe as actors, as intellects and as bold political activists, arrived in Hollywood as the most doted-upon European artist couple since Olivier and Leigh. They generated constant media attention. So I was obliged to spend a large amount of time at the Montands' second story bungalow apartment above the gardens of the Beverly Hills Hotel. When media was in attendance, the door across the landing at the top of the stairs was always closed. But if I was there only to go over photos or to have a discussion, no media, that door would open and Marilyn Monroe would wander in, usually in a thick black bathrobe, beautiful in the absolute absence of make-up and with the soft confusion of unbrushed hair. Apparently, she never had in her and Arthur Miller's refrigerator whatever she could count on being in Simone and Yves'. As she ate from a bowl of cereal or a small carton of yoghurt, she would wander into their conversation or look at the photos and make pretty good choices. Miller would come in sometimes in slacks and sweater, and they seemed an informal melding of close friends. This is before Simone had to go back to Paris for work there and before Yves and Marilyn would start their work together on their ultimately unsuccessful musical comedy, "Let's Make Love."

Another couple frequently there was novelist Romaine Gary and Jean Seberg. The easy flow of intellectual affinities in those rooms made it feel like the Left Bank. The two apartments might just as easily have been looking out over Notre

Dame and the Seine or down Boulevard St. Germain. A lot of the media interest at that time and much of the conversation concerned the conflict raging in France over Algerian independence and the right wing's insistence on keeping Algeria a department (equivalent of a federal state in the US) of France. When I'd resided in Paris a half decade before, I was constantly stopped by police who would go over my papers because I looked somewhat middle eastern, thin, dark hair and eyes… of which attributes only the eyes remain… Simone and Yves and Gary and other French intelligentsia opposed de Gaulle's demands that the Arabs thusly conjoined with La Belle France continue to honor their obligations to the French flag. They would have had an easier time teaching them to dance the can can. One of the reasons Simone wanted to get back to Paris was to return to the frontlines of the ideological warfare, for the Montands' liberal opinions were viciously derided in the French press.

If you love the French, it was impossible not to love Yves Montand. Having spent such intense time with that earlier French cultural ambassador Maurice Chevalier, I could see that Chevalier was what Americans think a Frenchman is, bubbling personality, twinkling charm, and Yves was what a Frenchman actually is. He was a real guy, very straightforward about what he thought, a very basic charm, down to earth. I asked Simone once how Yves, the son of Italian immigrants to the Marseilles slums, got so French and how his name got so French. She said it was because Italian immigrant laborers (he was born Ivo Livi) didn't do well in the labor-competitive French seaport, so they had to live in the cheaper which is to say higher floor slum apartments. When his mom wanted him upstairs and Right Now!… she would lean out over the metal banisters and yell, "Ivo! Monta!" ("Yves! Get your ass up here!") His friends would always mimic her, but he defiantly gave the phrase the Gaelic glaze which became the professional name his talents carried to vast fame.

After Simone was away for a while and the rumors of the Montand and Monroe affair started to circulate, Simone would call me not to check up on what I might have heard or observed but to see how Yves was. I'm not telling tales out of school about that relationship. It was big news, and it's certainly on the record. I told Simone once that I really felt I should go off his account. I had too much loyalty to her. But she asked me to stay on and to take care of Yves for her. I did my best, and it was fine with Yves even though he knew I felt very protective of her. One

time I was at the bungalow waiting to take him to a photo shoot… a Life Magazine story… and he was in the bathroom brushing his hair. I was standing outside the bathroom watching him as a press agent will do when his or her client is late for an appointment. It's like watching a pot to make it boil sooner? You know how you do that? To tell this story right, I have to explain what a French "puh!" is. It is a barely audible blowing out of the air through lightly conjoined lips, like blowing out a candle… that's it, like blowing out a candle, not with a "whuh" but with a "puh"… a French habit when they wish to express that something means nothing, that it's not even worth considering. It's not even a real puh because you don't actually hear the vowel sound, just the air percussion. At any rate I was just watching the back of Yves' head, not thinking anything that I was aware of, and he said, his eyes moving to another part of the mirror to gaze directly at me, "Why do you reproach me?" He wasn't angry… just a question. And the use of that word surprised me. In the first place, it's not that common in English, and it's sound-alike in French means something quite the opposite. But that's what he said, and I answered, "What do you mean? I don't reproach you. I wasn't even thinking about you… maybe that we're late is all." "No, I was watching your eyes. I know you admire her, protect her, love her… who doesn't? But you have no right to judge me. Simone and I have been married for all those years…. I have never… neVAIR! (his finger striking at the air)… had an affair. Puh! a prostitute here, a prostitute there." I couldn't help it. It was so damn French and self-exculpatory. I started to laugh. That made him smile, and he said "Eh bien (ok,)" and we went off to the photo session. Later when the pot had stopped boiling over and partners were restored to their rightful mates, Yves starred on the French stage in Arthur Miller's "After The Fall," which was the playwright's tribute to or exorcism of Marilyn Monroe. Monroe and Miller were two more of those people who, like Clint Eastwood and Paul Newman, like Cary Grant and Kirk Douglas, Gary Cooper and Audrey Hepburn, are… simply and significantly… larger-than-life.

It has to do in part with degree of fame and with what these set-apart few have come to symbolize in the public mind. They are so persuasively and uniquely themselves that they are unimaginable in any altered form. That doesn't mean they can't undertake a variety of roles. Henry Fonda's quintessential bad guy in Sergio Leone's "Once Upon A Time In The West" is all the more intense because we measure it against the everyman decency of the roles we most closely associate

with him… Marilyn Monroe's sad exit confirmed that the fault-lines in her perfection were part of the desirability which had captured our imagination.

A Hollywood press agent has frequent encounters with such highest-plane personalities. Orson Welles, Brando, Groucho Marx, Charlie Chaplin, Marlene Dietrich, Streisand, Bergman, Grant, Cooper, Eastwood, Beatty, Taylor, Garson, Holden, Kaye, Garland, Hackman, Sinatra, Hepburn, Rooney, Stravinski, Hope, Leno, Carson, Newman, Olivier, Nicholson, Douglas, Lemmon, Laurence Harvey, Burton, Signoret, Montand, Berle, Monroe, the Schells (Maria and Max,) Christie, Bisset, Seymour, Connery, Caine, Natalie Wood, the Douglases (father and son,) Jimmy Woods, Aldrin, Hitchcock, Schwarzenegger, Reeve, as well as noted scientists, jurists, politicians and the top ranks of moguls and musicians and filmmakers have trickled through, glanced off of or played leading , even seminal, roles in my life. Similar and over-lapping lists play roles in the lives of other press agents. These opportunities have fallen to me, as they do to most Hollywood flacks, in the natural course of plying the trade. It's about as good as one can do without being Jay Leno, Merv Griffin or Mike Douglas, all three of which uber talk show hosts I've represented, each much larger-than-life himself. Some of the experiences a publicist enjoys or endures are tangential chats or merely interesting moments while some others are career-long associations or even… a dangerous assumption to make in Hollywood…. friendships.

George Sanders' patented brand of blasé distingue evolved into ennui and brought him to suicide, leaving a note that said, "I am leaving because I am bored." He should have taken lessons from James Mason who was never bored or boring. If a moment even hinted at becoming conventional, Mason would concoct some mischief to avert it. James' special above-it-all charm, distain and amusement made him vivid in life, work and ironic, biting humor. You never knew which way he would bounce. You knew only that it would be some way you didn't expect. When I first worked with James Mason, it wasn't as his press agent. We were in a scene together during the filming of Joseph Mankiewicz' "Julius Caesar" on stage 25 at MGM. (Press agent confession: "In a scene together" here is technically accurate but essentially a bald-faced lie.) While I was in my teens, after I started film school, I haunted unemployment offices for work as a "waver" in films. Wavers were not as exalted as extras. They were the guys who waved in the background of crowd scenes for, as I recall, about five dollars a day and lunch. But I was in the presence

of movie-making. On "Julius Caesar" I was "discovered" while we wavers were standing in the line to the wardrobe department where we were to be handed our mini-skirted togas. I was plucked from oblivion because I had curly hair… or, as I call it now, the good old days. I was hauled off to the hair department to have my forehead plastered with ringlets, and then marched to a place fairly close to the Soothsayer who would inform Julius Caesar (Louis Calhern) to "beware the Ides of March." I wasn't exactly featured, but I was close enough to hear the immortal lines. Close enough to require some dramatic response. I did a pretty good gasp upon hearing this ragged nobody so address, one might even say threaten, our nation's greatest hero, but there isn't much more of me on screen than a ringlet.

I was within ogling distance of gods… Mankiewicz, Marc Antony (Marlon Brando,) Brutus (James Mason,) Calpurnia (Greer Garson, my mother's favorite actress and someone who would later become very dear to me) and Cassius (Edmond O'Brien who was to become a close personal friend even more than client.) I revered Brando, and who didn't? The pedestal on which film students placed him was Mount Olympus. He had done only three films, "The Men," "Streetcar Named Desire" and "Viva Zapata" but he was already in glory with evident promise of the glories to come. "Waterfront" and "Guys And Dolls" and "The Wild One" were a few years off, but he was The Man, especially since Jimmy Dean wouldn't do "East Of Eden" or "Rebel Without A Cause" for another two years. Dean was still in film school with us at UCLA.

The presence that most awed me was James Mason. The saints preserve us, "Odd Man Out" his very same self! With his immortal stumble toward his doom as Johnny McQeen, the dying Irish rebel in Carol Reed's dark tone poem of love and patriotism and death, Mason had taken a front row seat in my own personal pantheon of acting greats. And there he was, a hero incarnate. I never met an actor who doesn't hold in reverence that Masonian voice rumbling up from the back of his throat, so masterfully shaped for irony, the perfect tool for his self-deprecating wit and amused scorns.

The best kept secret to happiness in press agenting is that you have to be crazy about great acting and the men and women who can do it. That also applies to great writing, directing, comic invention and musicianship, instrumental, vocal or composition. Still a writer imagines and an actor becomes. Acting is a stronger magic. You have to venerate the larger-than-life characteristics of their special gift to be able to best serve their talent and your craft. The objective distance some

press agents affect as a thick outer skin comes at a high price. They miss so much of the honor and so much of the fun. Just this afternoon I did a gallery shoot with Martin Landau, and the photographer said "Do what you want," and Marty held his tie in a certain silly way, canted his head and became Oliver Hardy before our eyes, and then he scratched his head and morphed into Stan Laurel. Everyone in the room stood in awe. He became both Laurel and Hardy at the same time. You can't even imagine that, can you?… because that's how great it was.

I started working with James Mason around the time of "North By Northwest," and I once lamented to him not having known him when he was doing "The Seventh Veil" and "The Man In Grey," those imperious, haughty, darkly romantic roles that brought out the excited masochisma in women all over the world and, thus, brought him to Hollywood. "Oh," he said, with that Mason huff of suppressed amusement, "you wouldn't have liked me then. I was almost a Beatle, and I didn't handle it very well. If you think I'm contentious and litigious now, you should have seen me then." His attitudes were charmingly bizarre, and he moved in a cool that was unlike that of anyone else. Some of the most vivid instances of memory relate to his divorce trial from Pamela, the conclusion of one of the most colorful, outrageous and publicly conducted marriages in a town famous for all of the above. I'm quite certain that the flip side, their romance, must have been equally volcanic. They had lived in a British enclave just north of the Beverly Hills Hotel, a verdant and palmy dead-end street they had shared for many years with Charlie Chaplin and other noted Brits. What a neighborhood of eccentrics. And the divorce trial was everything you would want a Hollywood divorce trial to be, media crowding every entrance and exit, nothing withheld, body blow charges that seemed never to exhaust the principals. They were two glorious personalities, with the divorce trial to prove it. At some point in it, Pamela, whose youthful beauty was still compellingly evident, began a rather public relationship with a local TV personality named Joe somebody. The day after some escapade in the press featuring Pamela and Joe somebody, James and I stepped out of the limousine into the stroboscopic flash of bulbs. The media, like a pack of border collies, started herding him down the hall at the end of which Joe somebody huddled over a cigarette he was smoking with the earnest intent of someone who did not wish to be seen. He heard the rumble of the approaching crowd following James toward him, cameras at the ready. He looked up just

as James, that calm mask of a smile upon his face, drew within a step of him. Joe's stunned reaction was the wide-eyed stare of someone readying himself for a blow. Seconds of sustained suspense. At the raise of James' hand, Joe pulled back, shutter-fingers poised. "Joe," James said, and then his fingers merely tapped Joe's cheek in a love pat… "you scoundrel" followed by his little grunt of amused disdain. James' smile never wavered. The photographers were aghast. All they had were shots of two old friends saying hello. They looked like a bunch of guys whose pockets had just been picked.

But the memorable and cherished moment of the day came later when the limousine was cruising through Beverly Hills to drop me off at my office. In those days, there were actual newsstands, little kiosks where newspapers were peddled, their headlines all displayed and crying out "extry, extry, read all about it!" to passing cars and pedestrians. As we passed the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, we noticed such a stand emblazoned with the provocative front page banner headline of the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner. It read, for all in the car to see, "MASON ACCUSED OF HABITUAL ADULTERY." That came as a shock even to me whose life was lived headline to headline. I looked at James. There was a long silence, and then he exhaled the James Mason chuckle… the amused one… a quick spurt of levity, that "hmmpf" that could be compared only to Sydney Greenstreet's little snort of delight at Sam Spade's audacities in "The Maltese Falcon." "Hmmpf," James remarked again, "Well done, Guttman."

With Mason, it was always the unexpected. Even his anger emerged in terse irony rather than the explosive venting not uncommon in the movie business. As he got older, I felt we needed some new art (photos) to capture his more matured handsomeness, so I set a photo session with John Engstead, who reigned with George Horrell as the premiere portraitists of that star-studded moment in Hollywood history. It was, somehow, more a time of timeless stars than in this period of a-new-hottest-guy-or-gal-every-day instant stardom only occasionally sustained. The studios had done their job well in their contract-stars day, building giants, nourishing or banishing them by wit or by whim. And James was one of the most glorious. That, I felt, needed to be celebrated in new eight-by-tens. Engstead did his magic which was capturing the person inside. Both he and I were disturbed by the number of distracting wrinkles gathered by time on the Mason face. That's not how you saw James when you were with him. It all escaped perception in his

imposing presence. But there they were, and we set about righting that. Of course, in such a pursuit, there is that inevitable one-too-many retouches. Oblivious to this, I sent the prints off to James in Southeast Asia where he and Peter O'Toole and Richard Brooks were making "Lord Jim." Back from there came a telegram from him. "Thanks for the photos. Very beautiful. The next time I'm there I would love to meet her."

His grand gestures were always ironic, too. The decade of the sixties was a time when the tabloid press was in gestation. There was not yet the gaggle of blaring national supermarket super-rags thriving on sad tidings real or imagined which we have now. Nor was there our current flood of digital entities, the anyone-can-play blogs, that internet "media" glut so immediate and therefore so often half-baked. No, there were then only one or two little publications which were just inventing the indelicate art of annoying stars with evil dream-ups. James and Pamela were constant targets and, as James had openly admitted, he (and, even more, they) had a history of being overly litigious. Except with these scammy little newspapers (think Danny DeVito in "LA Confidential,") there was nothing to sue. You can't sue a fly speck. There was one particularly such guerilla journalist who was especially annoying to Hollywood and a major pain in the ass for James. One fine day it was learned that this guy had been ambulanced to the hospital. James was not displeased to hear this, and he asked the circumstance. The story derived from the fact that this dirt peddler could bring desperate young performers to some industry attention. With such leverage, he had compelled a starlet to perform an act upon him and instead of doing what was intended, she had bitten down… hard. James sent a huge array of flowers to him at the hospital with a note reading, "Dear…… , Congratulations. So few of us achieve our destinies. James Mason." In the light of that, it was very James that he also took delight in having me plant outrageous stories ascribing all kinds of infamous behavior to him as long as it was in sufficiently discredited outlets. There was one columnist back east whose nasty stories in one of the tabloid raglets had won him a special fame of hate. James dictated the stories for me to plant, all so loathsome that they couldn't possibly be true. The writer, such was his villainy, didn't get that fine point of *reducto ad absurdum*, and he printed them in all of their obvious fabrication. Each time one of these fairytales for the vacuous appeared, James would hoot with delight. This writer, whose affection I did not seek, thought me a fine fellow for passing such treacheries on to him. That enchanted James even more, and he referred to the guy as "Guttman's friend."

James had come into my office one day bearing a canvas that was three feet high and four feet wide, a sizable work of art. An artist of note, James had painted me sitting at a little, well-worn typewriter. You could almost hear its clacking as I pounded at it with evil glee writing lies about him. My alter ego, my better self, clad in the draped white sheets of heaven (proudly bald as compared to the sad toupee on the lesser me) stood behind me, smiling sadly in doleful impatience with my mendacity and the deceitful tricks of my trade. Thus had James lovingly explained the theme of the painting to me. That more perfect me was holding our family's late alligator, Wally, of whose demise I will speak in due course. He was petting Wally as they both awaited my arrival in the unlikely event that I would, at the appointed hour, be directed to the up escalator. Inscribed at the bottom was what James promised was an incantation to ward off the existential doubts that he hoped would haunt every flack, those crises of conscience which he felt must come even unto press agents. This dedication stated, "Mason done this for Guttman with affection and admiration." I loved that painting, and Gisela who has professionally presented some of the promising and anointed young artists, thought it was "a really good piece both in execution and theme, simultaneously loving and vicious." A number of years later, I took it home so that it could be properly framed. Three days later our house went down along with 270 other houses in the 1993 Malibu fire. My better angel and Wally went down with them. There was so much to mourn, but that one was sorely missed.

James always called me Guttman. I don't recall his ever addressing me as Dick except in times of extreme exasperation, as in "you dick!" James and Gene Hackman would often feed Gisela's convictions about the failing clarity of my intellect with such phrases as "that dick" or "he doesn't get it." Every time she disagrees with me she cracks, "Gene always says that you don't get it." It was, in fact, only one time in Paris when we were dining in a Chinese restaurant along the Seine and she and Gene were incapable of understanding some sophisticated point I was making. Gene looked at me, and then turned to Gisela and said, "He doesn't get it." That puny history notwithstanding, Gisela would and still does drag Gene's comment out like her best china on special occasions of our disagreement.

A rare but treasured compliment from James occurred when I learned that he had slipped into town and was in secret residence at the Bel Air Hotel. James' voice and speech were as distinctive and beautiful as any that ever graced the screen, not just that rich and edgy baritone but also the clear, determined enunciation of every

syllable, the crisp hiss or percussion of every consonant. It was at a nightclub on the Sunset Strip once that I watched the Hip Hypnotist Pat Collins put a guy from the audience under and then tell him he was James Mason. She instructed him to do something and he responded disdainfully, "I dohhhhhhn't WAAAAANT to." It sounded just like James. All of the Ts had separate and derisive clarity. This fellow, under hypnosis, had caught the disdain that makes James' speech so singular. He had identified James' deft knack of lavishing upon each consonant and vowel the celebration and exactitude it so RICHly deSERVES. After that, I could imitate James' voice rather well. It was the stone-hard dismissal that characterized it. Armed with this mimicry, which I knew could be an instrument of rich payback for all of his wicked practical jokes, I called the Bel Air Hotel and asked for his room by number . "And whom may I say is calling?" the operator asked. "James MAson," I answered in what seemed to me perfectly good Mason. There was a long pause and then came James' real voice, exasperated, "Yes, Mr. Maaason?" with contemptuous emphasis on the "May…" I found I could feed his voice back to him in fairly precise imitation. He was getting more and more aggravated and finally he took a deep breath and growled , "Guttman… you PRICK!" Epiphany.

James was a guy who rejoiced in sending the worst postcards he could find from wherever he went, including Count Ugolino chewing off the heads of his nephews, this from Barcelona for some unknown reason. This sadistic practice culminated in one card which was a nocturnal study of a woman's beguiling behind on some Mediterranean beach, with something like "remembering the silken strokes of the warm wind and your hands" scrawled on the back. He sent this not to the office but to the house, addressed to me but for Gisela's eyes only. It was remarkable to me, and somewhat insulting, that Gisela did not immediately discern that this had to be from the mad mind of James Mason. An intense interrogation followed, including "If it was from James, why did she send it to the house?" She! He could never know how maliciously the card had accomplished its villainy.

James used the ruse of madness for the cruelest tortures, ringing me up once from Hong Kong at three AM to discuss his clothes for some layout. "James, it's three o'clock." "Yes, I thought I'd catch you before you left for dinner." "Three in the morning." "In the morning? How strange. I thought it would be afternoon." "Then why did you call me at home?" I growled. "Do I detect some slight tone of irritation?" he said with urbane surprise and absolute delight.

His last word came as I slammed the phone down. I just didn't want to hear that damn chuckle.

In "Sunset Boulevard," Gloria Swanson's Norma Desmond idealizes silent screen stars by observing the "we had FACES then." What I recall of the British invaders of Hollywood is that they had WORDS then… AND they had trained VOICES. It began of course with Chaplin as an advance scout, only minus the words. In the thirties with Leslie Howard, Robert Donat, Rex Harrision, Charles Laughton, Cary Grant, Ronald Coleman, George Saunders, Herbert Marshall and then for the 40s, Olivier and David Niven and that bunch and then James Mason and his group. They were all cocky and some were cockney, especially Michael Caine and the other sixties rebels. And what distinguished them from mere mortals was not the crisp perfection or distinctive accents of their speech, but their wicked way with words, both in selection and inflection. With the notable exception of Olivier, and almost without other exception in my long years of work with them, they were not afraid of but rather enjoyed interviews. Not only did these exercises in language skills "help me find out what I think about things," as Ustinov put it, but it gave them an opportunity to engage in wordplay… sword-play, really, the swordplay of wit… manipulating words and thoughts like Russian chess masters dispatch knights and pawns. James Mason could parry and thrust phrases with the best of them. In fact, he WAS the best of them. He was always up to taking his dogma for a walk, ready to do verbal magic tricks for media for whatever news angle required it. For him it wasn't the linguistic gymnastics but the chance to impart some logic that today would be called politically incorrect but then was viewed as insurrectionist. When the Profumo Scandal broke in England, that country and the world suddenly discovered that political power often tempts sexual excess. Surprise, surprise, egocentric politicos like sex and they have lots of favors to render in exchange for a little spice in that part of their lives. As you may recall, the downfall of top English power-player John Profumo had to do with British beauties like Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies' being dispensed as lollipops to influence British political decisions. Every other Brit actor in Hollywood was ducking TV and print requests for comments on the sexy scandal. Not James. I had cameras lined up to catch him on the tennis courts at the Beverly Hills Hotel as he expounded on the thought that politics required the occasional cleansing influence of some good prostitute revelations.

"That's how politics evolves," he said, *'throw the old scoundrels out, bring the new scoundrels in*. " It became a catchphrase of the Profumo news cycle. Did it hurt his career? In close order after that he did, "The Fall Of The Roman Empire," "Lord Jim," "The Pumpkin Eater" and 'Georgie Girl." It's not hard to love people who can throw words about like hand-grenades. *That has been perhaps my single most-treasured part of publicity. Or of my personal life, for that matter.* Gisela refuses to think or say anything the way anyone else would. In some dispute today, I advised her to stop complaining about whatever the issue was. "Complaining?" she cried, wounded. "I don't complain. I bitch." "Really?" I mused, "aren't they the same thing?" "Well, yes," she granted, "bitching IS complaining… but with ZEST." God help me, but I DO love zest.

James and I thought alike on publicity. It should be an instrument of fun. When he was promoting "The Deadly Affair," I booked him onto the Merv Griffin Show. The talent coordinator on the show, a friend of mine, had found a quote James had once made to the effect that he enjoyed acting because each role required him to learn some new skills. In "Deadly Affair," James does some pretty mean dart throwing in a pub scene. This fellow wanted to have Merv relate the quote, mention James' having had to toss darts for the role, and then they would wheel out this big dart board. James Mason, wicked wit or not, was a great actor. Throw darts on a talk show and wind up hitting a band member? I thought not. I said no. When we got to the show, I had the prescience to go backstage, and there, sure enough, was the dart board. I mentioned all of this to James. When James went out, second guest since Don Rickles had been first and would be sitting there, Merv shortly went into his intro that James had made this quote about learning skills for each new film. To which James responded, "No, I never said anything even remotely like that." Merv was never thrown, and he knew how to play out any impromptu moment, so he went into an act of consternation. "James, you said very specifically that you enjoyed that, like learning to throw darts for your upcoming film 'The Deadly Affair.'" "Who told you that?" James continued blandly, "I can't throw darts for shit. They had to get a dart *double*. Didn't you notice the terrible James Mason hairdo they gave him?" Now Merv was playing his discombobulation, and he held up his note cards, saying, "I don't get this. We have these highly paid people called talent coordinators, and they question the guests in advance and then give me these cards saying what the guests want to talk about." At which point Don Rickles reached over and took the cards from Merv's hands saying, "Let

me see those things," and he started to read them, "See Dick and Jane. See Dick and Jane run." Then James and Don started a conversation about the immense enjoyment they had derived from the Dick and Jane books, breaking up Merv who knew a good "bit" when he was riding one. When we got back to James' suite at the Beverly Hills Hotel, there was already a beautiful basket of fruit waiting and a card from the talent coordinator saying, "Dear James, Thank you for the delightful appearance. We look forward to seeing you again soon."

Many people argued which actor had the greatest voice of that day… Richard Burton and James Mason were the most usual suspects. Some insisted Laurence Olivier, but Mason and Burton battled for the crown. God-given voices? Certainly in part, but James Mason took voice lessons almost every day of his acting life. One of the consequences of that intimidating timbre was that it held most people at a distance when they were with him. People seemed too intimidated, in fact, to offer to shake hands. James may have cultivated that vocal intimidation for just that purpose, even counted on it. While he embraced a friend warmly, he had contempt for the normal social convention like meaningless handshakes with strangers. Also, he had a skin condition on his hands that made them as rough as coarse sand paper, and he was very self-conscious of that, while being self-conscious about almost no other aspect of his extraordinary self . He did love to assault the expectations of his friends with his idiosyncrasies. Hearing that Gisela and I were in Madrid, he issued a command that we come up to Estoril to see the castle he'd just purchased while shooting "The Fall Of The Roman Empire." "You'll love how I've furnished it," he assured, alluding to Gisela's passion for antique furniture. From the outside, the castle (nestled into cobble-stoned streets) met and exceeded our expectations. Gisela was breathless to see the treasures that awaited within. We entered to find that it was…virtually empty. Finally James headed us to a room which he advertised as his *piece de resistance*, his bedroom. It had a single furnishing… a ridiculous pink tube iron bed… He must have stumbled upon the only garage sale in Spain. Gisela looked at it blankly. "I can see you're impressed," he smirked, pleased with her offended sensibilities. "I didn't want to overdo it." As we all left to go to lunch, Gisela said, "James, what you've done to this beautiful castle is the worst thing England has inflicted upon Spain since the sinking of the Spanish armada." James smiled and said, "Coming from you, I take that as a great compliment."

But I cherished James' brusque "Guttman," and I think it was his tip of the hat to the fact that that was Sydney Greenstreet's name and only form of address or designation in "The Maltese Falcon." In the credits it was Casper Gutman, with one t. Greenstreet's character came up the last time I saw John Huston. It was his final press conference which we held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel where we were announcing that Huston would be the honoree of the Santa Fe Film Festival which Guttman & Pam was handling. Huston still was imposing and inspiring even as he sat in a wheel chair with a tank of oxygen in his lap and tubes in his nostrils. The culmination of the film fest would be a masquerade ball at which everyone would have to come as a character of a John Huston film. As we waited backstage for his introduction to the press for what we didn't know would be the last time, he said, "And what, Mr. Guttman, will be your costume at the ball?" "My driver's license," I said. "Yes, yes," he smiled, nodding with polite consent, "of course." He died shortly before the festival took place.

John Huston was a great, grizzly bear, meticulously well-spoken and courteous, Irish charm masking iron will. Clint nailed Huston with his performance in "White Hunter, Black Heart." In his own on-screen performances, Huston rarely displayed the joyous sense of humor so evident in his conversation and in his films… the razor sharp quips and gesture of "Maltese Falcon," the mad narrative leaps and ironic nuttiness of "Beat The Devil," the subtle comedy and soaring affection of ineptly romantic characters of "African Queen." Comedy in his films always came out of character, and in Bogart he had a fine fiddle that could play in any elected voice. No single Bogart portrayal in their long partnership borrowed in any way from another. It was a director/star relationship rivaling John Ford and John Wayne or Frank Capra and Stewart, Cooper or Gable, take your pick. We handled a number of Huston films, and we usually freed Wally Beene from his client representation duties at our office to do unit publicity on them. He and Huston were cut from the same bolt of rough-hewn tweed, spoke the same language of adventurers, smoked the same cigars which Huston in his epicurean tastes bought (Wally said he didn't do the Huston films for the money but for the cigars.) Huston and Wally conducted the business of director and unit press guy over hard-fought poker hands. There was one actor, Wally reported, that Huston identified as an anti-Semite but whom he had hired for a particular film because

he was a great actor and right for the role. Huston never punished him for that perceived prejudice on the set, only at the poker table. Huston played not only for himself to win but also for the actor to lose, nicking him constantly with little remarks that could be taken as jokes, but were understood without comment by all at the game as meant to draw blood. "I think that was the funniest movie John Huston never made," Wally delighted.

Clint Eastwood can't stand not being expert at anything he tries. When Gisela and I helped ski entrepreneur Chuck Dwight and Olympian Jimmy Heuga initiate the concept of celebrity pro-am ski tournaments at Bear Valley in 1968 and 69, Clint gamely came up for the ride even though he'd never been on skis. His first descent in gangly snowplow showed a long distance to go. First Gisela showed him a few basics and took one explanatory run down with him and then brought Jimmy Heuga in for real coaching. Clint was, in a few days, good enough to make an honorable showing in the competition. A few years later in a winter event Gisela and I did with Dwight and for Guttman & Pam's first big corporate clients, the fabled Sun Valley ski resort, Clint was hitting the moguls with the best of the skiers and even doing helicopter skiing in tough powder with Bill Janss who owned the joint. In other evidence of the kind of expertise he demands of himself, you may have caught an earful of his piano skills when he hosted his PBS series on jazz. And that was definitely Clint doing his own piano in "Honky Tonk Man."

Since that film had Clint making the long jump from pistols to pianos, I thought his personal skills at the 88 should be a key element in the film's promotion, and I talked him into rolling out some prodigious ragtime on a visit to Johnny Carson and The Tonight Show. I don't know what I was thinking to second guess myself on that, but I was concerned that Clint might evidence a little jolt of nerves laying his hands on a keyboard in public for the first time and for an audience of millions. Oh, ye of little faith. Clint just sat down and turned his fingers loose, and it was impressive in both its skill and its ease. You could see the wonder and delight in Johnny's grin all the way through it, and the shake of his head at the end when the big guy came through it unscathed and shining.

The same compulsion to excellence prevailed when he chose to learn to pilot helicopters. We had our first demonstration of this when we were Patty Hearst's guests at her annual week-with-friends at Wintoon, the William Randolph Hearst hideaway in the Northern California Sierras just south of Mount Shasta. It is

80,000 acres of redwoods, about 120 square miles. In the late 1920s, Hearst quite prophetically postulated that America would go to war with Japan at some point, and that it would be ignited by a Japanese air attack on some great symbol of American power. He was off only in his geography. Rather than Pearl Harbor, he was convinced that the point of attack would be his mind-boggling castle at San Simeon on the central California coast. The Hearst Castle, he reasoned, was (and maybe actually is) the greatest celebration of American capitalist accomplishment. He created a similar but far more reclusive monument to power in his redwoods escape, building a breathtaking Bavarian- village-cum-hunting-lodge along the most exquisite roaring turns of the McCloud River which rushed with the icy meltings of the Mr. Shasta ice cap. The racing river spurts out of natural underground tubes in the foothills on Wintoon land.

Clint owned a ranch on Hat Creek about 50 miles to the east, only a few minutes by helicopter. He choppered in, Clint at the stick, making a spectacular landing in a redwood-lined clearing on a bend of the McCloud. I'm sure it was perfectly safe, because one reason experts get away with the spectacular is that it is always within the wide scope of their skill and in adherence to the regulations and knowledge defining what the safety boundaries are. But it looked astonishing. I'm pretty sure this was the summer of 1992 because it was while we were swimming that Clint asked me to come aboard on the "Unforgiven" Oscar campaign. The next time we were to go up to Wintoon, Clint offered to pick us up in Redwood City, the closest major airport… south of Lake Shasta and far south of Wintoon… and to helicopter us to the Hearst estate. Gisela resisted. I argued that he was really an expert pilot. "Too expert," she said, and we drove the hour and a half up from Redwood City. She never went aerobatic flying with Gene Hackman, either, but, truth in advertising, neither did I. But I did send Mike Douglas up with him for a white knuckle segment on his talk show.

Clint Eastwood can match anyone larger-than-life for larger-than-life. But you don't really notice it because he's so down-to-earth. He talks anybody's language right back to them, whether it is a construction guy in a bar or talking jazz and piano styling with Errol Garner. Sure, he's a legend when he walks in, but he quickly subtracts that from the equation. His appeal is egalitarian, but his interests are sophisticated. In the mid-60s when it was assumed all food including potato chips was healthy as long as it tasted good, he introduced us to

health food, turned Gisela into a health nut with his level of expertise, which probably added years to our lives and has kept him, in his 80s, directing several Oscar contending films a year, sometimes even simultaneously. An uncommon man with a common touch to all. One night Bridget Byrne, a film journalist who had done numerous Eastwood stories for me, and I bumped into each other at the Palomino, the mecca of country music in the San Fernando Valley, to which we had each repaired because Sondra Locke was appearing there as a guest star with Eddie Rabbit. No Eastwood in sight until Bridget said, "There he is, (nodding to the bar.} No wonder he's king." Clint was there yakking and laughing with casual connection with some guys. He was in jeans, a pack of cigarettes rolled up in the sleeve of his white tee shirt just like them. Come to think of it, in well over 40 years, I don't believe I've ever seen Clint smoke a cigarette. Maybe he does, or maybe we think he does because Sergio Leone always had him dripping those little dark cigars from the corner of his mouth in the spaghetti westerns.

I started working with Clint after "A Fistful Of Dollars," "The Good, The Bad And The Ugly" and "For A Few Dollars More" had morphed his "Rawhide" popularity into movie-going public pre-eminence. The thing was, the people knew it, but Hollywood hadn't yet caught on. When I started representing him at Rogers & Cowan, I was trying to acquaint columnist Louella Parsons with the public's wild enthusiasm for Clint Eastwood, and she had never heard of him. Hollywood lives in its own little world, even when some guy next door is whomping them at the box office. She was going to New York, and I suggested she ask every taxi driver who Clint Eastwood was. She came back singing…. and printing… his praises. The New York Times had wider view, and when I asked their west coast writer Aljean Harmetz to pitch Clint, that paper checked and saw a new big train coming down the tracks of American cinema.

It was a prominent front page story. The fundamental truism in PR, the very base of PR's efficacy, is that everyone has the courage of someone else' convictions, and the NY Times is a big someone else. Clint was very abruptly the same kind of superstar to the industry that he already was to the public. It was just when "Coogan's Bluff" was coming out, the film that would lay the ground work for the "Dirty Harry" franchise and the Clint Eastwood/Don Siegel actor-director partnership. There couldn't have been a better cross-over film, because Clint's Coogan was still in a oowboy hat, but he had come to the big city and knocked them dead and proven that his gunfighter cool worked just great in a contemporary

setting. "Hang Em High, " Clint's first U.S. and Malpaso project, had already done exceedingly well, but it really was "Coogan's Bluff" that showed Clint Eastwood to be a star for all circumstances. He firmed up his Malpaso producing empire at Universal with some of the top action directors including John Sturges ("Joe Kidd") and Ted Post ("Hang Em High.") But most of all and most directly encouraging Clint to explore Clint's own directing style was Don Siegel ("Coogan's Bluff," "Two Mules For Sister Sara," "The Beguiled," "Dirty Harry" and "Escape From Acatraz.") Clint took it from there, with the blessing of Siegel who had always had him direct a few "Clintus shots" in each film.

Clint's great director period, which has now stretched nearly four decades and grown more profound with each, has shown that distinctive artists don't seek to surpass their masters, but rather they move along their own distinctive path from the base of those teachings. Eastwood has always honored those from whom he learned, and often with a twist. In the cow-town graveyard scene of "High Plains Drifter," particularly prominent among the wooden grave markers are those ultimate trail-blazers of the Old West, Sergio Leone and Don Siegel.

When we represented Siegel, I got Merv Griffin to devote an entire show to Don upon the opening of "The Black Windmill." My bargaining chips? Clint, John Cassavetes, Michael Caine and I believe Walter Matthau, all of whom showed up for him for that TV tribute. Afterwards, Merv hosted a dinner for them all in the back room of Musso & Frank, and a warmer and funnier and more raucous evening of guy affection for another guy I've never enjoyed. Merv should have taped that hour, too.

Clint's first film as a director was "Play Misty For Me," and he cast Siegel as a bartender in the first scene he shot. Not just a good luck charm, but also nail-on-the-head casting. Clint never wasted a frame. His female star, Jessica Walters, was nominated for the Best Actress in a Dramatic Film Golden Globe. It was a good omen for the start of a directing career, so I suggested he let me arrange for him to present the award. He would be presenting either to his star or to Jane Fonda, for "Klute," a very esteemed performance, I argued. I knew full well how Clint felt about her having been photographed in celebration on a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft gun emplacement shortly before, but I said this would be an occasion of honor for art, not political statement. When he opened the envelope, it said Jane Fonda, and he announced it with dignity and with a gracious smile…. until Jane sent a young man up to accept it, attired in military jacket and jeans with

a very political statement, which I had promised would not be the case. I could see his eyes narrow into a Clint squint. I hurried backstage to rescue Clint from having to do photos with the guy, and as we were moving back to our seats he said simply and in his rumble-from-dark-heavens whisper, "Have I ever thanked you for all the good advice?"

Clint had the curiosity and the courage to put his initial action hero identification frequently to the test. Instead of repeating the action genre that had jumpstarted him to the head of the pack, he talked studio bosses into the adventurously noir romantic thriller, "Beguiled," which had a Civil War setting but had a lot more in common with the sexy French thriller "Les Diaboliques" than with "Gone With The Wind." When we had the first big screening for "the town" at the Directors Guild Theatre, it was generally concluded that he had removed the limits the industry places on any big box-office action star. He was suddenly free to fly wherever he wanted. He came up to Gisela after the film and said, "Weird flick, huh, Gi?" Yes, it was weird to Hollywood that someone who could hit a home run every time he put on a cowboy hat, and picked up a gun and set a new high bar for tough, would play a guy victimized by a group of sexually-repressed-and-not-happy-about-it women. But it established him as a guy who doesn't have to care about any studio's or even the industry's expectation. Clint had just escaped from Alcatraz… free as a bird, free even to do as a director his acclaimed jazz ode, "Bird." Clint had no limits, and he has used that carte blanche freely, dangerously and successfully ever since. When he showed me "Beguiled" the very first time, he wanted me to pay special attention a still photo during the title sequence, a shot of Clint as a wounded Union soldier among a sea of wounded in the carnage of a huge battlefield, hundreds of men moving or littered all about. It was actually a true photo from the period, and, technology not being then what it is now, I asked how they laid his face in. The shot, it turned out, was unretouched. A northern soldier who was the spitting, bleeding image of Clint Eastwood, face and figure, lay there on a field a century and a decade before, wounded exactly as the script called for Clint to be wounded. It was a good and remarkable omen for a guy who was about to take his first spin at a non-action dramatic role. And a gutsy role reversal, since, in this film, Clint was the victim.

It was films like that… and the gentle musical tone poem "Honky Tonk Man" and his homage to jazz greatness, "Bird"… which opened the door for him to be

received and publicized as a star and filmmaker beyond genre. And "Bronco Billy" was a deft spin in Capra/Sturges mode. When Clint was filming "Space Cowboys" about four old astronauts (played by Clint, Jim Garner, Donald Sutherland and Tommy Lee Jones) who were being sent back into space, he asked me to find out if Jay Leno would, following the taping of a regular Tonight Show, film a sequence of these four over-the-hill space vets appearing on the show. Jay loved it, but stipulated that it had to be improv. At one point, Jay asked the four superannuated fly-boys if each had military background. All nodded their "oh yeahs" and "sures." "North or South?" Jay pressed. It cracked-up all of them and, of course, it stayed in the film.

Push was coming to shove in the Oscar campaign for his "Million Dollar Baby" when Clint called to ask if I thought it had a legit shot at Best Film. "Are you asking if you should do Jay on 'The Tonight Show?'" I queried, knowing that he was always a reluctant talk show guest… perhaps less the past few years, but certainly still the case then. "I suppose so. Yeah." "Absolutely, but you have to get the right night." He loved the film and wanted to support it. We worked over the dates the ballots would be mailed out and when one might expect them to be filled out, determining the right date for a booking." I called the show and, naturally, they were delighted at the prospect of having Clint on, but on that particular date they had already booked Thomas Haden Church, a Supporting Actor nominee for "Sideways," as the first guest. There are few absolutes in Hollywood, but one definitely is that there were certain degrees of stature which require a first-guest booking on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, a kind of holy of holies. Anything else would be an affront to nature. I asked if they would check Mr. Church if he would move back to second guest if it meant doing the show with Clint Eastwood, and I wasn't surprised that he readily and graciously did so.

Sitting in Clint's dressing room before the show, I told him about Church's having surrendered the very coveted first guest position to accommodate him. "Really?" Clint said and then went down the hall to knock on Church's door, spending about twenty minutes there and, I supposed, starting a nice friendship. At the Oscars after Clint and "Million Dollar Baby" did win Best Film, I was riding up in the elevator to the photography and press rooms with him and Barbra Streisand who had presented the award. "Maybe it was the Leno show," he said with a grin, but then guys or gals who have just won the Best Motion Picture Oscar again will grin at just about anything.

If you think his unflappable cool means that his on-screen anger is not unleashed in real life, you'd be mostly right. In over forty years, I've seen him explode only twice… which, considering the frustrations that beset a director or a producer or a star, much less all three in one package, is moderation to the most improbable degree. Each was because of some injustice done not to him but to someone else who wasn't in position to stand up for herself (in one case) or himself (in the other.) The most amazing test of this equanimity I witnessed occurred when I went back with him to Harvard where he was presented with the Hasty Pudding Award. It required him, at one point, to be fitted with bra to dance with the in-drag chorus line, part of the time-honored nuttiness of the very honorable event. He submitted in good humor. I have never seen noblesse oblige more sorely tested or graciously accommodated.

He went along with some of my publicity ideas even when he didn't think much of them. When he was shooting "High Plains Drifter" on the eastern slopes of the Sierras near June Lake and Mammoth, he had a western town constructed along the shores of Mono Lake which is lined with large boulders of pumice. Pumice is a volcanic rock that is mostly air, veined… laced really… with tubes of air pockets. I had the cast members photographed tossing boulders apparently weighing hundreds of pounds back and forth, although ten pounds was probably the maximum weight. It got a lot of pickup because I neglected to include in the caption the matter of the actual weight. What got a big pickup was a shot of the distinguished Little Person actor Billy Curtis smiling into camera while holding what appeared to be a 500 pound boulder lightly on one shoulder. The film had an aspect of fable to it, and I think Clint figured the photos lent themselves to the mystic and mythic dimensions of the story.

One of the reasons Ciint was and is such a superlative director and producer is the great affection he has for his actors. I observed this particularly in the fondness he had for the octogenarian Chief Dan George. We had just done the press junket for "The Outlaw Josey Wales" in and around Santa Fe, New Mexico, all of the press events held at a huge ranch nearby where the press were moved about on hayrides, and the gathered press loved not only the film but the gregarious experience. Clint often portrayed loners, and many of his films were about the loneliness of isolation, but "Josey Wales" was about community and people supporting each other. So, too, was "Gran Torino," which was one of his

most moving films because it, like "Josey Wales," beautifully blended two great Eastwood themes… the loner and the blended community. I fully understand why "Unforgiven" dominated its year and is in the pantheon of Hollywood's historic westerns, but I still feel "Josey Wales" challenges "Unforgiven" as Clint's greatest epic western. Upon completion of that successful Santa Fe launch, Clint, Chief Dan, Joe Hyams (one of the film business' greatest PR and marketing guys and Warner Bros.' vice president in charge of Clint Eastwood, a very exalted position) and Gisela and I flew in a Warner's jet directly to Sun Valley where "Josey" would be screened and promoted at a Heroes Film Festival Guttman & Pam had helped initiate as part of our work for the resort. Chief Dan, well into his eighties, was always attended by several very beautiful Native American young women. As Mel Brooks sort of said in "History Of The World," "It's good to be chief." The exposure there went well, especially the photographers' thrill in grabbing shots of Chief Dan and Iron Eyes Cody together and my thrill in setting it. And I frequently noticed Clint's enjoyment of Chief Dan's enjoyment. Like most original people, Clint admires originality in others as much as he appreciates great performances.

The junket for "Play Misty For Me," Clint's first film as a director, was to be held in some vicinity of Carmel, California since that was where the film was set and had been shot. It is also where Clint has home and businesses and where he would eventually be mayor. I interested the studio in holding the press junket at the famous Ventana Inn in Big Sur, on the central California coast near Carmel. I didn't hide the fact that we represented the Ventana Inn, and I did get the film company good rate breaks and my resort client great press breaks. We held one of the events at Clint's famous bar, The Hog's Breath Inn, but the accommodations and the main press events were at Ventana. The studio, of course, planned and managed the junket, and I was there only in a consultation capacity assisted by a female staff member (all but three of my executives have been women,) and she (as has been the case with all of the others… sheer happenstance) was very attractive. I soon realized, that she enjoyed inordinate popularity with all of the guys in the press corps. Well, that always helps. It was not until the end of the weekend's proceedings that I found that this derived in some part from the Ventana's spas. There were three large and separated thermal baths, any of which could be enjoyed with bathing suit or sans bathing suit. One was for women, one for men and the one in the middle one was not segregated by gender. That was

her choice, and I think you can imagine why this was a source of her popularity. It was definitely a first for Guttman & Pam.

I don't know if fans today can begin to understand the dimension of Paul Newman's stardom in the 60s, 70s, 80s and beyond. There is no contemporary young star who is actually the equivalent of that. I remember the day Paul turned 40, and all of the press agents at Rogers & Cowan who were less than a decade his junior, suddenly confronted our own mortality and wondered if our days of prevailing were soon behind us. That "don't trust anyone over 30" stuff had really gotten to us.

Most stars upon whom such interest is imposed try to shun publicity, but Paul did what needed to be done to sell his films. He wore the crown almost apologetically. Or maybe he just shielded himself from any personal perception of it. There weren't a lot of movies shown on TV then…TV being only the seven VHF stations… so the series of films called Million Dollar Movies (a million dollars… whewwww!) that aired on Channel 9 in L.A. got a lot of viewership. With this in mind, I called Paul one day to warn him that his first film, the swords and sandals flick "The Silver Chalice," would be the million dollar movie the following week. I knew how embarrassed he was about that film, and I thought he should be prepared. He said, "I'll call you back." About fifteen minutes later he was on the phone. "What if we take an ad in the L.A. Times?" "Saying?" "Paul Newman apologizes, Channel 9 at 8 o'clock." "Paul, it runs every night, Monday through Friday." "Holy shit." "Yeah." "Ok, We take it on Monday… 'Paul Newman apologizes, Channel 9, 8 o'clock, every night this week.'" It received a terrific amount of attention, and some critics even rose to the defense of the film, especially its introduction to Paul's promise.

Paul went at everything with intensity and vigor… his driving, his interviews, his hamburgers. It amazed me each time how he could get his mouth around one of those things. Critics who didn't know characterized the Actors Studio stars, notably Paul, Marlon Brando, Jimmy Dean, Steve McQueen, as guys who "stared at their navels." Yes, they could get a lot of juice out of a quiet moment, a silent look, but who better than those stars could bring vigor and intensity to a scene, a role, a movie?

His wife, Joanne Woodward, was a constant in his interviews, even when they weren't co-starring in the film the interview was pushing. They made more films

together than Tracy and Hepburn. They were as married as any couple I've ever observed in this business. I recall his discussion of how he came at a role from the inside out and she from the outside in, but the end results blended. During one interview, he alluded to Joanne as "the last of the great broads," one of those phrases that give insight into how and why two people click. It was a phrase of such affection that it actually passed into the common vernacular, and I've seen its use many times since. He occasionally discussed that they came at their political and social and humane passions differently, too, but always arrived at the same position. And if they didn't, he acceded to Joanne's point of view. He was so happily influenced by and in awe of her mind and spirit.

I recall one interview Vernon Scott was doing at a home they occupied for a while off Coldwater Canyon. This was in the late sixties when the confluence of such social afflictions as Vietnam and Richard Nixon and smog and other flagrant pollutions made some of us wonder if there might be a better place to raise kids. There wasn't, but the thought flitted through the mind. Vernon commented that he had been looking into New Zealand and he counted off the reasons. Paul thought about it a moment and then said, "No, there's too much to be done here."

Another time, when they had a rented house just off of Sunset and were, therefore, subject to map-of-the-stars'-homes lookieloos, the conversation was interrupted by the doorbell. Joanne opened the door and said, "Yes, his eyes really are as blue as they are in the movies." And we heard a woman say, "Thank you, Miss Woodward. Have a nice day." And Joanne returned to the conversation. That particular house had a little sign on the front lawn beside the path up from the sidewalk. It read "Please… They've moved. The Fergusons." But it didn't help.

I called her one morning with the reviews of "Paris Blues." She said, "Thanks, but I really don't want to hear them." "But they're great," I insisted. "If I believe the good ones, don't I have to believe the bad ones?" One evening when I took her to an interview at CBS, I was low on gas and asked if she would mind if I stopped at the station across Beverly Boulevard. It was at the very start of eco awareness. The attendant came to the window… attendants still came to your window and they still pumped the gas… and I said, "Fill her up, please… lead-free." Joanne nodded and said, "Well, that's a relief. Why don't people get it? It's their Earth? Why don't they understand?" It's forty years later and they are just starting to. But maybe too late.

Paul chose "Rachel, Rachel" as his directorial debut as an homage and a gift to Joanne. The beautiful and Oscar-nominated Stewart Stern script delved quietly and compassionately into a woman's psyche in ways that no script ever had before. It was "a labor of love" in all of love's meanings. I worked to incorporate that in the campaign. It's hard work to make a film appreciated as a "discovery film." You have to select and pursue exactly the right taste influencers, get them to discover it, build on that. This was before our instantaneous digital awarenesses were even imaginable. "Word of mouth" was the ballgame. Warren Cowan used to insist on word-of-mouth screenings for taxi drivers and hair-dressers, people who talked to people in the course of their daily chores.

Once we got that word cranking in the business, we made an outreach to saturate "Rachel, Rachel" on "the Bel Air circuit." Bel Air is one of the richest residential areas for the entertainment elite. The Bel Air circuit was the network of top industry people who had home screening rooms and who competed to get to screen the hot films first. They "knew" people at the studios, and I'm sure being on the Bel Air circuit was an expensive game, but it was a ready evidence of being wired within the industry. We made aggressive efforts to make "Rachel, Rachel" a prime and easy get for the circuit. The film quickly had the cache, and, most important of all they saw that it delivered beyond their expected delights. So it wasn't a surprise but rather a grand celebration when Paul Newman won the New York Film Critics award as best director. Pre-Oscar awards were not so proliferate then, and the New York Critics honor was a major harbinger of awards to come. So expectations were high on that morning in early February when the media and the expectant, fingers-crossed press agents gathered at the Academy for the announcement of the Oscar nominees for 1968

"Rachel, Rachel" had four… including the big one, Best Film, plus Joanne for Best Actress, Estelle Parsons for Best Supporting actress, and Stewart Stern for Best Adapted Screenplay… but not for Paul as director. We'd had a similar disappointment when Kirk Douglas won the New York Film Critics' prize and the Golden Globe for his performance as Vincent Van Gogh in "Lust For Life" but failed to win the Oscar. But Paul wasn't even nominated for the Oscar for "Rachel, Rachel." . With some regularity, motion pictures nominated for best film fail to get director nominations. But this was a major contender that was very strongly and generally characterized as "a director's film." Of course, all

films are that, but some like "Rachel, Rachel" are received as the powerful realization of a director's vision, a vision that powered the film to life in spite of the industry's resistance to films of such fragile, delicate narrative where every brush stroke is meticulous and contributive. How could such a "director's film," already singularly honored for its direction, get nominated without the director along for the ride? The question really bothered all of the people involved with the film and in Paul's high-powered entourage…

Abe Greenberg was the entertainment editor of The Hollywood Citizen-News, which had industrial strength in what was then a six paper town (not counting the trade papers). Paul's omission from the best director fieldstuck in Abe's craw, too. I encouraged him not to let it lie, to get to the "why" of it. Each of the branches of the Academy… editors, actors etc…, selects the nominees in its category or categories, with all of the branches jointly selecting best picture nominees. The list of members of the directors branch was available, certainly for a top journalist, and Abe made up a mailing list (not difficult because many directors had studio deals) and polled the voting directors to find the answer to one simple question: how many of them had seen "Rachel, Rachel." The result was staggering. Even after its best film nomination, even after the official Academy screenings and all the studio screenings of "Rachel, Rachel" as a Best Film nominee, even after all the weeks at local theatres where their Academy card would admit them and a guest, only forty percent of the membership of the directors branch had seen Paul Newman's heralded film. For some reason, that brought closure to the Newman camp.

Until Abe published the story, the industry had pretty much assumed that Oscar voters, without question, saw the key contenders, and "Rachel, Rachel" had certainly been a key contender. It demonstrated to me and to a lot of others that the name of the game was making sure the voters saw your film. Abe's investigative poll very much changed the way Oscar campaigns were contemplated and conducted. No longer the bland assumption that the best films all will be viewed by this select electorate. With time and technology, it came to pass that videos and then DVDs of the films would be sent to Academy members . Guttman and Pam pioneered some of the innovations in this getting-the-eyes business, a few of them so effective that we kept them our own private edge for a few years until the town caught on.

A Conflict of Interest

Paul was represented at Rogers & Cowan by John Foreman who was very classy, delightfully acerbic and really more of a manager than a press agent. So most of the press agently tasks… writing releases, setting and working interviews, promoting films… fell to me. John eventually joined Freddie Fields in his management firm CMA where he served Paul in that capacity before moving into production to produce "Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid" and other films for Paul and some great films without him, including best film nominee "Prizzi's Honor." I worked on the release publicity for Paul on "The Hustler" in 1961. When Paul was nominated for that film, for what many thought his finest performance, and Maximilian Schell was nominated for "Judgment At Nuremberg," company policy dict atedthat I be recused from Paul's campaign, so that the two nominees could have completely independent campaigns. In such situations when the agency had multiple clients competing for the same awards, different account execs would be assigned to each, so each client would get the best possible campaign without any modification to benefit another. In a publicity agency with such a wide and powerful clientele, these conflicts arose often, and no one suffered or benefitted from any special preference. One year we repped four of the five best actor nominees, and none of them made… nor might they have… any complaints.

Max, being very specifically my account, a very close friend and our daughters' godfather, was my baby for the campaign. Paul, whose managerial and agency entourage was a who's-who of important "contacts" for Rogers & Cowan (power people who drive major stars to your firm or help keep them there), was much more the direct preoccupation of Warren Cowan and John Foreman. I was keeping Max visible and doing a subtle campaign because one of the other best actor nominees that year was Spencer Tracy, who also had been nominated for "Judgment At Nuremberg." Max did not have mere reverence for Tracy as man and as actor; he had awe. We agreed it would be unseemly for him to labor to win out over his and everyone else' hero. A balls-out, glad-handing campaign with Max showing up everywhere and milking every conceivable interview was definitely not Max's style. In the first place, Spencer Tracy had become a dear and idolized friend for Max. We were making good and respectful moves, one of which was that it wasn't an aggressive and visible striving.

We were both (as was Max's respected William Morris agent, Phil Kellogg) content with the nomination because it had already placed this young Swiss actor so firmly on the map. Brilliant, not yet 30, devastatingly handsome and attractive to women (as well as romantically involved with many of the most famous of them), how many brass rings do you need to grab? It was firmly understood that this was merely the first of many nominations or awards for Maximilian Schell, which certainly proved to be the case. He was doomed to be, perennially, a great actor in great roles in addition to being locked-in as a hot leading man… very much as his sister Maria (also a client) had done as a sure-thing great actress/leading lady. Don't let people kid you that nominations are not campaigned for. The appearance of no campaign is, in fact, a very specific KIND of campaign…. Tactic # 12 in PR 101.

Max directed most of his interviews and appearances to lauding his competitors., and very sincerely so. I would not normally think that the best strategy, but in this case, it seemed to be. Specifically, he did often acknowledge the sheer brilliance of Paul's "Hustler" performance. I did not want Paul's devotees in the office or the vast and powerful part of the industry so massively invested in Paul to think of Max as a usurper. It was generally held that this was Paul's year, especially since "Judgment" had two competing Best Actor nominees to divide the film's "vote." Moreover, "Judgment," with seven great actors starring in a kind of mosaic narrative, each with killer plotlines and scenes, did not permit the kind of dominant tent pole performance with which Paul carried "Hustler." George C. Scott, Jackie Gleason and Piper Laurie were astonishing in "The Hustler," but Paul moved that film with a savage fury and determination. It was clearly HIS year, as the year before had belonged to Burt Lancaster's "Elmer Gantry" performance in another title-role.

For most years through the 70s, it was widely believed that films had "votes," meaning blocs of voters who had loyalties to vote in a specific manner. In particular, it was assumed that voters associated with one studio or another might vote their loyalties. Thanks to the secret ballot, that probably wasn't the case, and it definitely is not the case now, largely because so few employees these days are lifers at one studio or the other. There is clearly no longer the perceived self interest in a home team win.

We were so convinced and content that Max had already collected and banked his benefits from this performance with the nomination,Max had determined

that he wouldn't make the trip to Hollywood for the awards, but would continue his skiing trip in Austria. with some dazzling beauty whose identity I knew not. I had surrendered his seats. At the rehearsal the day before the Oscarcast, there was no big picture of him in a seat so that the show's director and cameramen would know where to "pick him up." In the middle of the night preceding the awards, I got a call from Max saying that he had stored his skis and was about to drive down to Vienna or Zurich with only three hours to make the four-hour drive to jump on a plane which might, with luck, get him to Hollywood just as the awards were starting. More calls were exchanged that night as some avalanche on the road held him up or when he almost took a shortcut off some cliff. They were holding the plane for him at the airport. Oscar morning was a flurry of calls to retrieve his seat, to have a limo meet him, to have a tux there that might approximate his size and to lay aside a room for him to change in a Santa Monica motel near the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, where the awards were held. No one thought Max's name was in the envelope, but the Academy parted the sea to make sure a nominee was there just in case… Although Warren Cowan and Rogers Cowan had vested interests in a Paul Newman win, Warren took a guiding hand in assuring the tricky logistics of getting Max to the Oscars in time. He told the Academy just to have the limo available to Max at the holding area and that we would take care of his pick-up. He had credentials messengered so that Sandy Friedman, office boy on his way to top PR pro and a driver of remarkable and stomach-clenching insanity, could collect Max at the airport and deliver him to the Awards. Meanwhile I was across from the Oscar site, overseeing preparations at the motel which the Academy took over for Bob Hope's and other dressing rooms and as a general staging area. Max' plane was, of course, late. Sandy had to do his speed maniac act on side streets to avoid the jammed freeway. Max arrived physically drained by the trans-oceanic mad dash, emotionally siphoned and hyped at the same time, given his acceptance that he didn't have a chance to win. He was one great massage shy of getting to the auditorium on anything other than a litter. A masseur? In the few remaining minutes? At which point, Bob Hope strode out of his suite, as only Bob Hope could stride, heading coolly towards his opening the show in about six minutes, and I asked if he had a masseur on him. He looked at Max and said, "Yeah, you look like you need it. Ralph!" And Ralph the masseur looked out of Bob's suite. Bob pointed to Max and said, "Take care of my son, will you?"

The show was an hour-and-a-half over by the time the limo raced Max across the street. I hadn't had time to dress or to get my credentials, so I hurried home to see Max lose with dignity, the ironic end to a crazy hunch. Gisela's parents were visiting from Germany, and they had a good sense of the tension Gisela and I were feeling. Max was family. All that subtle but exhausting campaign and all that rush… for nothing. A major actress/dancer was doing a stomach-pumping, bottom-bouncing dance of the period, and my mother-in-law was agonized that this poor girl had become so ill in front of millions of people. Then the award. A shot of Max slumped gloomily in his seat, physically beat, drained of hope. They announce his name. He stays frozen in his slump, overwhelmed with having lost, having made that crazy race for… but it slowly occurs to him that the sound of his name was not merely a mocking echo in his brain.

The next day I arrived at the office to a traitor's reception. The farm had been bet on Paul's handsome nose. The apple cart had been upset, and I was expected to clean it up. There were a lot of people-you-don't-want-to-make-mad who we would have been thrilled if mad at Rogers & Cowan was all they were. "Well, you really fucked up this one, Guttman," one staff member said. I don't believe he was speaking for all, but you could have built an igloo out of the welcome I was receiving… If anyone disagreed with the party line, they sure weren't going to do it in public. I went into Warren's office, and his look was not that of anger but rather disappointment. "You HAD to DO it, huh?" he said. "Do what, Warren? My job? You like Max, too." "I love him, but that's beside the point. Just lay low for a while with certain people". "Did Paul say anything to you?" "He and Joanne are the only ones who haven't." I started out of the office, but his voice caught me. "Richard…" He was the only one who called me that. I turned. "Good job."

I went over at midday to the Chateau Marmont hotel where Max always stayed. We had to work out a thank you ad he would take in the trade papers. As we were working on it, he said, "It costs more to win than to lose." I knew he was joking. We couldn't agree on what words of gratitude suited the occasion, and I told him we were getting too late for them to lay out the ad. He said they should just reproduce his handwriting, and he wrote, "No man is an island unto himself. Each is a part of the continent, a piece of the main. John Donne" and then he listed everyone he wished to thank and then "thank you for being part of my continent." "Max," I pleaded," they're going to think John Donne won the Oscar

We need your name." "They'll know." "Who'll know?" "They," he said, pointing to the names. Another big argument, and finally, at the very end, he wrote, "Max."

As I was leaving, I said, "You know, this changes the whole game." "It's just a line in my biography," he insisted. Well, he made sure of that by going off to do a play in Vienna and then shooting a "Hamlet" in German for German television. But even absence or indifference couldn't hold that talent down. He did have a point, though. All glory has its season, and the length of memory and heat varies. Once upon a June, barely three months after the Oscars, I asked an actress if she could name the four people who had won the recent Best Acting and Best Supporting Acting awards. She couldn't name any…. And she was one of them. Of course, it was Cloris Leachman, and she was, as likely as not, just having me on. But most people in Hollywood would have drawn a similar blank, including some winners.

Two stand-alone monuments to larger-than-life are, you will most certainly agree, Orson Welles and Sir Laurence Olivier.

Welles, who eventually and unfortunately matched his unbounded genius with his unbounded corpulence, entered movie-making at a time when it was assumed that all of the rules had been created and carved into concrete. So "Citizen Kane" and "Magnificent Ambersons" seemed like an alien intrusion. He had all of these wonderful new rules all his own, and he chose to do it the hard way… starting off with a film that was a lacerating critique of the most powerful man in the American media, William Randolph Hearst. So a lot of media cards were stacked against him. And he alienated much of the Hollywood establishment by being so brilliant and so unlimited by the age of twenty-two. Geniuses three times his age were limited by Hollywood superstructure rules, so why not he? But brilliant he stayed even after his appetites for food and for film freedoms ate him out of house and home. My rare experiences of him came toward the end when his girth gave him little else to be oyher than Orson Welles, but the talents were still expansive. Guttman & Pam long represented the Merv Griffin show, and I made a point to attend the tapings whenever Welles was there. It was like being in the proximity of Leonardo or Ludwig. I was always prepared for an epiphany… and one night it came.

Merv taped the show at his theatre and office complex on Vine Street. You could enter from the parking lot behind the building with direct access to backstage and the wings, which is what Welles did, because, sadly, he was so wide that it

was difficult for him to manage the narrow hallway which led to the green room toward the front where all of the other guests gathered to watch the show and ready themselves for their own entrance. As result, Welles would do his waiting in a small room adjacent to the stage entrance, a room large enough to hold only one Orson Welles… and there most certainly was only one Orson Welles.

I arrived at the show late. Mr. Welles was already in his little room, busily distracted drawing sketches on a large pad of paper. Later, when Merv introduced him, I went into the theatre and stood at the back so that I could experience his appearance live. Merv was at ease with everyone, interested in everyone, but the two people who most commanded his interest and awe were Dr. Armand Hammer and Orson Welles. His personal office was definitely out of bounds if Dr. Hammer was visiting. We had to speak softly so as not to disturb them. This brilliant businessman and master of the world was Merv's guru. Merv, in turn or perhaps as result, was the brightest business man with whom I've ever worked… and with John Paul deJoria, Kathy Ireland, Wayne Rogers, Clint Eastwood and George Barrie in the mix, that's saying a lot. Merv also was like a kid at the feet of Orson Welles, particularly when the moment arrived, as it always did, that Welles did his magic. He picked an audience member at random who chose a name from a basket, everyone in the audience having scribbled his or her name into the collection. The man selected stood up, a professorial type whom Welles then engaged in conversation, instructing him to think of some public figure as they spoke.

Picking up the pad and sketching pen which had been placed before him, Citizen Welles began to draw as they chatted. Visibly, Orson Welles was having trouble. Finally, he put his pad down and said that the man's mind wasn't being very cooperative. "All I'm hearing is anger. Is this someone you don't like?" "Hate," the man said. "Well, just calm down and try to picture his face. The man did, and Orson Welles concentrated and then started to sketch in earnest. Finally he said, "Is this the object of your scorn?" And he held to the man and the cameras a very good caricature of Henry Kissinger. Yep, that was the guy. Much applause. Someone else' name was picked from the basket and Mr. Welles asked that woman to pick anyone else. She selected a heavyset woman in a sweatshirt. This lady was very nervous and had trouble concentrating when asked to think of a celebrity. Again, it wasn't coming through clearly. "You don't have to be so nervous, dear," Welles offered. "Why don't you come up here with me? Maybe you're just too far away." No, no, she couldn't. "I'm not dressed for… we were just

shopping and then someone said there were tickets, and…" But he cajoled her to the stage, and indeed she was ill-clad for her weight in shorts and almost shaking when she arrived next to him. He patted her hand to calm her. "Now let's just talk, but you think about your celebrity, and I hope it's not someone you hate." "Someone I love," she offered, and he told her that was a great relief. He started to sketch as they spoke and she calmed. Finally he asked if this was the person she loved, and the sketch was of Bob Hope… and that's precisely whom she had in mind. To her delight, Welles signed the caricature for her. We were all in a thrall of mystification. We went to commercial for Mr. Welles to depart. Merv never showed Mr. Welles laboring on or off the set.

At the end of the program, I passed Mr. Welles' cubicle as I went to my car, and he had, of course, already left. But on the floor were perhaps a dozen of the drawings he had been doodling before. I went in and looked at them. They were all practice sketches of Henry Kissinger and Bob Hope. What we had seen was not magic but rather, and something much more to be treasured, a masterful theatrical production by that ultimate master of theatricality and controlled attention, Orson Welles. I had finally witnessed a production of the Mercury Theatre. It was a missing piece from the great scavenger hunt of my life, and I was thrilled. So thrilled that I forgot to take one of the drawings. What an idiot!

My only actual conversation with Mr. Welles came when he had miraculously agreed to present an award to Warren Beatty… miraculously in that he was not given to public appearances. But he and Warren were the only talents ever to be nominated for Best Actor, Best Director, producer of a Best Film nominee and Best Screenplay for the same film, Mr. Welles for "Citizen Kane" and Warren for "Heaven Can Wait" and "Reds." Mr. Welles arrived early and I tried to entertain him with my inexhaustible curiosity about every thought he'd ever had and every miracle he'd ever pulled from his hat. I was particularly interested as to why he had done his character in "The Lady From Shanghai" with such a pronounced Irish accent, and he said, "The Irish are a mystical people." The cutting of that film's final shoot-out in the funhouse hall of mirrors was a major subject for me, and he was amused that our final exam in film editing at UCLA had been for each to assemble his own cut of the raw footage from that sequence in which maintaining screen direction… cutting coherently so that an actor on the right side of the screen doesn't suddenly bounce over to the left side of the screen…. were thrown to the wind by the constant use of mirrored shots and the intention

to confuse. Images that appeared to be at some specific "there" were actually at some multi-mirrored somewhere else. But I had my conversation with Orson Welles, Charles Foster Kane, Othello, Harry Lime, "Touch of Evil's" Hank Quinlan, all of the above. I'd spent a childhood sitting on the floor in front of the family radio, waiting in thrall to the very end of his Mercury Theatre broadcasts when he would say "I remain… your obedient servant" Serve us well he obviously did, often quite disobediently but always to our fascination.

How could anyone complain about an occupation so generous of brushes with greatness?

Another strange insight into Welles' deep but idiosyncratic talent came when a top lawyer had overseen the contract on a script sale for me. Instead of payment, he wanted me to track down the rights to an Australian novel called "Dead Calm." A dedicated seaman, he wanted to film the story of a couple whose sailing vessel is trapped in a dead calm on open seas when one morning a mysterious sailboat appears nearby, and no sign of life. When the husband rows over to see what the matter is, a young man from that vessel hijacks the husband's skiff, commandeers his boat and, sails off with the wife, leaving the husband on the sinking mystery ship with two murdered people and no means of giving chase. My research showed that the last rights resided with Orson Welles. Jerry Pam went off to Cannes shortly thereafter and made a trip to visit Welles' former assistant to find out what happened to the rights. "Oh," she said, "Mr. Welles made the movie." But it had never made it to exhibition. She told Jerry that Welles starred in it with Jeanne Moreau and Laurence Harvey. When I checked Larry, he confirmed it, saying that he had jumped at the chance to work with Orson Welles. "And it actually was filmed?" "About a half or a third of it." Larry recalled fondly that the experience had been everything he'd expected, including the abrupt and incomplete conclusion. "What, why, how?" I stammered. "He ran out of either money or belief." The film eventually was shot again as an Australian production which launched the acting careers of Nicole Kidman, Sam Neill and Billy Zane and propelled director Phillip Noyce to major Hollywood productions.

Welles' mind-reading was one thing, but I barely survived another instance of instant theatre, the contrivance of another maddening film genius, John

Carpenter. These guys are supremely sane, and it is we whom they make crazy as we wander fitfully through the nooks and crannies of their imaginations. John, that master of terror and the hallowed concocter of "Halloween" horror, was, by my arrangement, to receive the George Pal Career Achievement award from the Academy of Science Fiction and Horror. It was a big deal, and when I asked John who he wanted me to get to present it, he said he'd already taken care of that. It would be Frank Darabont who had established his own masters degree in film-making with "The Shawshank Redemption." What a great choice I thought… or at least up until Darabont took the podium to make his presentation speech. The gist of his introduction was that he'd been asked to hand John Carpenter this award bearing the name of George Pal, who, he said, was Hungarian and a great filmmaker, neither of which could be said for John Carpenter. A gasp from the audience which had gathered to honor Carpenter. The gasp did not dissuade Darabont. "Give John Carpenter an award with George Pal's name on it? If I had my choice, I wouldn't give Carpenter an *ashtray* with George Pal's name on it." A rush of audience dislocation surpassing "Springtime For Hitler." Darabont went on for fifteen minutes reading in detail every horrible review… who knew there could have been that many?… that John Carpenter ever received. The audience was roiling. I was in a state of shock, happy only that I had not made the presenter selection myself. I looked at John, and he had this mad smile on his face, and I was sure that the humiliation of it all had driven him out of his mind. It went on… it went on. Finally, it was Leonard Nimoy's bright and outspoken wife Susan who could stand it no more, and she yelled out… "OK, ok, we get the point… you hate John Carpenter… well, WE don't, so just shut up and hand him the goddam award." She spoke for us all. Darabont sighed with relief and explained that when he accepted giving this award, he had to swear to deliver exactly the speech that had been written for him by…… John Carpenter. Everyone was stunned, and then there was spontaneous applause for a great piece of theatre. Why I asked John afterwards about his reason for staging it, I can't imagine. His whole life and art has been given over to horrifying audiences. I asked if this was payback to me for some transgression, and he said that that certainly was a consideration. It was, everyone agreed in exhausted relief, great Grand Guignol.

Sir Laurence Olivier is rather a poster boy for larger-than-life. I'd seen him perform "The Entertainer" on the London stage, and at a certain point Rogers

& Cowan was engaged to sell the film version for the U.S. I flew to London to try to get Sir Larry to do something he hadn't done before… promote a film for the American domestic market. I checked into the Dorchester and was ushered to what was either their smallest room or their largest broom closet. But that was fine. Laurence Harvey had arranged for me to meet with Olivier (who was appearing on stage in "Rhinoceros,") so I left word where I could be reached and went off about other business there. When I got back to the hotel that evening, the doorman, who almost didn't let me in upon arrival, was suddenly aglow with great and empathetic curiosity as to whether I'd had a lovely day. When I got to the desk, they did everything but roll out a red carpet. There was great apology that I'd been given the wrong room and they hoped the new one to which my possessions had been transferred would be more to my liking. It was a magnificent suite for the same price as the other. When I opened my only message, I understood. It said, "Sir Laurence Olivier looks forward to your discussion tomorrow in his dressing room following the matinee performance." That was the highlight of the trip, the status inferred because of some small association with a revered acting great, with a creator infinitely larger than life.

Gisela and I had the same experience when, while staying at a far smaller and markedly more humble hotel in London, we wew scheduled to have a meeting with Glenda Jackson, who preferred to meet us where we were staying. Thank goodness the Durrants hotel had a very charming paneled library. The staff brought us tea on far better china than I'd seen there before. I talked her into letting us do an Oscar campaign for "Hedda," although she felt no one in Hollywood had seen the film. That probably was true, but many had seen her on stage when she did Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler" in Hollywood earlier that year, and she was on a run of three fairly consecutive nominations, including a best actress win for "A Touch Of Class," for which Guttman & Pam had done the campaign. Moreover, I had a secret weapon in having invented and secured for Guttman & Pam's private use the single way of showing movies to Academy members on cable TV. (More on this, my favorite coup, in a later chapter entitled Damage Control.) Only the films Guttman & Pam handled would enjoy that advantage. I was pretty sure our nomination campaign for her could be successful. She didn't believe it until her production partner, Bob Enders, called her to advise that she'd received her fourth best actress Oscar nomination. Gisela and I had already banked our reward for having attracted an acting immortal to the little Durrants Hotel. The next morning

we all got double portions of marmalade at our breakfast table. As for Olivier, when I met him backstage on that prior trip, he was charming, kind, indulgent and intransigent. He listened politely and then politely declined. I pressed him for a reason, offering to have interviews no longer than twenty minutes. He said it wasn't the time of the chat, "It's the forever that the words they put in my mouth will exist." I offered to have each interview tape recorded and they could draw only from that. "No, no," he smiled gently, "that would be even worse. Then I would have only myself to blame." Go to America to promote "The Entertainer?" Not, he insisted, until he had first swum the English Channel.

It's hard to talk larger-than-lifers without mentioning Johnny Wooden… Coach. He lived his values. We had, during the magic UCLA basketball years of the 60s, the pleasure of some social contact with him and his wife Nell and some of his various teams, particularly with Mike Warren who was for a short period my intern, Mike Warren who later honed his considerable acting chops on "Hillstreet Blues" and whom Coach Wooden called his smartest guard ever, the best review any athlete ever received. At a party following a one-point win over USC, Gisela was talking with Mike and with Coach Wooden, and she started to celebrate the thrill of the final play in which Mike drove to the basket for a contested lay-up and then, at the height of his leap, made a last second no-look pass to Lucius Allen who had a clean eight-footer which went in at the buzzer. Throughout her enthusing, Mike was making no-no-no signals with his index fingers which were pointing up and quivering like uncertain compass needles. Coach, Mike explained, doesn't like anyone to go for a shot he isn't *certain* he can make. "Michael did something wrong, and then he did something right," the greatest coach of all time said. "It's better to know you're going to do it right the first time." If that isn't a guideline for life, I don't know what is. We all get by with something we did right after we did something wrong, but Coach's outlook can save you a lot of sweat and, sometimes, a lot of grief. You don't always know that that no-look pass is going to lead to points.

Back to Henrik Ibsen. His "The Wild Duck," which delves into the insanity of committing one's life to the whole truth, blunt and uncompromising, is a great salve to a press agent's conscience and elected professional set of values. That

may be his appeal to me. One time in the market we bumped into the delightful actor, comedian and poet Henry Gibson who, along with the rest of the "Laugh In" cast, was in a period of intense currency. My daughter Monika was about eight then, and I introduced her to Mr. Henry Gibson. "My daddy loves to read your plays," she told him. "My plays?" he responded, "do you mean my poems?" "No, your plays. He keeps them in the bathroom. The one I want to read is 'The Doll's House.'" "My dear, he said to her, "I'm honored to be confused into such company." I met Henry in another market a few years ago. It was Oscar season, and I invited him to one of our screenings. He said he couldn't go because it would be the first anniversary of his wife's passing. It was the way he said it, and it was no surprise when, shortly thereafter, he left us, too.

The Ibsen/Gibson connection reminds me of another occasion when we had some contingent of our European star firmament over for dinner in our little valley house. The conversation was very sophisticated and we were having to be very cryptic in our discussion because it was quite anatomical with numerous references to the male genitals which we, by unspoken common consent, were referring to with the term "phallic symbol" because Moni was sitting at the table with us. Even though she was only six or seven, she was trying to structure what it was we were talking about. And it was phallic symbol this and phallic symbol that. Suddenly, Moni brought her spoon down on the table loudly enough to get our full attention. "OK, you guys," she said, "who's Felix Gimble?"

Long daily drives to and from work are the heavy price I pay for the bucolic pleasures of living in the far western reaches of Malbu. To retain sanity, I fell into the habit of listening to books on CD. Michael Redgrave took me through "Paradise Lost," Stacy Keach embodied Hemingway and each of his characters in every short story Papa ever wrote. That is a don't-miss as is author James Dickey's reading of his "Deliverance." In his soft Georgia speak?… better even than the great movie John Boorman made from it. One book that charmed me was George Burns' reading of his ode to Gracie Allen, "Amazing Gracie." In it we learn that Gracie was an expert Irish step dancer, and that when Fred Astaire expressed interest in having them in one of his films, a condition was that they be able to dance. Gracie asked George to show her his stuff, and he tried. "You can dance only with one leg," she concluded. He argued, but she insisted the other leg couldn't dance. She taught him some steps with which it might LOOK like he was dancing with both legs.

When they auditioned, Astaire watched him and then said, "Nice try, except you can dance with only one leg. I think we can work around that. "

One day in Burns' reinvigorated post-"Oh, God" career, I answered my office phone, and the caller identified himself as George Burns. Now anybody can do a George Burns, so of course I was suspicious. He said he'd met a young songwriter and how could he (George Burns or the fellow purporting to be him) find a contact to get one of his songs to Barbra Streisand . I knew who could help and who, in veneration of George Burns' comedy brilliance, might help. But how could I be sure this wasn't the old I'm-George-Burns scam? So I asked the fellow on the other end of the line if it was true that he could dance with only one leg. Suddenly he was very animated about the subject and gave me some further laughs about his one-leggedness. "Which leg was it" I asked. His answer corresponded to what was in the book. I put him on to the right guy, but nothing happened to it. Maybe the song was nothing you could dance to.

I had a similar call from somebody purporting to be Harpo Marx. Our paths had crossed (although we hadn't met) when he'd contributed one of his personal paintings to a big charity art auction I was assisting, a beautiful oil, a quiet, graceful, intricately detailed landscape. It caused him to have my name and number and he wanted help with arrangements for a trip he was making to Israel. The trouble was…. How can you recognize the sound of Harpo Marx' voice? I'd never heard him speak. Oscar Levant wrote about him copiously and lovingly in his various ingenious memoirs, so I had plenty of questions to throw at him in a kind of interrogation. He stood up to the test, and when I met him, those soft eyes reassured me I had the right guy.

BEL AIR CIRCUIT REDUX… I've already mentioned the function of this privileged means of putting films before industry "taste-makers" in the happy comforts of their own lavish homes. It was a valued privilege to be on the guest lists for film-viewing of such catered luxury. Of these pleasures I will now speak. Even the advent of DVDs and the advance availability of new films in that format has not materially reduced these coveted screenings, with projected DVD now the norm. But a half century back, being on Bel Air invitee lists was a social and even professional imperative. It was always good company, good food and a good chance to see upcoming releases just a little bit ahead of the others. Best of all, you met the most interesting people.

We had numerous charming exposures to Groucho Marx, mostly because he was a regular at the Saturday night screenings at famed agent Abby Greshler's home in, yes, Bel Air. Every time he saw Gisela, Groucho would say "Who IS this broad?" She always took it as a compliment, and it certainly seemed to be an expression of either admiration or lust, and in Hollywood they don't really distinguish between the two. Lust is considered a good review. On one occasion, much further into the famous mustachioed one's infirmities, we were at Sidney Sheldon's Beverly Hills home on a weekend morning, and Groucho, as was his habit or at least the habit of the attendant who walked him past the house each morning, came in for his customary bowl of cereal. When he saw Gisela, he said, "Who is this broad? Is she the same broad that I always say who's this broad?" Assured that she was, he demanded to know why she hadn't been served cereal, too. So she had to have cereal with him. But that was the end of the conversation.

One screening night at Abby's, Groucho came in a little late. Abby politely enquired if he could take Groucho's coat, to which Groucho snapped, "Why? Is there going to be a fight?" At which point, Ruthie, another regular, lamented, "If I knew it was going to be this kind of party, I'd have worn my best underwear." A night at Abby and Vi Greshler's palatial manse was like a night at a Friars Club roast. Even a bad film could be an entertaining experience at Abby's. One night it was an adventure flick with a distinguished cast but which was so preposterous that in any other projection circumstance it would have ground to a halt by popular demand at the end of the first reel. However, within minutes of its start, at the first warning clinker, Groucho came up with a crack that drowned the next two minutes of dialogue in laughter. Then it was Tony Randall's turn, and Don Knotts, and even the less famously comedic among us tried our comedic hands. Vince Edwards, who incarnated TV's first big hit doctor, Ben Casey, dished out amusing cutting comments with surgical precision. Soon it was a competition, with the sharpness of each crack rated on a scale ranging from cheers and hilarity to boos and hisses. Gisela and I agreed on the way home that the ridiculous action flick had been the most enjoyable comedy we'd ever seen. And not a thought for the poor people who had loaned out their film to spread word of its excellence throughout the film community.

Speaking of fame, which is one of the purposes of this exercise of recall, it is indeed, fleeting. Which perhaps is the *raison d'etre for* press agents or at least the reason some people hire us. GiseIa, not averse to rubbing it in, likes

to remind me that the commodity I sell… fame… is "passing, of the moment and evaporative." "So are flowers," I countered, "but that's no reason not to grow gardens." Fame is an unstable element, but it wasn't always that way. The Greeks and Romans carved their venerated contemporaries in stone. We have Mount Rushmore and the various memorials in D.C., but, no, immortality is not what it's cracked up to be and certainly not what it used to be. In these fickle times, even immortality is here today and gone tomorrow. A very talented soon-to-be star asked me who I thought was the greatest actor in films. "Well, I've handled so many of them, I can't differentiate," I parried. But he pinned me down, persisting, "Ok, then the greatest actor you've never represented." The greatest one I never represented? My mind flickered on Brando and Bogart, Olivier and March, Nicholson, DeNiro, Tracy, but I said, "Charles Laughton." And the dedicated young actor said, "Who's that?"

Chapter 3

Fame Isn't the Prize, It's the Price

I have an actor friend who gets through a crowd and through life with one overriding rule… don't make eye contact. It's a great and effective policy, especially for stars who inspire a dangerous sense of possession in fans when in the open public. Eye contact is a signed invitation. Having legions of fans attracted to the flame of your talent or acclaim can be a very mixed blessing. *Fame isn't the prize, it's the price.*

A BROAD DAYLIGHT KIDNAPPING AT CHICAGO'S O'HARE. Often stars are betrayed by their own good manners and wind up being held hostage by intrusive fans. Gene Hackman and I were on a flight to Buffalo for the "Superman II" press junket. One might think that "civilians" (Hollywood-speak… anyone not in the entertainment business) in first class might be a tad more considerate of a celebrity's privacy, but some of these privileged individuals presume. For the last hour before the Chicago stopover Gene was prisoner of a large and noisy man pitching his ownership of the film rights to the life of "the greatest baseball star of all time." "Well," Gene said, too polite to tune the guy out, "I'm too old, unless it's Satchel Paige." The wannabe producer didn't get the joke and didn't blink. He kept going on about how it was the role Gene was born to play, finally revealing that the player was Ernie Banks." "Are you aware that Ernie Banks is black?" Gene asked with greater civility than was called for. "So is Satchel Paige,"

the guy persisted, "Five minutes ago you were DYING to play HIM. The miracle of movies, Gene! The miracle of movies!" At which point the pilot mercifully set the plane down. "Chicago," Gene smiled, "I guess this is where you get off." "I'm gonna sell you on this," the guy said, "I'm not getting off." "Then I will," Gene mumbled, and we exited into the terminal.

Now here is where the story takes a turn that confirms that Fate is indeed gracious and where it bestowed upon us one of my favorite moments. Hackman and I had a particular affection for the late and lamented critic, Gene Siskel, whom we suddenly saw walking ahead of us, obviously on his way to join the plane that would take us all to Buffalo. When you really like someone and he really knows that you do, you are free to pull really mean jokes on him. I don't know how we decided it, there was no discussion, not even a nod. It was just something we simultaneously understood we would do. Gene and I came up behind Siskel and each of us clasped him firmly under an elbow, while Hackman held Siskel's neck from behind in a firm grip that defied the turning of the head. We lifted him a few inches off the floor and started scooting him across the terminal. Siskel, in a strained voice about an octave higher than his handsome Midwest baritone on Siskel & Ebert, began to explain to whoever we were that his paper had an absolutely ironclad rule against paying ransom, "actually to discourage situations exactly like this. And I don't have the kind of money you might think I have" and so on with a very convincing recitation of why this crime would not pay. At short length, we set him down at the check-in counter for the flight. A little dazed, Siskel turned around to see us. "I knew it was you guys," he said with a grandly stated nonchalance.

I had a personal opportunity to see how Gene Hackman always has a firm grip on things. It was the day of the Mohammed Ali/Ken Norton rematch at the Forum in Inglewood somewhere in the early 70s. Gene was working, as I recall, on Arthur Penn's "Night Moves." Considering the excellence of that script, I understood when Gene called that morning to say that he wanted to take the screenwriter, Alan Sharp, to the fight and did we know any good scalpers? Apparently we did, because Christy Cane, our Dashiell Hammett-esque Jane-of-all-trades whose mysterious contacts I never questioned but about which I often wondered, called him an hour later to say that she had two tickets in the 19th row, $1600 apiece. Gene was pleased. Christy, Effie Perrine with a 40 inch bustline, got things done. With her, Sam Spade wouldn't have needed a gun.

Shortly after noon, I got a call from Hugh O'Brian, TV's first great western series star… whose Wyatt Earp made TV safe for big hit western series just like the earlier Wyatt had madeTombstone safe for school marms and western dime novel authors. Hugh was a client who owned my affections because his Hugh O'Brian Youth Foundation helped and continues to help thousands of kids get a fair shake in life and he has generously availed each youngster of his personal help and considerable contacts for years. There long have been and still are always dozens of HOBY kids in extraordinarily high positions in Washington and always a few in the White House… kids without access until Hugh O'Brian came into their lives. "How would you like to see the fight?" he asked. "Hugh, thanks, but I'm not really a fan." It was and is true. I was a sports writer as a teenager and during my time in Europe, I would constantly visit the American embassies for the two things I missed most… malted milks and the chance to hear the college football games. In the half century since then, I haven't had more than a dozen malts or seen more than a dozen games live. But boxing was especially low on my need-to-see list. "Hugh, it's a great gesture, but don't waste something that special on me." "Second row." "Even so…" "Guy who's inviting?… interested in investing in films." "Second row, huh?" I said, suddenly engaged. "Soap guy from Fresno." We arranged for Hugh to pick me up at the gas station on La Cienega and Olympic and we were directed to a special parking spot at the Forum by a half dozen guys who greeted him with "Hey Wyatt." The soap guy proved an interesting conversationalist and after he hosted a very expensive meal in the Stadium Club, we proceeded with him to our second row seats.

I was enjoying the pre-fight experience immensely. Even representing Elizabeth Taylor's and Kathy Ireland's famous jewelry enterprises, Jane Seymour's new eminence in the gems trade and having exalted Harry Winston Jewels, Kazanzian Jewels and others for pay along the way, I can still honestly say that I have never in my life seen at the same time as many karats as glistened in those front rows. Well, I suppose in the Iranian treasury vault in Tehran, but it's a very close call, because on that fisticuffs evening, territory was being marked in diamonds and emeralds… and that was just the guys. Suddenly my reverie was interrupted by a vice-like grip from behind. "How did you get better tickets than I did?" a deep and familiar voice growled. "Because I have a better press agent?" I offered with unturned head. "Second fucking row?" Gene said. "Soap guy from Fresno. Interested in backing movies. Want to meet him?" I asked. "No," Gene said, "I'll just

go back to my seats next to the hot dog stand and behind the steel beam. Know where I can rent some binoculars?" I told him that if anything happened in the fight, I'd send word back.

With all due respect to the people who buy the tickets, the word "fan" derives from the word "fanatic." From the start of Hollywood publicity, a key goal of studio press departments was to make stars the object of public fantasy. That can get amazingly and sometimes amusingly out of hand. A perfect example of the convoluted psychology of fan fanaticism was driven home to me once when Gisela and I were in New York with Christopher Reeve for a junket promoting one of his films. Junkets occur thirty of forty times a year, usually a weekend, during which a studio gathers a hundred print press and electronic press in a hotel shortly before a film's release. The stars and the film's other interview-worthies grind out the charming chitchat to gather free minutes and free inches of promotional exposure. Like most free things, it's expensive.

On this one, held at New York's Plaza Hotel, Colin Dangaard came to the hospitality room for the Sunday buffet breakfast during the junket for "Monsignor." Colin was a junket regular, a widely syndicated Australian journalist who (his nearly unintelligible Down Under accent aside) was almost a dead ringer for singer/song-writer John Denver. This incident transpired at the height of Denver's well-earned mega-popularity.

Colin had a bemused smile as he ladled bacon and eggs onto his plate I asked him what her name was. "I never found out," he answered. "For the first time in a long time, Colin, you have my rapt attention," I said. "Well, I came back to my room last night at about three… you know how it is. And I get in, and I realize that the lights had already been on and that there's this girl in my bed." "Talk about room service." "No, she was there on her own, sitting up reading. So I say 'Oh, excuse me, I must be in the wrong room,' but she says 'No, Mr. Denver, this is your room. And I'm your biggest fan, as you are about to find out'. And I come back with 'no no you don't understand.' But she says 'no it's YOU who doesn't understand. I want to thank you for all the pleasure you've given me and are about to give me.' At which point she drops the blanket and I can see it's quite a present she intends to extend. But this I can't do under the circumstances, and I insist I'm not Denver and she insists I am, getting a little testy in the process. So I say, 'ok, I'll prove it,' and I launch into 'Rocky Mountain High' and suddenly she's

convinced and really pissed and leaps from the bed screaming at the top of her lungs 'You're not John Denver, you fat-head phony' at which point I realize how attractively naked she is and I start to give the whole thing a second consideration, but she's pulling on her clothes, screaming at me that I'm a lying sonovabitch who lured her there under false pretense, that she has a mind to call the cops, yelling that I'm a fake and a sex pervert and throwing everything loose at me. And then, just as the door is about to close behind her, she whirls back in and screams 'And I'll NEVER buy another one of your fucking records!!"

You can discount that as garden variety schizophrenia, but actually it's very typical fan double-think… a common case of a fan's fantasy taking one step or more back from reality. Here are some other fan lunacies that almost any star can match. I arrived at the Guttman & Pam office one morning to find a headline about our client Jaclyn Smith slashed across the top of the Herald-Examiner, one of LA's two top morning papers at the time. "JACLYN SMITH SUED FOR DISRUPTING FAN'S SEXUALITY" or something very close to that. The gist of the story was that a law suit had been filed in an Orange County court by a man who wanted reimbursement for the fact that every time he saw Jaclyn on television, he was deprived of the ability to be sexual with any other woman for some stated period of time.

She was, the suit alleged, casting a spell on him to keep him from being unfaithful to her with any other female. I called Jackie's lawyer and learned that it is legitimate, or at least legal, for any publication to print a story about any duly filed civil suit. And as for the plaintiff, anybody can sue anybody for anything. The fact that it is a filing makes it, per se, not libel. Jackie could not even have countersued the man for malicious prosecution. A judge might easily rule that if the guy legitimately thought the charge to be true, that would make it not malicious. If you wish to spread some libelous thought about someone and still be libel-proof, apparently you just have to press a suit charging the other person with whatever deleterious behavior you wish to bring to public attention. Such inequities are, apparently, the necessary knocks and pings in the motor of a free-flowing legal system where no one's case is prejudiced in advance. Public figures are particularly at the mercy of such legal Catch-22s. If you pull that on Mack the barber, it doesn't make the news.

On another occasion, we started getting calls from a man in Utah who demanded to speak to Jacqueline Bisset because, he kept charging, she was the mother of his child. His pursuit of this became intense and was soon very worrisome. We had to put an end to it before it became dangerous to Jackie. The Beverly Hills Police Department, with so many stars in the public it protects, actually has a division to deal with this kind of unwanted pursuit. I invited one of its officers to visit our office to try to resolve it with me.

It is counterproductive for a publicist or lawyer or manager to call these delusional people, these "celebrity obsessives," because it just validates in their minds that they are establishing or continuing a relationship with the star in question. Contact with some official rep of the object of obsession becomes a tangible level of reality. It only confirms the fantasy. But getting someone to flash a badge. to interject a voice of somber authority, is different and can serve to challenge the delusion. We finally tracked down a phone number, and the officer conversed with the man, conveying great and reassuring calm. The man was insistent and exhibited a tenacity born of the fact that it was real to him, not a fantasy but a conviction.

"No, sir, Miss Bisset did not have your child…" the officer said firmly, repeating responses so we could get the gist of the conversation. "How do I know that it wasn't yours? Because Miss Bisset has never had anyone's child… no, sir, she is not a mother…. No… sir… sir… take my word for it… no child…yes, absolutely positive… What? No, wait… don't hang up." But apparently the man had done just that. The officer set the phone in its cradle with a look of extreme exasperation. "What happened?" I asked. "What happened?… what happened?" he muttered, still fuming… "Sonovabitch said, 'Well, maybe it was JOSIE Bisset."

These convictions are real to these people, triggering the stalker pursuit. The delusion of having fathered a child with the object of their obsession validates in the stalker's mind the concept that they had shared sexual congress. At its base, being annoying or threatening is a way to make the star aware that they occupy the same planet.

On the other hand, the reliable support of fan groups offers a terrific support system. Jackie was once invited to make a presentation at an important gathering of top members of Hollywood's gay community. Barry Krost, an important producer

and artists manager, called me to request her presence. I said I wanted to be sure she would be well-received, and he said he could guarantee her a standing ovation upon her introduction. I suggested he couldn't possibly guarantee that. "Of course, I can," he insisted, "I will simply say… 'Will everybody… who would like to BE Jacqueline Bisset… please stand up.'"

Richard Simmons once, to my great discomfort, did an improvisational take-off on stalker fan excess, acting it out in the hallway connecting the dressing rooms at The Tonight Show, kissing my shoe because I worked with the superstar he most adulated. It was a sheer piece of Richard Simmons theatre, and I was the stooge, which didn't go unnoticed by the people in the hallway who witnessed it. I was sodden with embarrassment. Richard was doing a parody of a burdensome aspect of the fame game. At a certain point, devotion can become toxic.

Or it can become intoxicating. Jane Seymour's avid fandom has enthusiastically followed her into her current prominence as a painter and brand name in the world of jewelry design. Their devotion has made itself very evident in specific instances. The first was the motion picture "Somewhere in Time," the film in which Christopher Reeve's character, a writer, is transported back in time into a romance with a turn of the century actress incarnated by Jane. The bittersweet romance touched something so hopelessly and hopefully romantic in audiences that it drew together hundreds of thousands of people who were not so much fans as addicts. Tens of thousands gather to celebrate the film and the place it has in their hearts, joining at the site where the story transpired, the great hotel on Mackinac Island in Michigan. Romanticism is not dead. The celebrants come attired for the period, committing themselves together to a story about the immortality of love. It struck a nerve common in human wanting. Jane and Christopher were bound together in that vast longing for a simpler time and a simpler and more enduring concept of love. Later, Jane was of untiring assistance to Christopher and his wife Dana following his accident as they strove to support research and care for the kind of quadriplegic damage Christopher had suffered so tragically. The family of "Somewhere in Time" fans joined them in the effort to fund the search for a cure.

An equally devoted vast audience gathered about Jane's gritty but uplifting series, "Dr. Quinn-Medicine Woman. The essential element in such fan fixations

is identification. "Somewhere in Time" touched their need to connect with something romantically hopeful. "Dr. Quinn" told human tales relating to medical practice in a time and place when the supporting science was pretty basic. What she brought to it was a passion and commitment that most people found missing in their relationships with HMOs and doctors who they felt were handling too many, charging too much and caring too little. They maintained the show's popularity for six years and two well-received two hour movie-of-the-week sequels. The fanbase builds to intensity when the performer carries out aspects of the same role in personal life… in this case, Jane's unrelenting work to protect children through such organizations as ChildHelp USA and City Hearts. Much of Jane's success has to do with caring and hearts, which is reflected in the wide sales of her jewelry and books, her burgeoning industry actually, relating to her primary theme of "open hearts," hearts open to love and to helping. Jane's fans are so in sync with her own wide open heart that they joined together to campaign for and then raise the money to pay for Jane Seymour's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. It was one of the rare instances of that honor being sought by and bought by the star's conjoined fan bases. Over 500 fans flew in from all over the world to see her unveil her nine square feet of fame on Hollywood Boulevard across from the (newly renamed) Grauman's Chinese Theatre. That little piece of real estate in front of the historic Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, where the first Oscars were awarded, is a personal favorite of mine since I've had eight or nine of my clients enshrined there.

Fans make pilgrimages to see their favorite star's name inscribed in a bronze star on a sidewalk. Is it because they know that their favorite once stood there and knelt there and felt honored there? I think, rather, that it is a kind of incandescent symbolism with which an enterprising chamber of commerce has driven traffic to its streets and commerce to its stores. But in some ways it's pure of heart, a salute not only to people of achievement, but also to fans and to the phenomenon of fandom. There was a $15,000 fee (now $30,000) attendant to being honored with a coveted star on the Walk of Fame on Hollywood Boulevard. That covers the simple cost of the event. Hollywood, which is big in the minds of the world, is actually a small town which can't afford to absorb that cost so many times a year. Does an emplaced metal star have real weight as a recognition of distinction?… especially since there are nearly three thousand of them? The surprising

answer is yes. Just ask the hundreds of fans who descend upon one with flowers and other expressions of devotion when the name on that star passes away. A star, even among that multitude, is a tangible evidence of having achieved a certain level of popularity, excellence or usefulness. When they say "attention must be paid," this is a very powerful way to pay it. First you have the huge press turnout for the unveiling and then the lasting place of eternal existance. The measure of that occurred at the time of the sad and exploited passing of The King Of Pop, Michael Jackson. Since his star was being "used" that evening… it was placed in a position of honor which just happened to be where the premiere of "Bruno" was transpiring and therefore roped off and tread over by hordes of red carpet media… the entertainer's desolated fans converged on the star of another Michael Jackson, the radio host, and piled a Kilimanjaro of flowers, toys and other remembrances upon it. It was a case of any star in a storm and an evidence of the tremendous magic and mojo these plaques carry.

I usually find a studio or distributor to fund a Walk of Fame star for promotional purposes, usually with a plush party afterwards. MGM underwrote Pierce Brosnan's to launch his first Bond film. For Loretta Swit, who will be seen as Hotlips in TV's "M.A.S.H." until someone passes a law against beloved reruns, the division of 20th Century Fox which syndicates that show's repeats gladly forked over the costs. Columbia coughed up for Jimmy Woods for the launch of "John Carpenter's Vampires." That occasion provided the funniest testimonial speech I think has ever graced a star unveiling. Usually before the plaque is uncovered, two personalities associated with the star of honor pay oratorical tribute. John Carpenter was one, giving his usual acerbic and grudging praise which, at the end, made you know that in his opinion Jimmy is a grand pro who had passed hard muster. Melanie Griffith had starred with Jimmy in a brilliant and violent crime flick called "Another Day In Paradise," and she readily agreed to offer the second testimony. She explained that she had just given birth and the thought struck her that making a film with Jimmy was a lot like having a baby. The act of inception is an experience of dizzying delight, ecstasy if you're lucky. Next comes the joy and excitement of the planning and anticipation. This is supplanted gradually by the discomfort of the gestation and eventually getting sick your stomach every day building to relentless pain culminating in a final experience of screaming agony. And then in its wake is this glorious baby that you're so thrilled has come into your life. I paraphrase, but she had the gathered large and savvy crowd on a

building roll of laughter, particularly Jimmy who, master of the verbal arts, most appreciated its eloquence, structure and wit.

Of the thirty or so star emplacements I've generated and supervised, the two most interesting choices of location were Jay Leno and Randy Quaid. Randy has his star right in front of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel where the bus dropped him off when he first came to Hollywood from Texas. Jay Leno asked for his to be in a less exalted area in front of the Robert Ripley's Believe It Or Not museum. The reason?…. it was on that spot that he was picked up on charges of vagrancy when he first came to California. The cops drove him around in the back all night, and he kept them laughing. They were his first California audience. They gave him the best possible review, letting him off without booking him.

All of these placements are the same, and yet most have special twists and heart tugs, like two in which I was involved in recent years. Mickey Rooney was a long-time client, and I would take a special pleasure in helping him, on occasion and sans fee, maintain his fame as he moved into and through his octogenarian and nonagenarian decades. He was so powerfully one of the last remaining, sustaining and insistently active of the great stars of the Golden Age, … even beyond the passing of his much younger "National Velvet" teammate and star of stars Elizabeth Taylor. How can one help but tend the garden of a friendship and an admiration based on such talent and spirit? His occasional irascibility and incomparable vigor came right out of his great well of talents whose depth never were sounded. One year, and this was an annual occurance, the Deauville Film Festival called in its yearly effort to get Gene Hackman to agree to be honored, Gene Hackman who is so allergic to honors. I directed the festival's genial American ambassadress Ruta Dauphin (widow of the remarkable character star Claude Dauphin) to the fact that it was Mickey Rooney's 80th birthday. The festival, as result, gave The Mick a lush retrospective of a great dramatic, comedic and tuneful selection of his storied films. Some years later I was helping out Mickey and my longtime friend and truly beloved Honorary Mayor of Hollywood, the regrettably late Johnny Grant, in the placing of Mickey's fourth star on that star-studded boulevard. This one was for Mickey and his last (of what?… seven or eight?) wife, Jan The star was to honor their successful international touring in his "One Man, One Wife" review. Mickey, always in the spirit of things, showed up in tux with Jan in sparkling gown, and they had a combo backing them for a set of songs for the gathered crowd. That's my point here… the gathered crowd. There were hundreds and hundreds on hand

for the honoring of a guy whose reign as a top boxoffice star was in the 30s and 40s, with beautiful sparkles further on along the way, of course, but the great body of it long before most of them were born. Hollywood is a place and fans are a tribe where legend is honored. That is an extraordinarily large part of the charm of doing PR, of having been in a business which serves this miraculous and sustaining relationship of entertainers and the people they entertain.

One of the difficult aspects of undying fame is that the nature of it alters over an extended physical lifetime. Some, like Eastwood and Streisand, carry it at peak heat throughout. For others, there is often the challenge of adjusting to its different stages and the revised immediacy of their importance to public, to media and to industry even though they have never stopped being classic stars. Most wear these crowns lightly and well however grey the hair on which they rest. Some had suffered a fandom so intense during those years at the very top that the memory of it tricks the mind in time to feel that something is missing, Mickey Rooney had the stage to himself from the time he was a blazing little wunderkind in burlesque and the top box-office star in the world throughout adolescence and his sky's-the-limit pubescence. It created in him an impatience and belligerence with anything that couldn't be immediately accomplished.

One of my favorite experiences with Mickey Rooney came upon the heels of some news stories about Willie Nelson's tax problems, a rather awesome debt. Mickey called in a particular state of invigoration and excitement and concern. He noted that Willie had almost single-handedly powered Farm Aid, the great telethon fund-raisings for the embattled small farmers of our land. The nation, Mick said, owed this guy a debt of gratitude. He was certainly right on that account. Mickey's idea… nay, dedication… was to create a national fund-raising to pay off Willie's debt… "to get him… are you ready?… on the road again. Get it? On the ROAD again!" I told Mickey that it was a great idea, certainly merited, but I thought that he had to ascertain Willie's feeling on it… to get Willie's permission before he put it forward. "Why, for crying out loud?! We're doing it FOR him!" "Mickey, I know. But you have to see how he'd feel about it. Not hard for me, Mick. I'll get Kris Kristofferson's number for you. He'll be able to advise you or maybe put it to Willie." "What the hell for? I'm not asking Willie to sing. This is America showing up for Willie Nelson. Why ask?" Mickey demanded, suddenly very angry at me for shooting down such a great idea. "I don't know…," I said, "… maybe because it might embarrass him?" "EmBARRass him?!" Mickey roared at

the very idea of such an ingratitude, "let him pay his OWN fucking taxes!" and slammed the phone down on me.

Can you wonder in any way at my affection for that pugnacious star? There has never been a more irrepressible… and uncontrollable… force of talent and passion and energy to hit Hollywood. In the time of the movie capital's most dazzling blitz of stars, his films, often with Judy Garland, were always among the top moneymakers. He could do it all except hold his temper. He was so beautifully and impetuously Irish. Catch him playing "Fascinating Rhythm" on the 88 with Tommy Dorsey's band in "Girl Crazy." Even Oscar Levant would leap to his feet and applaud… and probably did.

I saw him perform in Vegas with a six piece jazz group backing him, and at one point he sat down in the seat of each of the guys and took each instrument as far as it would go. One Sunday he insisted I join an "angels tryout" at his house for a stage musical he wanted to do with Kay Ballard, based on the longtime hit comic strip about Maggie and Jiggs. The music was by the guy who celebrated my home town with "The Trolley Song." I was part of an audience of eight who saw what might have been the only performance of that show. What a shame other audiences did not follow, and what wondrous blessings my silly job bestows!

One golden rule by which our industry should abide is "you always honor legend." There are so few people or things in our business or in our world that truly deserve the title "legend," and I represent and have represented more than my fair share. Barbra Streisand and Dame Elizabeth Taylor alone are more than anyone's fair share. It is always a thrill to work with each and every one. And Mickey Rooney, no question about it, WAS one. During the 30s and the 40s, they paid a lot of attention to such things as who was the number one box-office star. And Mickey was always duking it out for that honor with the Duke himself, John Wayne. As powerful as are the performances we remember… "National Velvet," "Black Stallion," "Boys Town," any of the Andy Hardy films… filmic Norman Rockwells with laughs… it was in anything having to do with music in which Mickey shined most brightly. Music is in the DNA of every cell of his body, and it took no more than a downbeat to spring it to vivid life. His dramatic fireworks portraying lyricist Lorenz Hart in "Words And Music" was trumped by the fact that it contained his final film teaming in song with Judy Garland in the Rogers and Hart classic, "I Wish I Were In Love Again." At a star-studded luncheon we

held for Geoffrey Rush during the Oscar campaign for "The King's Speech," Rush alluded to that culminating Mickey-and-Judy moment as a favorite movie memory. He confessed that Mickey's presence was the over-riding thrill of an event jammed with Hollywood's biggest, brightest and most current stars. I've always liked that the meticulous Hart got the subjunctive case ("were") right in that song title, just as I've loved that Irving Berlin, born and honed in the poverty of the great Jewish immigration of the late 19th century, made his up-from-the-streets colloquialism part of his music, as in the yearning beauty of "What'll I Do?" This is commemorated in an apocryphal story one can only hope is true. When he married a true love who was from social status and pristine education, Berlin, it is lovingly reported, asked her which of his songs she particularly liked, and she responded without hesitation, "Oh, of course it's 'What Shall I Do?"

I'm sorry Hart died so young but I'm grateful that he didn't live to see (and hear) the computer world and to have to hear "you've got mail" a dozen times a day. What group of computer geniuses programmed that one, the Bowery Boys?

I was, of course, on hand for a luncheon honoring Johnny Grant, the master and guiding spirit of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. It was an event of some major distinction further illuminated by the presence of the still arousing Mamie Van Doren who recalled, for those gathered, how upon her arrival as sexy ingenue wannabe in Hollywood she became a friend, a romantic friend one was compelled to assume, of Johnny, who it turns out was quite a roué in his earlier years. She said she couldn't recall if she was seventeen or eighteen, and Johnny yelled out, "You were EIGHTEEN!" I was happy for his and Mamie's fond memories. He was the only entertainer who could match Bob Hope in USO tours to entertain troops in war-torn lands. Angie Dickinson, who is a great sounding board and divining rod for the goodness in other people's hearts because you have to have it to know it, was a career-long friend of Johnny and of course was there at the lunch and then again at the funeral which sadly preceded Johnny's long-planned retirement as the Mayor of Hollywood and return to the other-kind-of beauties of his native North Carolina. But fittingly, he was still in residence in the penthouse of the historic Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel right smack on the street he loved and had made even more famous than it was when he came to it… which is pretty darn famous.

One Sunday I got Johnny to come all the way east to the Pomona Fairway and thoroughbred track for a fund-raiser I was assisting and to which I had drawn a

bunch of my clients. They were there to compete in a horse race to raise money for training physically-challenged kids in equestrian skills and pleasures. Among the stars in the stirrups were Carl Weathers, Gil Gerard and Jenny Agutter. It got very competitive, and, in some close proximity passing, Carl was knocked to the track, miraculously spared passing hooves and then he chased down his mount, sprung up and finished the race. It might be hard to find a stuntman for that one. Even though this was a cold and early morning, Johnny was there to man the hosting duties, call the exciting race and generally lend his pizzazz. At the end as we were walking to the parking lot, I told him, with gratitude, that I had never asked his participation in any charity endeavor that he had turned me down. And he said, "Because I trust your heart." No one ever came up on the short end trusting Johnny's heart.

Another distinctive trip to Hollywood Boulevard was for the star-dedication for Erik Estrada. I'm deeply impressed by Erik's decades-long work with law enforcement to achieve the protection of children. He arrived with an escort of… I'm not exaggerating here… scores of motorcycle officers on siren-blaring, lights-flaring bikes, over a dozen fire trucks similarly in full sound and splay of circling red lights, a fly-by of police helicopters, hundreds of police and sheriffs officers and public servants of every stripe and uniform. All of this motorcade had assembled in the parking lot of the Hollywood Bowl just up Highland Avenue from Erik's waiting-for-the-moment star in front of the Graumans Chinese Theatre. I had to laugh at the thought of the guy driving the last car to pass before they hit the road. Imagine looking in your rear view mirror and seeing a few hundred lights flashing at you with the loudest choir of sirens you will ever hear. You would feel like OJ Simpson making a run for it. It was a dazzling spectacle of the sort that the French call "son et lumiere" (sound and light) at the highest decibles. It was, by far, the most bedecked and certainly the noisiest star unveiling to which I've ever lent my press-gathering abilities. We heard it arriving a long time before we saw it arriving.

Celebrities sometimes suffer the misfortunes of never being 'perfect strangers" to anyone. Most of us would never intrude on perfect strangers, nor would we have the nerve to thrust ourselves upon the most famous people in the world. But

many people do not hesitate to do that in the case of a celebrity of any stature, with the most celebrated being the most vulnerable. The fans feel they know them and in some cases own them. This occurred to me on the occasion of the Golden Globes show when Barbra Streisand was to receive the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's Cecil B. DeMille Award, the lifetime achievement honor which was about the only award not previously bestowed upon her. Barbra and her husband, James Brolin, had accommodated a large number of the interviewers on the red carpet, and as result, we entered at the back of the International Ballroom after the show had commenced. The protocol and courtesy of that situation requires late arrivers to stand at the back and wait quietly for the first commercial break before they move to their tables. As we stood there, Jim's press agent, the terrific Susan Dubow (and I was about to find out how terrific) was situated on the other side of Barbra. Just beyond her was a woman who very rudely, considering that the show was in progress, was talking rather loudly on her cell phone. Her voice was carrying, and we could hear that she was telling a friend that she was standing next to Barbra Streisand. "No, I'm not kidding," she said, "here, I'll let you talk to her." At which point Susan reached over and closed the phone, cutting off the call. "No you won't," Susan said. I wanted to give her a Golden Globe.

The advent of the Internet has changed the nature and, even more, the impact of fan celebration of artists. Fan clubs existed when I was a kid, mostly among people in a geographically concentrated community. Now they span the world, especially since the advent of the Twitter and website realities. Streisand admirers have fashioned some very sophisticated fan sites, and they chronicle her new records, films or DVD releases or political or charitable activities on a daily basis. They certainly played a role in helping "Meet The Fockers," her teaming with Ben Stiller, Robert DeNiro and Dustin Hoffman, become the first live-action comedy to exceed a half-billion dollars in box-office gross or to sell three million copies of the DVD in 24 hours or to having her become the first and probably eternally the only recording artist to have a number one album in five consecutive decades and spanning 45 years.

Time does not stand still, and neither do legends. Five years later she raised that never-to-be-equalled-or-exceeded accomplishment to six consecutive decades, hitting the charts at number one with "Partners" at the age of 72 and raising the span of time between first and most recent Number One CDs to nearly 50 years.

So she gives her fansites plenty to celebrate. They monitor the thoughts she blogs on her own website and discuss and help disseminate her activities, new releases and points of view. Their knowledge about her is so meticulous that I often go to them to verify information and I rely on them to catch print coverage or television breaks I may have missed. As press agents and marketing people all over the entertainment industry are finding out, fansites can be an incredible sales force and great sounding boards for a celebrity's heartfelt causes and social activisms.

Knowing News Before It Happens

Prior knowledge of what will become news is a common and essential part of being a press agent. You develop sources that can alert you to upcoming events or currents of news. A common call a press agent receives will go like this: "Do you have anyone (or usually they specify a client) who wants to talk about (let's say) cheating politicians? So and so is going public about his whatever." We also know things in advance because we are brought in to make them happen with a bigger splash, a smaller splash, a designated spin or a built-in damage control. Very often, these consultations or event managements are pro bono because they have a charitable or public service aspect we support.

For me the most outrageous and dangerous look into a crystal ball came when we were nest-sitting a Time cover on Molly Ringwald. Molly was at the Miley Cyrus apogee of her career heat as America's screen queen of teen. In that period, Time always had a late spring movie cover, a look at what was reliably projected as the screen event of the summer movie-going. That year they had selected the Robert Redford-Debra Winger romantic-thriller, "Legal Eagles." Neither actor could have been hotter, and the film was foreseen as a hit… at least until it finally was seen. Racing up on the issue, Time concluded this was not the film on which to hang their movie issue. The only other compelling movie theme of that moment was the box-office dominance of the John Hughes teen angst films, "The Breakfast Club," "Pretty in Pink" etc., and Molly Ringwald was the primary star of the trend. So, Susan Geller who was Molly's account exec, was busily working all of the details of that most incredible of breaks, a Time cover.

On the Thursday before the weekend on which the issue was closing, we received a phone call from a Time editor asking if he could come to our offices right away for a meeting. Obviously, it was not something that could be handled on the phone. And when he arrived, that tension was evident in his demeanor.

Basically what he said was that they had to push back the movie issue a week and that they wanted us to hold off on any ancillary press we had scheduled for Molly. We were stunned, worried that this meant a key, career-shaping story was a scratch, that a trigger element in Susan's meticulous campaign for Molly was going to be ripped out from under us. The editor seemed to take our stunned silence as our refusal to cooperate. How could we not cooperate? It was their magazine, their call. Why he then laid his cards on the table I'll never know, but he asked us if we were aware of the Libyan plane that had just attacked a U.S. airbase in Italy. Of course we were. He confided to us that the US would bomb Libya on Saturday and that Time had to hold its cover for that. At that moment I was truly stunned. I was stunned even that Time knew it. We assured him of our understanding and cooperation, and when he left we agreed that that information would not go out of the room. I was so burdened with the responsibility of that knowledge, I never told my wife until we saw it on the evening news that Saturday.

On that occasion, we knew world news two days before it was out of the lock box. But on another occasion, I had a preview of things to come two decades before they hit this country right below the belt. In 1988 the Glass-Steagall Banking Act was on the chopping block in the House of Representatives. It was one of the cornerstones of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's strategy to put the United States on a road to recovery from the Depression. It was a New Deal legislation which instituted regulations on America's banking community, excluding it from investment banking, insurance and other financial activities FDR and Henry Morgenthau thought best placed in separate hands and under the microscope of federal regulators… For a half-century conservatives and free marketers chafed under that restriction, and in 1988 the act was facing repeal. Our most financially savvy client, Wayne Rogers… he of Trapper John fame on "M.A.S.H." and his own adventurous film producing… was a financier and a banker, among other things. And he worried that if Glass/Steagall bit the dust, so would the U.S. economy. How prescient he was.

He asked if I could get him invited to be an expert witness before the House Banking Committee, which was holding sessions on the repeal of Glass/Steagall. It was a Democratic congress, and Rep. Henry Gonzales of Texas was chair. He was impressed with the Wayne Rogers bona fides I put before him and Wayne's take on the legislation. So Wayne and I flew back to D.C. and he appeared together

with a Nobel Prize economist. Once the committee members got their Trapper-John-doing-triage-on-the-economy jokes out of the way, Wayne, a banker, gave dazzling testimony about why bankers were not to be trusted. Committee members were worried that nine of the ten biggest banks in the world were Japanese, and Wayne explained why that ordained that those Japanese banks and the Japanese economy would soon be paddling down white water in a leaky boat because they were so bloated and unregulated. That was soon the case. Wayne then laid out why Glass/Steagall was an imperative gate-keeper for our economy, as well and why regulations imposed on banks by Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration were necessary. When a bunch of bankers and their lobbyists think they're smarter than FDR, look out, Wayne said. He returned four years later to help save Glass/Steagall again.

My opportunity to join Wayne Rogers for his testimony had been for me a living lesson in democracy, its strengths and particularly its weaknesses. Exactly two decades before Henry Paulson and George W. Bush informed the world that banks and brokerage firms and their AIG-type allies had gamed the deregulated system to the very brink of worldwide bankruptcy, Wayne explained to those saner Congresses how that would happen But he wasn't recalled to give witness in the late 90s. The last bill President William Jefferson Clinton signed was the repeal of Glass/Steagall orchestrated by Newt Gingrich and Phil Gramm. This then permitted Bush and Paulson and Congress and the SEC and the Fed to green-light the banking industry's bunco game with credit default swaps or whatever those creatures from the Black Lagoon are called.

I had witnessed Wayne Rogers and a Nobel scholar in economics giving congress proof positive that we can't give the foxes the keys to the henhouse, that regulation and pre-emptive caution were imperative, and that Glass/Steagall was the greatest legacy of a New Deal that had had to dig us out of the crater once before. So when Bush and Paulson threw in the towel, it didn't come as a surprise… nor should it have to anyone else… but it did come as a shock. The day with Wayne in the Capitol was memorable for that and for our lunch in the Senate commissary with George McGovern and a host of household name Senators of both parties hopping Wayne's table. Being a Hollywood press agent can have its unique rewards in terms of life experience. But the lesson Wayne laid out went for naught, and congress undid (and never redid) Roosevelt's bank supervision controls, and nearly bottomed-out our nation.

Feeding the Wolves

Which came first, fan hunger for every dire, tragic or private detail of the lives of their favorite stars, or the commercial desire of media to feed that appetite. My bet is on the media. It's the nature of all enterprise to cultivate and maximize the hunger for something they can sell. Movies started about when William Randolph Hearst was putting big money down on what came to be called "yellow journalism." My other bet is that the earliest film press agents and their successors worked damn hard to put the media on to this scandal news scam. The press agents just wanted to sell movies, and the media (as we used to say) just wanted to sell papers. In the process, the public got a taste for scandal that never wavered. In a way, this led to my incredible opportunity to appear before the Judiciary Committee of the United States House of Representatives.

When Paul McCartney's wife died suddenly and tragically, the media knew that they had a story they could ride for days. Why? Because it had a big question mark attached to it, An improbable set of circumstances had been set in motion. Since media is always looking for some unusual hook, even for a tragedy, a bizarre cyclone of interest was stirred up because it was reported that Lynda had expired near Santa Barbara, California, and there was this big brouhaha about why there was no hospital report issued there. Did she die there? Why won't the family give the facts? All of that nonsense. It was the top of the news, not because a noted photographer and wife of a music icon was gone, but because of where she was when it happened… the brutal news imperative of the unanswered question. The family, in a seclusion of grieving in Arizona, was beset with this need-to-know pressure from the media "on behalf of a breathless public" (or so the media pretended or maybe even believed.) We are talking here of the entertainment side of news, not the news side of news.

One morning in the midst of this sad and silly furor, the exploitation of the story on a morning news show really annoyed Gisela and me. Protecting celebrities from nonsense has been part of what she and I do. I could see immediately that the Santa Barbara rumor had been thrown out by a bright press agent to throw the dogs off the trail and to give the McCartney family a chance to come to terms with their pain. Gisela asked why I didn't have some client speak out about this press excess, but we agreed there was no point in that. It would be too gratuitous. When I got to the office, I got a call from CNN on that very subject, but I said I had no clients to speak out on it. No, the producer said, they wanted me to….

me, the same me who abhorred the idea of press agents blabbing off. But it was so strangely coincidental with the conversation Gisela and I had just had. I told them I had to consult my wife. I asked her if I should make an exception to the rule. She reminded me it was something I achingly wanted to complain about. She asked what I was wearing, and I told her. "Oh, hell," she said, "go ahead and do it anyway."

So an hour later, I was staring into a camera debating via satellite People Magazine editor Peter Castro, a key contact, about the presumption of the press. In the middle of the interview, they cut away to a press conference which the Santa Barbara sheriff was holding to announce… nothing. He had nothing to say because the whole story was just a dust-devil of… nothing. When they cut back to us, I pointed out that we had just witnessed millions of dollars of media resource being wasted on nothing. It was ok. I had my angry say. It didn't really accomplish anything, but it did send me to Washington. That afternoon I got a call from an official at the Screen Actors Guild asking if I would appear on behalf of SAG before the House Judiciary Committee considering a bill that would protect performers and other public personages from invasion of their privacy by intrusive and endangering paparazzi, who bear zero DNA resemblance to the good-guy event photographers who work our red carpet press lines.,

I had stage fright the second I said yes. Four minutes… did I have enough opinion and fact to fill four minutes… and how could I possibly squeeze all I wanted to say into it, and what the hell could I possibly say to keep talking for four minutes without making a fool or a pomposity out of myself… or to justify taking up two and a half hours of congressional time (four minutes times the number of committee members.) I told Gisela I thought I should consult Marty Landau for pointers on how to act it out, but she said his understanding of performance was so sophisticated I could never comprehend it. I consulted our lawyer son in law, Moni's husband Mark Robertson, a top hospitality industry legal exec. Luckily, both of our sons-in-law now are distinguished lawyers. I planned to refer to a Supreme Court decision which found that high tech surveillance by police requires a warrant. The legislation that SAG and its expert witnesses were addressing concerned the rampant ambush paparazzi (stalkerazzi is my preference) invasion of stars' p*rivacy*. The prior Supreme Court opinion I was citing was issued in a ruling relating to a Fourth Amendment (*due process*) case that might not pertain in this matter. In D.C. I discussed that at dinner the night before the

hearing with a Harvard law professor who was also giving witness, and he advised against referring to that ruling because that case before the Supreme Court had concerned due process, not privacy. But I felt this specific Supreme Court ruling established that technologically-enhanced surveillance, both visual and audio, can constitute trespass. Well, I did use it, and it went over pretty well. The professor, who spoke after me, used it, too.

The main point I made, something relevant to a book about PR, is that these stalkerazzi employ dangerous and rude techniques in order to get their guerilla shots, the ruder and uglier and more intrusive the better, that they were not only invading but also shredding the privacy and dignity of their quarry. I told the committee how a photographer can hover in a helicopter for an intrusive shot, but that, by FAA regulation and common sense, the sun cannot be mirrored back at the craft to block the shot, as John F. Kennedy Jr. once pointed out to me. It would be a crime, he explained, to interfere with an aircraft and manslaughter if something were to happen. So I withdrew my hand from the make-up mirror for which I had been reaching. Saved from a life of crime and stupidity. It was a technique I've actually used in on-the-ground paparazzi/stalkerazzi situations. There was, I learned, a similar legal impediment which prevents celebrities from getting police protection when their car is being pursued by a car or cars of stalkerazzi as had been the case on the occasion of Princess Diana's death. This, as I put to the committee, actually happened to a major actress, famous and pursued for her fame and beauty by these long-lens poachers on privacy and sanity. When the trailing car started to bump her car from behind, she called the local police on her cell phone and asked what to do. The police officer said that in that case, the law required her to stop and exchange insurance information with the other participant in the collision, and, only if the damage was over 500 dollars should she call the police. His advice, get out of the car and become a sitting duck. In other words, let them memorialize and profit highly off of your anger. So, I pointed out to the committee, here are two cases where FAA and California Motor Vehicle Code regulations prevent a celebrity from taking effective defensive action. I actually saw some of the committee members making notes.

The memory most indelible from that day occurred before our appearance when I was with the other witnesses, Michael J. Fox and Paul Reiser among them, in the ante room, variously chatting or trying to memorize our comments or to calm jangled nerves. Rep. Henry Hyde, the committee chair and a legislator with whom

I almost never agreed, came over, introduced himself, thanked me for appearing and then asked if I was nervous. "Eight point one on the Richter scale," I answered. "Well, think about this," he said, "you're an expert, and we are all very interested in hearing your expertise and your opinion as it bears on this legislation." It was such a civilized and decent gesture that I was humbled and even slightly calmed.

On a later occasion, I told Marty Landau about it and that I had been tempted to seek his advice. He asked how I'd played it, and I explained that I'd read the body of my statement, but that I'd memorized the four passages where I really wanted to drive it home, and that enabled me to give it to them looking them in the eye. Marty smiled and said, "That's what I would have told you to do."

A most important rule of daily function as a PR guy or gal is that a press agent should not be seen and should not be heard. I was going to do a chapter on this, and then I realized that it's not a chapter, it's a paragraph or three. *Press agents know better than anyone, except those who have been mentally, morally or spiritually undone by fame, that public attention, however useful, comes at a high cost. Not only high cost of privacy but also of distorted self-perception.*

Teeny-bopper crazes can throw some young actors into delirious fan *attention* and confusing wealth much too early in their lives. Some of them used it to get invited to the Playboy mansion. Steve Guttenberg used the riches and prominence of the "Police Academy" and "Three Men and a Baby" films and sequels to create housing for young women thrown on the streets after abusive childhoods in the foster care system, hiring social workers to guide them through the desperate transition. Ian Zeiring used fan hysteria from the "Beverly Hills 90210" series to power his constant effort to get at-risk youngsters to commit to available educational programs. It's what you do with what you get that determines who you will be.

The celebrity faces this question… *am I the person out of whose eyes I see every day, the person whose foibles I know so well, or am I that selectively perceived person seen through the media eye, distorted, for better or for worse?* Most deal with it very well and remain integrated personalities, but it is stressful. We all face that duality to some extent, but one pays an exorbitant price to be a public figure. This is because the public perception is so insistent and so contrived to meet the needs of the media much more than the needs of the subject.

Chapter 4

Heart Tugs

I expected a lot of the Faberge Film Festival At Sun Valley, the biggest stunt of Guttman & Pam's early years, but I never expected it to touch my heart in a way I never would forget. It may have been the tallest I've ever seen a great star stand, and, not surprisingly, that star was Cary Grant. It was 1973, shortly after the launch of our filmtown PR firm, and it had grown very starry very quickly. I needed a big summer promotion for Sun Valley, one of our first big corporate accounts, and I sat down with Jerry one day to discuss an ambitious idea. We represented Faberge Perfumes and its film division. Its boss, George Barry, had energy, charm, charisma and an enthusiasm for vast and adventurous ideas. He also had a G-14 plane that could carry a lot of stars great distances in great comfort. He also had Cary Grant on his board. I wanted Cary to host our event, to have the invitations sent in his name. What could be more compelling? It was a big ask. We couldn't go to Cary with it, not an idea of such personal commitment as this, but Barry could.

I wanted to throw a summer film festival in Sun Valley, which was our client because my charismatic friend Chuck Dwight, ski entrepreneur extraordinaire, hauled us everywhere he took his ski resort-developing fast-moves and bright-accomplishment. He was now building the Cottonwood condo project with Paul Anka at the queen of American snow playgrounds and he had told Sun Valley owner Bill Janss that Guttman & Pam was the greatest thing to hit ski resorts since super-moguls. He had told Bill that Jerry Pam and I were the super moguls of publicity. We had to live up to it, and this idea was one it would take

a super-agency of 30 or 40 publicity operatives to pull off, not a little boutique firm like ours. Except…. except that all the excepts fell into place very nicely. Sun Valley could handle the physical aspects of the event, however vast, with facility. And when the star acceptances raced in, it got extremely vast extremely fast. I wanted a festival that we controlled completely and that benefited only our clients, and when we shook this idea down, all the pieces were in place or fell into place with a few knowing nudges on our part. Nobody was saying no, and everybody who was saying "yes" was a somebody. We were only five in staff then and, with Gisela, six. Our daughters, Monika and Danielle, were fourteen and twelve and excellent and very cheap labor. They had their mom's verve and could wrangle stars and media with the best of them. We could do it. I didn't count on the fact that *every* major press outlet would want to attend, even though they would have to get themselves there. Well, I'd contemplated… or, at least, flirted with… that possibility. After all, how often does a journalist get an invitation from Cary Grant to spend a weekend at Sun Valley, Idaho with many of the top stars in Hollywood? But I didn't think it would wind up looking like a laid-back Hollywood premiere, with press to match, lifted from the forecourt of the Grauman's Chinese Theatre and set back down in the summery slopes of the Hood River Valley.

All the strings were already in our hands. Faberge had its first three films already in the can, "A Touch of Class," the Glenda Jackson/George Segal romantic comedy which would go on to win Golden Globes and a to score Oscar gold as well; "Night Watch" with Elizabeth Taylor and Laurence Harvey co-starring again as they did in her first Oscar winner, "Butterfield 8," and "Welcome to Arrow Beach," a thriller which Larry directed and in which he starred." They proved to be the final two films of Larry's career, which we fully feared at the time and which is part of this tale about a kind of breath-taking generosity that should be counted twice when they ask if Hollywood has a heart.

The engraved invitations from Cary Grant went out, and the positive RSVPs came zooming back. starting with many from our own client list… Gene Hackman, Jim Garner, Jim Brolin, Bob Stack, Hugh O'Brian among them… it was a starry bunch. We had lots of friends, and George Barry had more . When the eventual size of the press became apparent, we wondered how we could stage enough events to keep them busy, but Bill Janss had his staff cooking, and there were raft rides down the Hood River, ice-skating shows at the great rink behind the lodge where Olympic and Hollywood super skating star, Sonja Henie, had twirled her magic

in "Sun Valley Serenade," swimming in the same steaming pool Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich dunked in after bracing runs down the white winter slopes, bowling contests and other diversions to keep everyone involved. Our main events were the three premieres, of course, presentation dinners, interviews with the cast members and creators of the films including George Barry who not only was a social and business leader of great status, executive producer of "A Touch of Class" but also, later, the Oscar-nominated composer of that film's song. All that and Sun Valley and the glory of the Sawtooth branch of the Rocky Mountains to boot. You couldn't lay a more delicious smorgasbord of delights before any group of junketing press and visiting stars.

But the piece de resistance, the crème de la crème, the icing on the cake for the press was the fact that Cary Grant had agreed to give a forty-five minute press conference which would be held in a tiered convention hall with theater seating for several hundred people, such was the audience of press who had signed on. This was scheduled for the final morning of the festival, so we had no early departures. I'm quite sure that was the main draw for such a tremendous turnout. All of the attending stars were there, as well. An in-depth look into the specialness of Cary Grant, whose charm, aplomb and courteous interest in and conversation with everyone illuminated the entire weekend.

Larry Harvey was a major star of the festival, of course, not only as a star of two of its films and director of one, not only because of tthe immortality of "The Manchurian Candidate" and "Room at the Top" and "Darling," the cult greatness of "Summer And Smoke," "Walk on the Wildside," "The Good Die Young," "The Alamo," "Butterfield 8," "The Long, The Short and The Tall," "The Outrage" and his blazing Shakespearean stage career, but also because he appeared before us on this final stage as an extraordinary incarnation of courage that amazed and inspired everyone there.

It was no secret. You could see it. Larry was dying. He was rail-thin, walking around in a burnt orange jump suit that was now a month or two of emaciation too large for him. No more erudite, more wickedly witty or charming… yes, a charm that matched even Cary's… a man or woman you would ever meet, and all of those qualities were generously shared with the festival goers. The only things missing were the glass of Pouilly Fuisee or the long stemmed cigarette holder, one or the other of which he always seemed to have held in one hand all our shared lifelong. You would never know that Larry was dying… except if you looked at

him. Not in his eyes, for they were alive and vivid as they had been on all of the occasions of delight Gisela and I had shared with him. All weekend he kept us laughing, but Gisela would start to cry every time we left him. Was there ever a sharper or wiser tongue with a quip? Even Peter Ustinov, Michael Caine, Roger Moore, Carl Reiner, Billy Wilder, Merv Griffen, James Mason, Milton Berle and Tony Randall, some of the quip masters of my happy experience, stood in Larry's shadow. Well, Jay Leno of course, but that's his métier. If Larry ever got around to discussing the fine points of "Richard III" or Harry or "Hamlet" up there with Will Shakespeare, I would like to have heard that bandy of words. I'm quite sure now as I write this that I thought the whole Sun Valley festival event to life for Larry, to honor him as a stage for his final leg-bending bow and display of gallant gesture. And I'm equally sure that that is why George Barry had backed it so extravagantly. But I had no way of knowing how much it meant to Cary.

One of the media circus occasions of the weekend was when we took Laurence Harvey, Cary Grant and Gene Hackman down to the airfield in nearby Haley, which is one of the renowned capitals of soaring…. glider flight. None of them including Gene, a veteran of aerobatic flight even then, had ever experienced soaring. The photographers had a feast on the three climbing into their graceful, sensual crafts. A shot of Gene and Cary leaning on a glider was one of the few photographs I've ever had featured in both the People page of Time Magazine and the Newsmakers page of Newsweek. Each came down thrilled with the experience of soaring soundlessly along the reaching peaks and the green and river-striped valleys. Cary commented on the particular delight he'd experienced and was asked if he planned to take it up and do it forever. "At my age," he responded, "you don't plan to do anything forever, and a continued search for new experiences seems the best approach."

But for Larry, the experience of silent glide in a sleek and silvery craft at play among the updrafts and caprices of winds on nature's most glorious field of beauty was an absolute epiphany. When he alighted, Gisela and I… all of the gathered press and stars… could see how much had been lifted from his heroically wide but now thin shoulders. "How did it feel, Larry?" Gisela asked, putting an arm around him. "Free," he said.

It was stomach cancer, and it worked him hard. He never spoke of it or evidenced any of the pain, although you could see it boring into him. He couldn't have been on much medication for it, for his mind was sharply ready and bright. But you

knew. And so it came to the promised mass interview with Cary Grant to which everyone had been looking forward. It was a medium sized amphitheatre, like a large university classroom, probably something used for conventions. However, this was an unconventional event… Cary Grant, open to all questions, his career, his thoughts, his memories. All of the storied stars who came up for the festival had chosen to skip the kayaking or parasailing or hiking or ice-skating which were available to them on the final morning. They chose instead to be there to experience the mind and spirit of one of the very greatest of all superstars. Larry Harvey came in last. You didn't ask yourself what circumstance of dealing with his reality might have delayed him. He chose to stand at the back, at the top of one of the aisles.

Cary was in great form. He was in Cary Grant form, and all of the pleasures of watching him in "Bringing Up Baby" or "The Philadelphia Story" or "North by Northwest" or "Notorious" or "An Affair to Remember" were so casually accessible and cheerfully and generously shared. And then there came a question… I'm embarrassed and frustrated to say that I can't remember exactly what it was, but what evolved from it was so powerful that I suppose the question itself was just washed out into the sea of memory… a question that gave Cary pause. As he searched for an answer, he looked up and saw Larry in his burnt orange jumpsuit at the top of the stairs, and that comfortable smile came across Cary's face. "You know what?" Cary said, "I think Larry Harvey can answer that one better than I. Larry, want to give it a try?" Larry, who had been caught up as we all had in the great Cary Grant-ness of this experience, was embarrassed. But answer it he did, and the huge room was filled with that most glorious and melodious of all voices, the rich resonance and softly precise enunciation that glided into your mind and filled it with astonishing colors. … that cultured elocution and caress of sounds wrought so astonishingly from the raw brawl and snarl of the street languages of his rude childhood and from his determination to re-create himself into such a master of all the arts of spoken word. The unforced power of his communication belied the frail body from which it emerged.

Whatever he said… again, that irrelevant specific was lost for me in the great shared experience that followed so immediately… it absolutely riveted the audience. It had wisdom and grace and humor. When he finished, someone asked another question of him. Larry was embarrassed because this was, after all, a Cary Grant experience, but Cary nodded for him to go on, and all of the heads in the hall

were turned, some of them painfully, toward Larry. Cary smiled and then, as Larry responded, Cary moved up the stairs and, at the completion of the answer, took Larry gently by the elbow and guided him down the stairs. He firmly sat Larry into the chair from which he had previously been responding. Cary gestured to the audience for the next question which, of course, was addressed to Larry. And then, as Larry answered question after question from a group of tough news people, pros unaccustomed to the emotional tug of what was transpiring, visibly involved, exploring Laurence Harvey and honoring him for what everyone knew would be the last time, Cary stood behind Larry and massaged his shoulders and neck. After a while when the questions and possibly Larry were exhausted, Cary said, "Thank you very much. I appreciate your having joined us for this festival and for this conversation." There was a silence for a brief period, everyone too caught up in the moment to know what was appropriate, but then there was applause, not wild but rather modulated and respectful and sincere. And all the while Cary continued to massage Larry's shoulders.

That was Laurence Harvey. And that was Cary Grant.

The one bump in the road on that weekend occurred one morning when I found the producer of one of the films, a dear friend and meticulous film-maker, in the Sun Valley movie house with some kind of meter. It seemed to suggest that the projector lamp was not quite strong enough. We were showing his film that evening, and he didn't want it poorly projected. I checked with the projectionist and he said that they replace the lamp every three years, and this one was only one year old. But the producer, a perfectionist, was adamant. We determined that the nearest lamp to be purchased was in Denver, and George Barry generously ordered it and a small plane to bring it to Haley, the nearest airfield. There were delays, and when 8PM arrived, , the scheduled start of the premiere, and the audience was seated, the plane was only then approaching Haley. It was now getting dark, and Haley wasn't equipped for instrument landing. Cary Grant had just come to me and said everyone was complaining that we were almost a half hour late. The pilot could land at Twin Falls, at best an hour and a half by car, or they could attempt the landing. I wasn't about to risk someone's life for a light bulb and I told them to have the pilot leave it in Twin Falls and then I went to the producer and told him the new bulb was installed and that I was starting. After the film I asked him how the projection was and he said, "much better." If he ever reads

this… my trusting and longtime buddy, I'm sorry. Press agents under duress do desperate things, even to friends.

The mysterious ways of the human heart can add a poignancy even to so skeptical a trade as flacking for flicks . In London, on my very first and last as it turned out film as a full unit publicist, "The Man Inside," tough guy Jack Palance and I had circled our two wagons against some forces that had made it a rather tense shoot. We were filming a sequence at Victoria train station, and between scenes Jack and I were just walking around talking. A middle-aged lady kept following behind us… the kind of grey lady you saw so often in London in the mid-fifties when bomb craters still scattered about and bus drivers struck to raise their salaries from eleven pounds a week to fourteen. She was tailing and hovering, which can be very unnerving. Jack finally turned to her and said, "Yes, madam, what is it you want?" "Your autograph, please?" in a very timid voice. "Can't you see I'm talking to my friend?" "Yes, but my son so admires you…" "Well, thank you, but…" "…and I'm on my way to visit him at the sanitorium." Jack hung his head a moment as his considerable humanity suddenly engaged, and he wrote a kind and charming note of some length and bought her a large bouquet of flowers which he said were for her son. You have to play these little glimpses as though you weren't yourself moved and then go on with the conversation as though nothing had happened.

When the tension on the set came down too hard, sometimes I, rather than his driver, would drive Jack back to London because he wanted to talk. I had a little Porsche, and his legs were a tight fit. Gisela and I were just married. We were living in a seven-pounds-week basement apartment in a little hotel in Shepherd's Bush, and it always smelled of curry because we shared the cellar with the coal storage area and with the kitchen of an Indian restaurant. We had a Porsche, but we didn't have any money. Driving into London from Elstree, we saw a little pub ahead standing alone at a road crossing. Jack asked if I minded if he stopped there for one drink. New brides are not happy when new grooms show up late, however I said, "Sure, but one." As malevolent fate would have it, the pub was filled with Ukrainians… in England. My luck. It got very Ukrainian very fast. The Slavic banter got mushier, the singing louder and the time later. They were coal miners from the Ukraine, as Jack's father had been. When I finally got him to the car, it was dark and he was none too steady. I hadn't been able to call Gisela because

cellar rooms don't have telephones. I dropped Jack at his place and headed to Shepherd's Bush to try my luck. I didn't have any. She wouldn't open the door. I tried to explain, but even I wouldn't have believed my tale. I drove back to Jack's apartment, forced him to get dressed and we went together to Shepherd's Bush. He explained and apologized through the closed door, and then she opened it, studied him a moment and said, "You need some coffee." I asked Jack if he wanted some Indian food, but he said coffee would be fine.

A few decades later I was in the backstage green room at the Academy Awards the evening Jack had won Best Supporting Actor for "City Slickers" and had memorably celebrated on stage with one-arm pushups. His daughter Holly dragged me over to him and said, "You have to direct Jack. They want him at the end–of- the-show curtain call to lead everyone on stage in pushups. Should he do it?" "Jack," I said, "paraphrasing Voltaire, once is exuberance, twice is egomania." "Thanks," he said, "I didn't want to be ungrateful, but I didn't want to look like a jerk."

To my knowledge, he never did.

When we handled Romy Schneider and Alain Delon, they were Europe's two biggest stars, they were the most adulated lovers in 90 percent of the world, they were the hot new stars of Hollywood and they were without any doubt the most beautiful of all the beautiful couples with whom I have ever worked… and those are legion. They had separately and *ensemble* become dear friends for my wife and me. Romy called one Saturday and asked if we could dine with her that evening. It wasn't easy but she seemed really to wish it. She and Alain had the same managers, partners in life as in business, and they called us to urge that we come. When we arrived, one of them, Georges Beaume, took us aside and said he was grateful we were there and showed us an envelope which Alain had asked him to give Romy. It was clear that it was a Dear John. The evening suddenly took on a dark undertone. After the salad, Georges handed Romy the envelope. She looked at him with anguish, and he nodded. Her hands didn't shake as she opened it. A lace handkerchief fell out… antique and of matchless design and detail. She looked at it and then read the letter, and then asked if we would excuse her. Grasping the letter, she got up to go to her room, but then came back to take the handkerchief with her. We sat in a silence which continued when she returned in about ten minutes and resumed her place at the head of the table.

We weren't struck dumb. We simply didn't know what to say. We longed to see that bright Romy Schneider smile which owned the heart of every movie fan in Europe, but we didn't. Just a brave little resolve to be a good hostess. She patted Gisela's hand and said in German, "I'm so glad you're here." Her hand stayed on Gisela's a few moments, and then she served the entrée.

A few decades later, shortly before she died tragically in the middle of a life that had become tragic…. why her of all people?…. Romy was at a party in London at which my partner Jerry Pam also was a guest. They happened to be leaving at the same time, and Jerry, knowing my affection for Romy, waved down a taxi and offered to drop her wherever she was going. As they rode off, Jerry told her that he was partnered with me, and he said that seemed to evoke happy memories for her. She asked him if he would deliver something to Gisela and me, and then she kissed him flat on the mouth. Jerry has always maintained that that was the only truly valuable benefit he derived from our partnership. When Romy died a short time later, I thought of it as her gesture of goodbye to us.

Robert Urich did some very good films, but it was on TV that he reigned as a true star. He went from series to series and starred in such mini-series as "Lonesome Dove." It was impossible not to have loved him in a guy kind of way or in a girl kind of way in "Vegas" and "Spencer For Hire." But it was Bob, not just the characters, that the people really loved. And, I can tell you, he was verifiably the caring and grounded guy he played. The affection was because you could see what a good guy he was. I saw it in the love between him and his wife, Heather Menzies (she sang "I Am Sixteen Going On Seventeen" in "Sound Of Music"). And I saw it again at one of the Revlon Run/Walks for Women's Cancer, the one we held shortly after Bob's first bout with cancer and during his courageous fighting it at least to a détente. It was a celebrity-studded event, as they all were and are, each drawing tens of thousands of survivors and their supporters. I take pride in these occasions because our daughter Danielle was so instrumental in developing them with charity promoter supreme Lili Tartikoff and, of course, the staff of the Entertainment Industry Foundation where Danielle joined with the industry charity's Chairman, Lisa Paulsen, in a partnership of initiating such annual events for various charities, raising hundreds of millions of dollars. The Run/Walks funded

the UCLA women's cancer clinic where Gisela would be treated. They also helped establish the National Women's Cancer Alliance combining and coordinating the knowledge of great hospitals and research centers across the country.

This particular event held at UCLA was memorable to me because of Bob and Heather. It was a pretty dazzling show generally, with Candice Bergen the host and Oprah among the dozens of stars who ran or otherwise participated… Oprah was the first star across the 5K finish line. Doing the publicity on them, we were deeply involved. Because of Bob's high visibility as a cancer victim resisting his disease with all the fight and heart in the world, I had asked him to drive the pace car. Later, I suggested he join Candy and some of the other stars in the 1-800 Flowers booth where celebs were handing out a long stem rose to each of the thousands of women cancer survivors who were there to run and to share their pride of survivorship. Heather and I were standing together watching Bob lovingly involved in the encouragement and honoring of these ladies, and I mentioned to her how much I appreciated Bob's being there, that I had felt he was a symbol of courage even though it, obviously, was not a female cancer with which he struggled. "Yes," she said, "but I'm an ovarian survivor." That I had not known, and it knocked me back a bit. I took her hand and led her over to and slipped her into the line waiting to receive a rose from Bob. I explained to the other ladies what I was doing, and, with deep feeling, they welcomed her in, well invested in the moment that was about to come. Danielle and I stood together as Heather moved toward her husband. It was one of those earth-stands-still instants when he picked a rose and handed it forward to the next woman… and realized it was his wife. It was so powerful that you had to look away and give them a moment of privacy among the tens of thousands of people. All of the women behind Heather were sobbing, and you knew it was a moment they would remember when things got them down.

That long-stem rose was one of the inspirational moments in a PR career you might imagine has far fewer than is the case. We received a nominal fee for publicizing the EIF's good works, but a much higher recompense in the people we met and the courage we witnessed. Inspirational people and experiences do abound in this or any occupation. As tough as this wide world around us often seems, humanity is not in short supply. Robert Urich's generously shared soul is a shining example.

Freddie Fields, who headed MGM, involved Guttman & Pam thoroughly in "The Year Of Living Dangerously" right from the beginning. He had Jerry there the day that director Peter Weir gathered the MGM brass to show the actor he had selected to portray the key role of the strange, complex and dwarflike assistant to the journalist played by Mel Gibson and who ultimately becomes Gibson's alter ego and conscience in the story of political and romantic intrigue in Indonesia. The film literally hung on that casting, and the actor in Weir's test was a revelation. Only afterwards did the filmmaker tell Jerry and the others that it was New York stage *actress* Linda Hunt who, of course, went on to win the Oscar for her performance in the male role.

But the emotional tug for me in our experiences working on that memorable film came the night Weir showed his rough cut to an audience of ten or twelve of us in the huge Cary Grant Theatre on the historic MGM (and now Sony) lot in Culver City. I chose to sit next to Maurice Jarre, who would do the score. And what film student wouldn't take the chance to have a conversation before the screening with the genius whose prior scores included "Lawrence Of Arabia" and "Doctor Zhivago.?" We had worked with him on several John Huston films, "The Man Who Would Be King," among them. There was so much more I wanted to know about Jarre's work with David Lean that I boldly, maybe rudely, took the opportunity to sit beside him even though there were 400 empty seats in the Grant Theatre that night. The first cut of "Living Dangerously" unspooled and it was one of those rare first stabs ("Dirty Harry" comes to mind) where you can say "send it out as is." Obviously, the diamond would be polished and perfected and was even more superb upon release, much thanks for that owing to the skills of Maurice Jarre. As is the custom with such first cuts, Weir had given the film a "temp track," meaning that he had laid in existing music which gave a rough idea of what he thought the score might contribute at various parts.

So I was an uninvited witness when Peter Weir came over to Jarre after the screening to get his reaction. There is a particularly integral sequence in the film when Mel Gibson and Sigourney Weaver flee a boring embassy party and sail through a police blockade, a passionate reflection of the romantic and political turmoil into which they are impelling themselves and the film. "That sequence where Mel and Sigourney drive off?" Jarre noted. Weir nodded and said he'd laid in something by Vangelis (composer for "Chariots of Fire" and "Blade Runner") which he had found. "Keep it," Jarre said. Even Weir was startled at the idea, one

of the greatest composers of film history suggesting that someone else' music be integrated with his own? I knew at that moment that I was listening to one of the most generous and impeccable gestures any great artist would ever make. "That music for that scene can't be improved upon," Jarre re-iterated. Weir went with Jarre's advice… and it cost Maurice Jarre at the very least a certain Oscar nomination and possible victory. A score cannot be considered for nomination if it includes prior composition by another composer. And Maurice Jarre knew that very well. Great music is one thing. Great integrity is even more impressive. It was a privilege and an education to have been there to hear those words.

Gestures of generosity come in all shapes and sizes, almost always surprising in their originality. Nobody lives so intently on the brink as knife throwers in the circus, construction guys atop the skeletons of eighty story buildings and ballet dancers. The intensity of all of these people is amazing. They are so in the moment they crackle. Ballet dancers must sustain perfection of murderous duration. I think that's why by and large the great ones have disdained publicity. Alexander Godunov gave early promise in his acting of being as important a film artist as he was on the ballet stage. I knew him through his relationship with Jacqueline Bisset, which made them definitely the reigning media focus couple for a long period. Magazines fought for the rare pictures of this couple which had the distinction of being not only very hot and very beautiful, but also super talented. Alexander defined his power and range as an actor from the start, from the dignity and controlled strength of his Amish suitor in "Witness" to the terrifying force of evil he transmitted in "Die Hard." In his first two or three films, he conveyed a range that few actors exhibit in a career. There was not only breadth of character but also depth of character there of which I had a few glimpses. One comes to me through a mist of delicious fragrance. On my way to a screening one evening, I dropped some papers off at Jackie's canyon home as Alexander was making English bangers and mash for her and her mom. I hadn't realized until I smelled the hot sausages that I probably didn't have time to stop at a restaurant before seeing the film… Alexander saw how voraciously I savored the fragrance , and he took me by the shoulders and planted me at the dining table for perhaps the finest simple meal I've ever had.

Another evening wound up with our taking steak dinners at the Pacific Dining Car downtown. The evening had started with abundant tension. A limousine

was scheduled to take Jackie and Alexander to a sneak preview of her new movie "Class" at some mall on the suburban checkerboard of cities an hour and a half to the south and east of LA. My cousin Benjamin, who could actually make sense of the stupid directions they give you, was picking me up at my office, and we were just leaving when Jackie called. The limo had never arrived. I had them drive down to my office, and cousin Benjamin would deliver us all in good time. Benjamin's enthusiasms and unfailing positivity sapped the tension from even a no-show limo. Benjamin was simply the most enthusiastic and affectionate person I ever knew as well as one of the most cultured. After the screening, Jackie's agent, Ben Benjamin, invited us all to a very late dinner. Alexander and my cousin Benjamin (the evening was afloat with the cordiality, knowledge and wit of the multiple Benjamins) connected through their shared cultural enthusiasms. Knowing how avidly cousin Benjamin devoted himself to the arts, I was surprised that he was so sanguine and casual in the company of one of the most gifted ballet dancers of all time.

In the course of the meal, we were discussing Japan, and Alexander had occasion to say that something had happened when he was there for "Le Corsaire." Benjamin gasped… I mean gasped aloud… at the reference to the ballet. His voice erupted into a crescendo of awe ending in high soprano. "Oh,my GOD!" he shrieked, "You're Alexander GODUNOV!!! I've traveled the WORLD to see you!!" It was a thrall of such magnitude and charm and sincerity, it startled us (and the nearby tables) and then elicited warm smiles. Benjamin remained in a state of astonishment and barely spoke after that. About a half-hour later, we were going to our cars in the now almost emptied parking area. "Benjamin," Alexander said, "this is for you." And then he performed a *tour en jettand*, a linked chain of curling spins, twirling in the air like a top at a 45 degree attitude to earth and sky, seemingly frozen for elegant moments at the peak of each, leaps of once-in-a-lifetime height and grace around the darkened lot. A *tour*, as well, *de force* which lit up the night. Benjamin was wordless all the way back to my office. It was a highlight of what proved to be a tragically shortened life. Actually, it was the sole and revealing intersection of two tragically shortened lives, since Alexander passed from this world not long after. You never know that at the time. When Benjamin died a few years later of suffocation during an epileptic episode, his wife, Janeen, had him buried in his tuxedo, placing in his breast pocket the tickets for the opera they were to have seen that weekend.

Chapter 5

Justifying Publicity

It doesn't make anything you can eat. It doesn't propel your car or heat your home. It doesn't dispose of your trash but rather adds to it. It doesn't take science to the next stage or hold back new perils. But it impacts how you and more than half of the nine billion other people on this planet think about almost everything. It's called Public Relations

Publicists don't have to pass an exam or to obtain a license. They are not even certified… other than by reputation. But the large majority are skilled in how to shape awareness and how the careers or other interests entrusted to them are perceived. The pursuit can be particularly inventive in the Hollywood jungle. Stardom is a hard job and it exacts a heavy toll, but it is almost invariably the only road for talent. The degree of fame or recognition determines what roles and other opportunities a star is offered. *Fame, however, is not the prize…. it's the price.*

The crux of a whole life is sometimes confided to a press agent by a client in a single gesture or statement. Often it is entrusted as the element the artist wants or needs to be part of the telling of his story. Tony Perkins, a unique and complex acting talent and an infinitely kind person, had been with me at a book promotion on Hollywood Boulevard, after which I invited him to lunch at Musso and Frank. Over that bistro's signature tomato soup, he asked me about my children's names. Monika and Danielle. "MOHnika," he repeated, "with the long O? Not mah-nika? " "Yes, it's German." "But don't her friends standardize it?…. make it Mah-nica?" "All the time," I said, "but I always tell her that it's important to be a

little different than other people and to stand up for it." He thought about that for a while and then said, "That's the story of my life." He wanted me and his public to see what it took for Anthony Perkins to bring so many memorable characters to the screen, characters that stand alone and have become reference-points… the deranged obsession of "Psycho," the gentle humanity of "Friendly Persuasion."

Truth was important to Tony, far beyond any consideration of wanting to appear a big shot movie star. During the promotion of "Friendly Persuasion," we'd booked him on The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, which was originating in New York at the time. Tony wasn't completely comfortable on talk shows, and Johnny asked him if he'd enjoyed his previous visit to the show. Tony answered no, not really, and when Johnny asked why he said, "I had to walk home." "HAD to walk home?" Johnny prompted. Yes, Tony explained that during the last show someone stole the front wheel off his bicycle which he'd chained to a lamppost outside the studio… and he'd had to walk it home. He was just a guy who never hid the truth. It broke up Johnny Carson, and that and so many other truths paid off in a long and illustrious career and in the affectionate regard of a wide audience and the avid fascination of interviewers.

That should have taught me something about truth and New Yorkers, but apparently it didn't. Jerry Siegel who was heading Guttman & Pam's New York office… (full disclosure: he WAS our New York office)… and I were to have breakfast at a New York deli with Sam Waterston, seeking him as a client. Jerry was late, and he apologized saying that his bicycle had a flat and that he'd had to take the bus. It was a good meeting, but after Sam left I asked Jerry why he had to get into the bus thing. "You want him to think he's so insignificant to us that you didn't take a taxi to be on time?" "Oh, he'll understand," Jerry said. Apparently so. Shortly thereafter, Jerry went on his own, and Sam Waterston remained his client for decades.

So the point of all this is that in publicity, the truth is very important. The truth, actually, is the point, because what you're selling has to… well… *it has to live up to its publicity*. The point also is that… because of the demands and traditions of our craft and because the media are in the entertainment business as well as the news business… publicists sometimes have to take a circuitous route to get there… "there" being the truth. The truth is not always all that interesting all by itself. It needs to tell an arresting story to get itself heard. When I started, the publicity field was the wild west. The circuitous routes to the truth, the stuff we

had to do and CHOSE to do to get a story in, were very colorful and imaginative. The bizarre fact is that now when the internet is redefining or at least bending the media… rarely for the better… and when economic factors have made media survival supremely competitive, even at the peril of hallowed traditions, *the news business is more in the entertainment business than ever.* However much they may distrust and deplore press agent device, they frequently welcome the bells and whistles of a well-constructed and entertaining news pitch or written item because of the inventive angle or twist it is given… as long as, in the end, it hews to the actual facts.

If a press agent doesn't cherish his or her memories, the rich parade of great and amusing and inspiring characters encountered in any PR career, that flack is eating the bones and leaving the meat. The work experience of every press agent I know is a cavalcade of the entertainment business through his or her unique perspective, enriched by the personalities of the people he or she represented. Whatever made them stars also made them indelible and original companions. Furthermore, many of the most astounding people of my experience were great characters who never made it to acting or to the headlines or even to public awareness, but who memorably amazed me. You may or may not believe that these experiences I unfold actually transpired, that the dialogues actually were conversed, but could any imagination possibly have conjured them all?

Putting It In Perspective

Even careful, cautious people do stupid things. And so I once found myself on a narrow open ledge at virtually the highest point that man had constructed on the face of the earth, no safety wire in event of a slip, no rail to hold on to. I was a quarter mile or so above the bustle of the Toronto traffic so far below that cars no larger than ants were crawling across roadways no wider than narrow strips of ribbon.

I was standing on a fifteen-inch wide concrete ledge, nothing protecting me from gravity or grave but an eight-inch high steel I-beam reaching barely to ankle height which formed merely a lip on this narrow, narrow circular rim atop the visitor viewing center crowning the CN Tower. The wind tore at me, flapping my clothes about me like shreds of flag, abrupt changes challenging every effort to stay balanced. The fear of imminent plunge to death scrambled my mind…

spasms of vertigo… I flirted with the idea that I might just as well step forward and get it over with.

A wall inclined behind me sloping back at a 75 degree angle up to the ultimate roof of the Tower about 20 feet above. The door through which I'd emerged onto this idiotic enterprise was 15 feet away and open, still in my sightline but about to disappear in the curvature of the inclined wall. The PR guy for the CN Tower who had escorted me at my request to this stupid predicament, leaned out his head and waved to me encouragingly. "Everything ok?" he called. No, everything was not ok . His face, the wind kept telling me, would very likely be the last I would ever see.

I intrude into my recollections this idiotically true incident not to expose my least rational self, but because it is a reasonable analogy for a life in high-stakes PR. A press agent's existence is vertiginous. Those who entrust their careers to you are venerated artists, the anointed people whose beauty defines beauty, national treasures, legends, and that raises the height from which you can fall. The view is great, but the missteps are costly. Unlike my precarious teeter on the world's highest ledge, at least in PR you meet some interesting people. The ones I dealt with in these first six decades of my occupation were the classic stars who will live forever. That is, sadly, no longer the life expectancy of newly-minted stars.

Chapter 6

The Guy Who Wrote the Rules

Warren Cowan came at PR with such a passion and with such glee, that by the early 1950s Rogers & Cowan had become the paradigm forever for high-powered, superstar, independent Hollywood publicity… "independent" as distinguished from the studio PR machines that had long dominated the star-making business and were, at that transition moment, dragging their heels against turning over the reins. There were grudgingly cordial relations between studio publicity chiefs and the rapidly rising stars of independent publicity. They did, after all, have one thing in common… they wanted the films of their newly shared stars to succeed. The stars now were paying part of the cost of publicizing films and were exacting greater control over their own exposure in return… or at least their PR reps were doing that for them. Territory was being redrawn, and soon studios would be hiring agencies to assist in promoting films. There were crazy and unforeseen curves in the road. Because their lawyers said so, studio PR machines, for instance, weren't allowed to announce castings until the contracts were signed. Contracts often weren't signed until the film was almost fully shot. So most star assignments, to everyone's relief, were leaked rather than announced… and then let the ballyhoo begin. One studio guy asked me once in annoyance, "When are you guys gonna leak this baby? We've got stuff backin' up."

In the process of pioneering these new realities in partnership with Henry Rogers, Warren Cowan established many of the basic rules and practices of agency PR. During one Rogers & Cowan morning staff meeting, someone suggested that we didn't have enough to go with on a story we were planning. To which Warren

responded, *"It doesn't have to be a million dollars. It can be three dollars and ninety-eight cents in a big box."* If you could grasp the genius of that, you were a press agent.

The Cardinal Rule of PR

At the start of my career, I asked Warren Cowan to give me the cardinal rule of press agenting. *"Get the hell out of the shot,"* he said without a blink. Now, that has two meanings, and I have religiously subscribed to both.

One is get the hell out of the shot… meaning that a publicist's machinations should never be seen. That's primary, mandatory, immutable. Whatever good befalls or is reflected upon your client, it is and should appear to be, the natural consequence of the client's talent and importance. Of that neat disappearing act Warren was a master. The second interpretation, get the hell out of the shot meaning literally get the hell out of the SHOT… don't be part of a photo, don't get personal publicity… to that one he wasn't so dedicated. That could be because he was "indie" from the start, never having worked at a studio.

Henri Bollinger, who has headed the Publicist Guild for decades and is one of the town's most savvy indie PR men, tells me that this rule (staying behind the camera) derives not only from the good sense it makes but from the fact that in the iron-fist studio days every publicist understood that one could get bounced for sharing a shot with one of his or her (more his than her at that time) studio's stars. A half-century back, before he became the west coast office for Lee Solters' New York-based independent PR firm, Henri got his start at television station KTLA adjacent to and owned by Paramount… and staying out of the shot was a delineated job-dependent rule.

Warren Cowan, however, enjoyed and accepted awards and maintained visible celebrity throughout his career, which is to say his life. When Paul Newman passed away, almost every TV news shot of Paul at various events had Warren right behind him or guiding him through the clamor of press, selecting the most important interviews, guiding Paul at the elbow. Warren had preceded Paul through the Pearly Gates by four months, but there they were going out together. It was as poetic as justice can get.

Joined at the Hip

Paul Newman's acting skills never diminished, and his greatest role, his astonishing philanthropy, continued and grew until the end. It actually has continued after his death and very notably so under Joanne's compassionate oversight…

Paul's Newman's Own philanthropy last year contributed $21,000,000, the largest giving of any entertainment figure, living or dead. Warren Cowan died with his boots on, as well, notably sharp and integrated at 90. On what would be his death bed, on what would be his last day, with the final sweep of his white plume, as Cyrano de Bergerac described the grand eloquence of final gesture… "mon panache"… Warren assured a journalist quite close to him, someone for whom he truly and deeply cared, that Paul Newman was not in perilous health even though Paul was himself at that moment hospitalized in dire decline. Truth matters, but it can have consequences which a press agent is honor-bound to control. Warren knew that Paul's family wanted the last months to themselves. Obligation to client was not something Warren invented, but nobody played it better.

Fame Is a High Maintenance Sport… and a Costly Addiction… for Flacks

A most important rule of daily function as a PR guy or gal is that a press agent should not be seen and should not be heard. A publicist comes most easily undone if he or she courts celebrity. I've spent my whole career not being a celeb, and a happier man for it. When your name appears in print, it is not by dint of your accomplishment but rather your client's. Press agents are like bartenders in that they each can always pour themselves a shot of the poison they dispense. Publicists can always insert themselves into a story or into a shot. In fact, sometimes it is difficult to avoid it. The media always wants a mouth to put the facts into or to take them out of. The TV media demand talking heads. But a sip of fame here, a slug a recognition there… and pretty soon you're just another fame-aholic. I make it explicit to journalists that a condition of anything I say is anonymity. It doesn't always turn out that way.

Our clients require exposure in controlled bursts in order to conduct their career and to exercise their talents happily and successfully. Measured dabs of visibility and attention keep industry awareness of and interest in them successfully in orbit. A flack is best attired in a cloak of absence. A client once demanded why my name was in a story about him, a question I'd asked myself when I saw it. I explained that the journalist apparently felt he had to source some fact. Well then, the client pursued, why was my name was the same size as his. I explained

that newspapers are printed in eight point type and that it would be bizarre to print a press agent's name in six point letters. It would serve only to call further undue attention to him or her. But that client was absolutely correct. A publicity story loses something when you see the puppeteer's hands, or discern his/her name, and that something is called credibility.

And yet here I am, pouring out exhibition while my life's theme has been invisibility. I've been a tranquil island of anonymity in a stormy sea of fame. When I started writing down these recollections, I thought the stories were going to be all about other people, but I found that it was actually only through some revelation of my own life that I could give these tales a coherent connection. Having now written down these disparate episodes, I can release myself from being forever and ever the oral historian of my own life.

Anticipation

Warren Cowan was often a blink ahead of the game, and that's all you need if you're smart. He quickly recognized when a concept or phrase or even a word would have that most short-lasting and useful of all things, currency. He then would find a way to use it to add a special sparkle of currency to some client's campaign. He had an instinct for what would have resonance, however momentary. The work of noted photographer Steve Shapiro always captured the perfect moment. I once asked Steve his secret, because I could see a shot in my camera, but could never catch THE moment. "You shoot it the second you see it?" Steve asked. "The exact second," I affirmed proudly. "That's too late," Steve said, "You have to anticipate it." That's what you have to do in publicity, too, anticipate.

No one in publicity had the anticipatory skills of Warren Cowan. One morning he arrived at the office, and his first word was "Compleat." "What?" "Compleat… c-o-m-p-l-e-a-t." "What happened to e-t-e?" "That just means having all its parts, while e-a-t means top of the world." "Quintessential?" I suggested. "Exactly." "Where did you come by this information?" "It's on a Jaguar billboard, the compleat driving experience or something." "Why not quintessential?" "Compleat is coming into heat. Use it today… a story… a catchphrase. It's a story-selling hook… but today. It'll be gone tomorrow." He was right in both assumptions. It was indeed a hook that made some campaign or other cook for us, and we used it in a half dozen letters I wrote for him. And in just a week it was totally passé, erased from memory, so much so that the inevitable one-usage-too-many brought a gruff note from an editor saying "check your spelling."

Another thing on which Warren had the lock was *"selling the sell,"* merchandising your work to the client or the client's reps. We were doing the pre-publicity for an American tour by Tom Jones. Weeks before its kick-off, it was a near sell-out, and we had a budget for a double-truck (two adjacent pages) ad in the trade papers using a photo of Tom Jones. In the composition of the shot, Tom's head was so far back that the photo was horizontal, without the fold-break disturbing the essence of the picture… Tom singing up into a handheld mic… leaving the left-hand page only suggesting his torso, basically an empty setting for a strong and concise ad-line at the top. But we didn't yet have a strong and concise ad-line. I came in one morning and gave Warren something I'd come up with in the car. He grabbed the phone and dialed. "Tom, the ad? We've got it… six letters… Of course I know your name alone is eight letters, but we don't need your name, we have your photo…. Ok… are you sitting down?… Well, do… Sitting? Tom… the photo, at the top of the left-hand page, six letters… ready?…. 'USA… SRO'… Yeah, it really is…. Tom, that's very gracious of you, thanks." And he hung up, smiling. "He loves it." "The idea or the sell?" I asked, amazed by his unfailing ability to sock it home. Warren looked at me as though my question made no sense. It was inconceivable to him that I didn't comprehend from birth that the *Idea and the Sell are the yin and the yang of publicity, one notion indivisible.*

An Inadvertant Life

I had never heard of public relations and was certainly not looking for a job in it, much less a life in it. But approaching the summer before my junior year in college, I needed a job. I'd spent the previous summer and most of my sophomore year as a ramp serviceman loading luggage on the graveyard shift at LA Airport. United Airlines didn't hire college kids. They wanted guys who wished to stuff suitcases into the bellies of planes unto their deaths. But I lied that I had quit school because I was engaged and I needed the buck sixty-eight an hour.

I had never required more than a few hours of sleep a night, so the 8PM to 4AM schedule was do-able for me. I could get a lot of homework done on the downtime between flights and still grab enough sleep before leaving for school in the morning. The other ramp servicemen were just guys trying to feed a family or get dates on that pay, decent guys, sports-page-reading guys, a surprising number of them former boxers. They weren't interested enough in books to look at what I was always reading. And nobody gave me any trouble. It was 1953 and the LA sports world was humming… Art Aragon was the Golden Boy of boxing… so

they had plenty to keep their conversations interesting while waiting for the next flight to come in.

My only friendship was with a kid on summer break from BYU whose dad knew someone who got him the job. He was a very nice guy, intellectually curious, and we had studies in common. It came to a sad end at a midnight lunch break when he said, over a bowl of pea soup that cost only a nickel in the staff commissary, "You know, I'm impressed that you never smoke, drink or swear. You'd make a good woman." I thought it was a joke, so I said, "You never smoke, drink or swear either. You'd make a good woman, too." "I am one," he answered straight-out and exceedingly proud of the revelation. I certainly had friends who were gay, but trans-sexuality (it wasn't trans-gender yet) was complex, well beyond my psych studies to that point. It was a half-century before LGBT awareness liberated us, both gays and straights, from the tyranny of perception. At 19, I had no business setting up office inside the belly of a DC-4 to practice psychology without a license. I feared giving bad advice. I begged him not to tell that to any of the ex-boxers and muscle guys we worked with, which really offended him. I began to make sure that when work gangs were divvied up, I was always on a crew other than his. I was afflicted with the ignorance of the times.

What had been a friendship devolved into a resentful distance. Just as he was about to return to school, he caught up with me one wee small hour when we were heading for our cars. "Hang on a second," he said rather sadly, "I just want to know what happened to our friendship. You made your rejection quite obvious, and it was a pretty darn lonely summer. I'd really like to know why the change." "Are you kidding? I didn't know how to handle it when you told me you were a woman?" "After I what?…. told you I was a WOMAN?!" he exclaimed in outrage, and then, "I told you I was a MORMON!" That was the only memorable event in the numbing year of airport nights. And when a crew foreman finally thumbed through some of my books and saw they were psychology, anthropology and theatre history, I was summarily fired. A dollar and ninety cents an hour (I'd had a raise) down the drain. I needed a new job for the new summer.

On the bulletin board of the UCLA Bureau of Occupations were pinned notices of work availabilities, and there was a "wanted, mailroom boy" listing for a company called Rogers & Cowan. It was just a job… not a life direction… and a job was something I needed. It was a nice office in Beverly Hills, walls covered

with Musee d'Art Modern posters. The company had something to do with art, I supposed, and that was ok with me. I was well-qualified… I had a car and they had deliveries. They asked what would happen when school started up again. I assured them I could work my schedule to give them five hours in the afternoon. That seemed fine, all systems go. But some client's nephew needed a job, so I had a great summer as counselor and director of theatre programming at a kids camp on the high slopes of Mount San Gorgonio, learning and then teaching canoeing and forestry lore, writing and directing plays for parent days and parent campfire nights. One evening, after I had led a group of 12 to 15 year olds on a climb up Grayback, Southern California's highest peak, I made camp for them alongside a creekbed, failing to notice the plentiful hoof-prints in the dust. That night a herd of wild burros galloped through our campsite. Only one kid got stepped on and that without injury. I would never entrust a child to me absent other supervision. But it did prove something that would stand me in good stead as a press agent. I was lucky. In publicity, on those occasions when you are not smart enough, it is absolutely imperative to be lucky enough.

In September, I got a call from this Rogers & Cowan company that the office boy job was open if I was still interested. I worked my classes so that I could start work at one each day, 46 dollars a week and a little extra to be made on deliveries at 10 cents a mile. There were these Henry Rogers and Warren Cowan guys, about eight other workers at whatever it was they did and a half dozen secretaries and accounting staff. There was a lot to do for a lone and part-time office boy, so one Friday I didn't get to distribute the new telephone books. I came in on Saturday morning to do it, but they were gone and in their stead a note saying "Since you were too busy to pass out the phone books, I did it. Henry C. Rogers." But, as I said, it wasn't a career, it was just a job.

Things changed for me at Rogers & Cowan one day when I had to make a delivery to a Beverly Hills mansion and Kirk Douglas opened the door. Hold on… what is it these guys were doing at that office? I was a film student, so maybe this was up my alley or at least a door opening onto other promising alleys. I started to read the memos before I distributed them, to read the newspaper and magazine clippings which I mailed to clients. I was assured it was a job of grave repsonsibilitys. A light bulb switched on. So the art posters were just pretentious décor. The people in this office were in some mysterious and slowly-to-be-deciphered

way engaged in the grand scheme of Hollywood. I devised and dedicated myself to a crash course in what publicity is and how it threads into the very woof and warp of the entertainment world fabric. Up my alley?… it was the alley I had stalked from childhood. I'd been a journalist wannabe all my life; I'd written high school sports from age 15 for one of William Randolph Hearst's top papers, the Los Angeles Examiner, and I had a weekly column in it when I was seventeen. I'd thought long and hard about being a sports writer. Sports… apart from their visceral tensions and releases, their exultations and life-lesson disappointments… are where we play out our metaphors of victory and defeat, determination and skill. I grew up a Pulitzer (my grandmother was a cousin of Joseph Pulitzer from the poor side of the family) in St. Louis, a town dominated by the Cousin Joe's flagship, the Post-Dispatch. I was writing and editing school papers from fourth grade on. This publicity thing combined the only two things to which I'd ever aspired… journalism and movie-making. Sure, I'd toyed with the idea of becoming a therapist, but who wants to be depressed all your life? I'd dabbled in documentaries, but having, at Rogers & Cowan, fallen into this collateral aspect of movie-making, this publicity thing, the decision of what to do with my life seemed to have been handed to me right off the rack, pre-cut to size. Publicity tied the disparate aspects of my aspirations into a neat knot. I'm drawn to any confluence. I read them like tea leaves. Confluence is the closest I come to metaphysical speculation or conviction… confluence and Chinese fortune cookies. And PR was a confluence of my interests. I started to study how they did it.

It was the flip side of journalism. A journalist has to identify, research, interpret, organize and then economically, intelligibly and accurately convey news. He or she is expected to do this objectively, but it is almost impossible for some conclusion by the reporter not to color the facts. We all are subject to opinion and to response. A publicist, quite the contrary, has to evaluate what the operative news factor of a story is, and then must determine which elements of the story will benefit his or her client and the client's interests. The press agent has to structure news so as to get the media to use it in such a way as to retain your plug element. It helps if you know how to construct a story from the ground up and to do so in a way that bends reader conclusion in a client-friendly direction.

It's important to understand that you are not writing an ad. You must bring to your copy the well organized information, clear and comprehensible writing, structure and the sense of what makes this story relevant to the readership or

viewership of the outlet or outlets to which you are submitting it. The reporters and editors who will consider it are people at the top of their craft. They know their stuff and they will judge your stuff with a sharp eye. Sloppy writing can kill a solid piece of news. Keep your purpose clearly in mind and find an angle that will both intrigue the media and that will project and accomplish your purpose. Find the element that locks your plug message inextricably into the story. One difference between the reporter and you, the press agent, is that the journalist has to BE objective, and that you, as a publicist, have to HAVE an objective.

Warren and Henry were too importantly occupied for me to reveal and explore my growing interest in the craft. Their top account executive, Ted Loeff, much beloved and respected by artists, studio heads, magazine editors and journalists alike, had an open mind and an open door. He taught me to learn the skills and to learn the clients, arguing that *you represent talents well only if you formulate common intellectual ground with them. You can't sell what you don't understand.* Ted was an integral element in one of Hollywood's main gatherings of liberal and activist *mensches* (worthwhile human beings)… among them such of his personal clients as Martin Ritt, Mark Robson, Robert Ryan and Charlton Heston… yes, Charlton Heston. I started writing sample copy for Ted, stories about Heston's deep quest for social justice. Ted delivered lesson one… "This stuff isn't going to stoke women's interest in Chuck. They don't love him because they think he has a huge heart." "Why do they love him?" "Because they think he has a huge dick."

Ted arranged for a subscription to Weekly Variety to be sent to my house. (My parents' house, to tell the truth… and, yes, I actually lived at home throughout college and substantially beyond… how cocooned can you get? I made Thomas The Innocent look like a gang-banger… a house where never was heard a discouraging word… well, maybe discouraging, but never expletive.) Ted's idea was for me to read the Weekly cover to cover and to mark stories that could be adapted… I think his word was "extrapolated"… to fit one of Rogers & Cowan's clients.

His reason for the Weekly Variety discipline was thus… "Each of those stories has passed the muster of a top and tough editor, which means it's fit to print. Most people in Hollywood read the Daily, not the Weekly, the editors of the Daily included. They'll never know it's a hand-me-down." Not only did it hone my sense of what made a story, but Ted would slip my extrapolations to the company "planter" who shuffled them into the mix of the items he was selling. Ted kept a

copy of every story I wrote that broke to have in hand when he demanded that the company up me from office gofer to press agent. The fact that I still had two years of college to go and would have to be a part-time press agent made that a hard sell.

At a PR firm in those pre-digital decades, the "planter" was the guy who sold the stories to different outlets, the limited number of specific columns and other media who trafficked in entertainment news. To my good fortune, at Rogers and Cowan that designator hitter was Larry Laurie, the best planter since Johnny Appleseed. No one who ever walked the face of the earth could more adroitly squeeze some loser item into life. Larry was a handsome, glib and charming Irishman, smartly over-endowed with the gift of gab. He had the first little Porsche roadster convertible in town, in which he dated many of the top young starlets and had their hair and their dreams of stardom madly flying. Larry could get any story into orbit. In selling a story, he did not merely enthuse… he exuberated. Larry and I once were conjuring a what-if story that had David Niven trying to buy the film rights to the life of the English driver who had just set a world speed record on the salt flats in Utah, a story which would remind the industry, the media and the public of the adventuroso aspects of Niven's playbook, complimenting his evident way with romantic comedy. We couldn't, however, think of the driver's name. (This antedated the Internet by forty years.) I had Larry call the LA Examiner sports information desk to find out. Larry, in seeking the name, was describing the driver in such vivid flow of adjectives and adulation that the sports "morgue"(digging up dead stories) guy at the paper said, "Can't find his name, but I sure as hell wanna see the film."

Ted had armed me with a simple philosophy of PR success. One of the first and most sacred rules was *"never miss a shot," meaning never let an opportunity go by without at least taking a shot*. Part of my education was reading every memo I carried from office to office. Ted also imparted the corollary rule of a career in anything… *make your break. MAKE YOUR BREAK*. What does that mean? I asked. You'll know when it hits you, he answered. He was right. It did hit me and I did know. It hit me when I was of reading a memo from Warren Cowan that I was delivering to Henry Rogers. Jack Webb's obsession with "Pete Kelly's

Blues" (the second of four films he would direct) wasn't going away, the memo said quite urgently. The company needed a home run. Jack Webb, a very prestige client, had revolutionized television with that early TV sensation, "Dragnet." But R&C was coming up blank on creating a break-out piece of PR to fast-track Jack Webb's beloved new project, a period blues musical in which he had invested not only his talent and his clout, but also his soul.

There are some stars who leap into legend early on. Their art, stature and charisma is such that it quickly evolves into an eternal flame… Cary Grant, Barbra Streisand, Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Judy Garland, Gary Cooper, the Hepburns, Audrey and Kate, Sinatra, Brando, Garbo, Eastwood, Bogart, Bette Davis, James Dean, Wayne, Newman, Welles, Beatty, McQueen, etc. There are always, by a very different measurement, a few stars who are the hottest thing in the business at any particular time. Some will ascend as legends, and some will fulfill their season as dominant stars or acting talents of a specific period. And that is an extraordinary thing, too. It's in a constant state of change and of being assessed and re-assessed. The reason for this scrutiny is that *while you have it, you damn well better use i*t. And the people around you, press agents among them, have an obligation to make these judgments often and accurately and to protect and build on any advantage they perceive. Tony Curtis was just slipping into high gear in his long and defined time of pre-eminence… the same kind of most-profoundly significant star as Tom Cruise or Julia Roberts or George Clooney or Angelina Jolie or Johnny Depp have been in their continuing time. Warren Cowan constantly took the pulse of fame, and knowing who was hotter than whom helped keep his clients and his company at their respective peaks… He and I went for a meeting with Tony Curtis, Dean Martin and the producers and studio execs for a film in which these two leading leading-men would co-star. I noticed Warren's eyes shifting back and forth between the two during the meeting (they were both clients) as though he were measuring. As we drove back to the office, Warren said, "You know, I think Dino's a bigger star now than Tony, and I think Tony knows it." It was a complex and subjective conclusion, but I realized Warren was absolutely right. A place in that wavering line had subtly changed and, as these things do, would change back. . It would shape for that moment what Warren had to devise and execute to best serve each. Rogers & Cowan probably handled forty to fifty percent of the truly top stars. How big

was R&C? Do you recall that amazing shot of all the MGM stars of the '40s? I have it on a wall of my office to remind me what stardom is. A shot of the Rogers & Cowan client list at any one of twenty points in history would have been far more starry.

How Warren prioritized the relative fame and stardom of his own aggregated version of more-stars-than-there-are-in-the-heavens… and my office-boy perception of that… gave me the break I needed to get out of the mail-room about a half-year into my gofer stint there. I knew who was on his mind. With all of the Coopers and Crawfords and Sinatras and Douglases, Newmans and Berles, the Brynners and Rex Harrisons, Audrey Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor, Heston, Curtis, Wyman, Kaye, Allyson, Grayson, Doris Day to Johnny Mathis, Judy Garland to Bobby Darin, Diana Ross and The Supremes and nearly ad infinitum, the biggest biggest star, the one whose pleasure and gratitude Warren most sought at that point in 1955 was… Jack Webb. "Dragnet" had created the curt neo-realism that would make police procedural series TV's go-to genre. He had become such a singular sensation that Webb was the one particular client at that moment upon whom Warren most doted.

Webb was aware that this was a moment when a job really had to be done on and for him. The task of the moment was to deliver an indelible campaign on the movie Webb had just produced, directed and starred in. "Pete Kelly's Blues" was more than a film for him. It was a passion. He was brilliantly learned in jazz and had gathered the top musicians of the genre, including Ella Fitzgerald and Peggy Lee, for the film, his tribute to the music he loved. R&C needed a home run badly, but it would have settled for a bunt. I was still a junior at UCLA, and I often ate my lunch in the six hundred seat auditorium of the Music Department where, as good fortune would have it, the Roger Wagner Chorale rehearsed every noon just when I had my lunch break. I had become friends with some of the top people in the department because, no dummies, they took their lunch then, too.

I went first to the music fraternity and proposed their sponsoring what I called "A Seminar On Blues featuring Jack Webb and the musical stars of his 'Pete Kelly's Blues.'" I let the words Ella Fitzgerald and Peggy Lee flutter in illusive possibility lightly coated with a sheen of promise. With the fraternity's slavering backing, I went to Music Department brass and was promised the auditorium at no cost, and I was pretty sure I could fill it. I threw in a special department award for Webb, which was enthusiastically embraced. I brought this back to Ted Loeff in

a one page proposal and he took it to Warren. "Who did you say is putting this together?" Henry Rogers asked Warren Cowan incredulously after he read the note. "Dick," Warren said. "Let me get this straight," said Henry Rogers, "You're putting our biggest-clout client in the hands of the office boy?" "Give me a better idea," Warren said earnestly. I worked with the music fraternity in covering the campus with postings. I'd done special writing for the *UCLA Daily Bruin*, so the advance coverage in that school paper was heavy.

Warren was nervous the day of the night. He was hurtling toward the river and could only hope that the bridge wasn't out. When he arrived with Jack Webb and five of the greatest jazz and blues instrumentalists of the '50s, there were nearly 800 students and faculty jamming the 600 seat hall. Either the fire marshals had gone home, or they were as passionately devoted to Kansas City jazz and blues… not to mention to Jack Webb… as the rest of the crowd. It wasn't a seminar, it was a revival meeting. The yelling started when Webb and the musicians walked in at the back of the auditorium and the noise lasted through the musicians' setup. It took another five minutes for Webb's waving arms to bring them back to sanity. His brilliance at everything was immediately felt. He had prepared an extraordinary syllabus on the music he loved. The evening was a history of blues, one of the great and gloried instructions on a respected campus. He told the story in words, and the musicians told it in music. Even Ella and Peggy, had they shown, couldn't have taken that crowd higher. There was love flowing back and forth between artists and audience in great tides. When it was over, Webb didn't want to slip out the stage door. He gloried in the crushing enthusiasm, and it took us a half-hour to get him out. As Warren ushered him and the musicians into their bus, Webb said, "Warren, I never thought I'd say this to anyone but a woman, but you've given me the greatest night of my life." I had still been toying with the idea of becoming a shrink, but Jack Webb sealed my deal.

If I'd been a year further into publicity, I would have told them to take that act on the road and replicate it in five key cities before the film opened, doing it as a fund-raiser for some important music cause in each city. It seemed someone else could have come up with that, but I think they were happy just to be off the hook. The one rule it taught me when I knew enough to take a step back… *being off the hook is never enough. You take it as far as it will go.* It wasn't just a night… it was a whole campaign… or could have been. But it got me in the door.

In new client solicitation and in pitch meetings, most press agents have their own special stump pitch. But even good clothes-off-the-rack can rock if tailored to the buyer, a tuck here, a stitch there. And that was a Warren Cowan specialty. I remember very well being in on Warren's pitch meeting with Christopher Plummer when Chris was about to start filming his role as Captain Von Trapp in "The Sound of Music." Plummer, with well-earned pride in his acting chops, felt that engaging publicity to draw career momentum from this much sought-after role required him to stoop to conquer. His mindset that it was beneath him was clearly visible in his occasional reference to the project as "The Sound of Mucus." Warren, undeterred, pointed out to him, as he had to others, that *"each new role is the stepping stone to the rest of your career"* and that Chris had to be aware that his association with a such a huge hit could be every bit as important in getting him a continuity of major roles as is his unique and considerable talent. Warren stressed that stamping Plummer's name on that film's success, as only we could do, would encourage other significant roles to come his way, that he had to get great visibility to keep this film's clearly ordained box-office success from being Julie Andrews' stepping stone to the exclusion of all others. Warren's relentless don't-walk-away-from-the-biggest-opportunity-of-your-life sell finally broke down Chris' clearly valid my-work-speaks-for-itself resistance.

I tried to be patient with his anger about the film and, worse, his real distain for publicity. One of the great breaks in Hollywood publicity then was Louella Parsons' column which appeared in all of the Hearst newspapers, including the Los Angeles Examiner, the only serious competitor to the LA Times as the dominant morning rag. Especially important was her Sunday feature story, one of the most read exposures in the country. Louella's daughter Harriet was to do the interview for a Sunday piece, an exceedingly prime break, at a lunch with Chris at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel where "Captain Von Trapp" was staying in the penthouse. It was an accommodation I knew well because Warren Beatty usually lived there. Time passed as Harriet and I sat in the hotel restaurant, and Chris simply did not come down for this important interview. I finally went up to see what was delaying him. I found him on the phone describing to the concierge a shoe he had thrown not out the window but through the window in some dispute with his wife. He was more interested in pursuing that tension than coming down to do a career-assisting interview.

That attitude notwithstanding (I'm getting back to how this relates to Warren Cowan,) Chris and I had a respectful relationship, and the job he allowed me to do was pretty good. So I was surprised when I showed up on the set one day and Chris began the conversation with "Don't take this personally, but I'm dispensing with the services of Rogers & Cowan. Don't argue the point. I have damn good reason." "I am taking this very personally," I said, "because you've had a damn good job." "Excellent, but I bid you adieu." "Because?" "It doesn't matter." "Because what?" "Do you remember that powerful sales argument Warren gave me in his office? You were there." "Of course," "His insistence that the promotion I would obtain from the studio would be for the *film*, not for *me*? He stressed that I needed publicity which sold ME, me specifically, and not just somebody, what he described as the unique me who could bring to a film something nobody else could?" "He sold *me*," I said. "He sold me, too," Chris said, "and last night I was dining at La Scala and by chance I heard Warren in the booth behind me selling someone else with the exact same goddam speech." I said… "Well, maybe…." "Maybe nothing," Chris said heatedly, "the exact speech. So I turned around and who do you think he was saying it to?…. Eddie fucking Fisher!"

I did get Christopher Plummer back the next year, and with that re-association came one of the most cherished gifts my craft ever brought me. Chris went off to film a BBC production of "Hamlet" with the Royal Shakespeare Company shooting at Elsinore Castle itself. Rather than bringing him good luck, the BBC "Hamlet" network broadcast in America received reviews you don't send home to mom. Gisela and I could not have more disagreed with these pans… It was a powerful performance, and we said so with passion in a telegram, the old-fashioned Western Union telegram with pasted-on verbal brevities… pronouns and articles sacrificed to telegram-speak. Apparently it touched Chris because he sent a return telegram saying "Dear Gisela and Dick, Your message cheered me greatly. See you on my return. Love." It was lovely in itself and a collectible object of astonishing significance because of how Western Union garbled his name. They added a letter. It read in full… "Dear Gisela and Dick. Your message cheered me greatly. See you on my return. Love, Christ." See you on my return. Everybody… and we showed it to everybody… was impressed.

Actually, Plummer was dead wrong in his indignant despisal of Warren's having used the same sell on him and on Eddie Fisher. The same philosophy applied to each

of them and applies to all sells. It simply has to be tailored to the specific product or talent being sold, which we had done for Chris and did for Fisher. Obviously, I had failed to make him see that our job for him had been differentiated to sell the idea of a great dramatic actor adapting his thespian powers and his skill in developing a compelling character, to a big and commercial musical project. For Christopher Plummer, we were working the proposition that this had become a recent tradition of the theatre and the screen… Rex Harrison and "My Fair Lady," Richard Burton and "Camelot," Yul Brynner and "The King and I"… three very apt superstars with whom to associate Chris. It had been paying off. It is one of the first concepts of flackery, *placing the star's work in a context of and association with success*. It's like selling the futures of a really promising commodity. That way, the artist's representatives can start reaping the next roles on the basis of the anticipation, not having to wait to sell the eventual success post facto when the potential buyer can say… and this is a line that I actually heard uttered… "yeah, but that was last week." *Anticipation can be more motivating than attainment*. This town buys futures. But there was no rationale which would remove the Eddie Fisher factor from Christopher's craw where it was securely stuck. Maybe that epiphany at La Scala Restaurant cost him the chance to have harvested more from being one of the two stars of one of the biggest commercial hits of all time. It did not, I must emphasize, deprive him of his talent, and he lived and prospered happily ever after. He may be at his peak now, winning the Oscar and a run of great roles in his 80s, more than four decades later.

The La Scala restaurant, where Beverly Hills' hip-crowd crushed in from twilight to midnight to do its eating and chatting, was Warren Cowan's night-time office. One night, during a Dodgers/Yankees World Series, he introduced Louella Parsons, the Hearst newspapers' queen of gossip, to the New York team's superstar, Moose Skowron, whom Louella kept calling Mouse. Warren surreptitiously wrote "Moose" on the tablecloth in front of Louella. She didn't notice, so he underlined the second O and then started tapping the tablecloth to direct her eye there. The only one who noticed was Skowron who, uninitiated into the customs of Hollywood, was a bit perplexed. There was a similar event at the office one time in a prospective client meeting with someone named Patrick. The guy who headed our personality department kept calling him Peter. Warren wrote "Patrick" large across a piece of paper and held it up, but the Peters rolled on to the irritation of

Patrick. Even though Patrick could plainly see that Warren already had his name in print, we didn't land him.

La Scala was sort of in-the-family because we handled the owner Jean Leon and his effort to start professional soccer in the USA, which everyone knew would never happen. When Gisela's parents visited us from Germany, Warren hosted us all at La Scala. It started on the wrong foot because when we told her parents in advance that Warren had invited them to La Scala, they thought we were going to the opera. Warren, as was his habit, was exceedingly gracious. With Gisela translating, they got along well and, of course, the food was delicious. Throughout the evening, Warren was introducing Gisela's parents to all the stars dining there who stopped by to say hello. That's the measure of a superstar press agent's fame… when he's the one who gets table-hopped. The trouble was that her parents spent their lives in the Black Forest in the elegantly distant world of Baden Baden, and their big stars were Beethoven, Maria Callas, Van Clyburn, Mozart and Bach. They had no idea of the importance of the top box-office draws with whom they were shaking hands. So when Warren brought Peter Lawford to the table, he introduced him as "the President's brother-in-law," and that was a winner.

Warren Cowan's conversation with Eddie Fisher on Christopher Plummer's night of disenchantment, actually, was to re-sign him. In our prior tour with Fisher, one memorable crisis on which the R&C staff had to weigh-in was the PR ramifications when his romance with and marriage to Elizabeth Taylor came to a madly publicized end. Whatever the other calamitous world events of the day, it was the termination of this famous relationship that ate up the front page headlines. Warren was due at a big emergency meeting with Eddie and his reps at the studio where Eddie was rehearsing his television show. We had an intense head-knocking session about publicity approaches that could be taken, how to mitigate the damage and the embarrassment. Warren wanted to be armed when he got there. We were satisfied with the list, and Warren drove off to the meeting. When he returned, several of us convened in his office to find out how the strategies went over. "We never got to them," Warren said. "All we talked about was what songs he was going to sing this week. 'Am I Blue?,' 'I'll Go My Way By Myself?' 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore?' 'On the Street Where You Live?' 'Our Love Is Here To Stay?' 'They Can't Take That Away From Me?' 'Bye Bye Blues?' 'It's The Talk of The Town?' ' 'I'll Never Smile Again?' or, going the other way "I'm

Sitting on Top of The World?' 'On The Sunny Side of The Street?' It was driving Eddie crazy. Every song will get a laugh," "What did they decide on?" someone asked. "When I left," Warren said, "I think the list was down to 'Oh, My Papa' and 'Happy Birthday to You.'"

One instructive day, Warren asked me to join him at a meeting. Russell Birdwell was coming in that afternoon to sell Warren on some idea, and Warren said I would learn something valuable. "What?" I asked. "We'll see," he answered. Russell Birdwell had preceded Henry and Warren in the super-flack business by about 20 years and 10 years respectively. Like Warren and Henry, he was a great self-promoter, too, even more dedicated to it than they were. He had pulled super-stunts for Goldwyn, Stanley Kubrick, Darryl Zanuck and Howard Hughes. Birdwell did the blow-away campaign introducing Jane Russell in Hughes' "The Outlaw." His name had been synonymous with big bang press agentry, but he was at that moment a bit more legend than player. He was coming in at 3PM, but at 11AM some guys showed up with two huge crates, each about the size of a hutch. They set them in Warren's office, unpacking two large pieces of furniture which ate up much of the office's space. This was when music was sold on 12 inch platters and just before the advent of hi-fi stereo. The big boxes were the first stereo equipment either Warren or I had seen or heard, sizable banks of tweeters and woofers. But we didn't know that. They were just big pieces of furniture.

At 3PM, Russell Birdwell came into the office exuding Big Sell. His was a different style than the primarily Jewish press agents who had followed the primarily Jewish studio chiefs to Hollywood. He was a Texas boy who brought his daddy's barnstorming evangelist preachering to the entertainment field. With great flourish, he opened the big box furniture and explained the new magic of stereo. We thought he was going to try to sell us the equipment, but no. With further flourish he removed from its opulent wrapping a 12 inch album which he placed on the turntable he had just revealed. Laying the needle in the groove, he sat back, smiled and gestured with one hand to the machine. Suddenly an enormous sound was bursting from the giant speakers, a woman singing. That first experience of the blasting stereo was mind-bending and eardrum-bursting. Russell Birdwell was beaming and Warren Cowan was giving him nods and eyebrow bounces to show he was impressed. The song ended and Birdwell said the singer's name with grave importance. "Warren, this girl's future may be too big

even for me. I may want you in on it. Think about it and call me." He rewrapped the record, smiled to each of us and left.

His presence was so energized that a big empty space remained where he had been, and we stared at it for a few seconds. "Well," Warren said after a bit, "what did you think?" And his voice had a reverence that told me he expected a positive response. "Warren, I prefer singers who hit the notes," I said. He looked at me with amazement and raised his hands forward as though handing me a baby. "The presentation!" he exhorted, "the presenTATION!"

Warren was a great teacher, but I think he also was a great student. When he joined Henry right after the war, it's quite clear that no one had to teach Warren Cowan brash and dash. But PR, as simplistic as it must look to an outsider (dream up item, give journalist hard sell, send clip to client,) has its skills and its moves, and many of these had been authored by Henry C. Rogers for well over a decade before a knowing wind blew him and Warren J. Cowan together.

From no less an authority than Bob Thomas (already AP's dean of the wire service reporters when I started and who sadly just left us at 92, sharp, funny and human to the end) I received testimony that Henry had virtually invented the concept of "the Academy Award campaign" in 1945 when he meticulously planted and grew the idea that Joan Crawford was the ordained Best Actress Oscar winner for "Mildred Pierce." And so she proved to be, with Henry's work certainly a factor. Bob knew publicity as well as any journalist because his father, George A. Thomas, had headed that pursuit for David O. Selznick for whom Thomas pere contributed significantly to the earth-shaking success of "Gone with the Wind." One insight into the precarious plight of PR guys in the '30s came from Bob's observation to me recently that his father, as esteemed and pre-eminent as he was, moved from one studio or producer to the next, "and we didn't eat too well in between." In his highly regarded biography of Crawford, Bob acknowledged Henry's having invented the strategy which creates an industry mindset that can lead to what's inside that Oscar envelope. Invariably, all nominees in any category are qualified to pick up the prize. Publicity seeks to help voters see why one of them deserves it more.

Warren learned from Henry's master plan, and he added the idea that the positive effects of an Oscar push can begin before the film is even completed, that this is a strategy which has commercial value in-and-of-itself quite apart from

any effect on Oscar voting. The initiating venture into this idea involved Joan Crawford again. In 1959, we were handling "The Best of Everything," a big hot romantic novel which producer Jerry Wald was bringing to the screen. Wald was savvy and hungry, a guy who, rumor had it, took pride in the prevailing legend that he was the model for Budd Schulberg's novel "What Makes Sammy Run?" about the quintessential Hollywood scrambler, Sammy Glick. Wald was a key mover in Hollywood and, therefore, a prime client for Warren. Warren always knew where the power was and gravitated to it. Working for Jerry Wald and doing it with excellence had great significance to Warren. "The Best of Everything" was expected from the word "go" to be a big box-office pot boiler, and Warren thought he could win Wald's heart and mind with the idea that it also could be projected as a serious critical success. One way he elected to start this was by starting Oscar buzz while the film was still shooting, reprising his partner's earlier device for the same actress. Her prior Oscar acknowledgement made it all the more credible. Wald's skepticism notwithstanding, Warren was pumping up the anticipation by labeling Jean Negulesco, director of the film, as a "great woman's director." Negulesco had guided Jane Wyman to the gold statue a decade before in "Johnny Belinda." *You bring to an effort all of the substantiating factors you can when you're trying to "float an expectation."*

Warren started planting the story that Jerry Wald was bringing studio execs in to see Crawford's rushes for "The Best of Everything" because her work "already had Oscar written all over it." I was in Warren's office when he received an angry call from the easily angered Mr. Wald. Warren took many of his calls standing up with the phone on speaker, and he would annotate the proceedings with meaningful nods to whoever was listening to it with him. Wald asked if Warren knew who was "doing this Oscar crap." Warren proudly owned up to it and pointed out that it was giving an expectation of class as well of box office to the film. "Yeah," Wald fussed, "but me bringing people in to see Oscar in the rushes?, it has PR hype written all over it. This is a Harold Robbin's kind of novel we're making. Who's gonna buy that Oscar crap?" "Jerry," Warren said, nodding to me, indicating he was establishing the set-up, "I haven't sent you any of the clips yet. How did you know about this?" "From Sam Goldwyn, that's who. He calls and says, 'Jerry… another Oscar for Crawford? You know what she'll be asking?' Goldwyn, and from the studio guys here, that's who. They want to know why I haven't brought THEM in to see it." "Well, Jerry," Warren said, looking at me and pantomiming

a finger-slash across the throat and then pointing that fore-finger at the speaker, "seems like SOMEone's buying the Oscar crap."

When the film came out, it was respectfully treated by critics, even though it was, as Wald had pointed out, the same sex-and-scandal weeper the Rona Jaffe novel had been. But Warren socked home his angle that it was the first film to treat the new idea that professional success could supplant marriage as the natural goal for some women. And Crawford's work was honestly appreciated. I wasn't involved in the campaign. My baby that year was "Room At The Top," a labor of love for me because Larry Harvey was already a friend and Simone Signoret had become a dear friend for life. They and the film and director, Jack Clayton, and script were all nominated, and Simone won Best Actress, with the screenplay winning, too. Warren received a complaining call from Wald the morning the nominations were announced. Rogers & Cowan represented four of the five Best Actress nominees, Audrey Hepburn for "The Nun's Story," Elizabeth Taylor for "Suddenly Last Summer," Doris Day for "Pillow Talk" and Simone. Wald's total conversation, Warren told me, was, "I thought this was supposed to be Crawford's year."

However sincere that complaint, Wald happily continued his association with Warren. For a proud interval, the time between Warren's planting of the Crawford buzz and the morning of the nominations announcement, Wald had been the producer of a contender, and he had used that edge well as he used every edge. That little history always reminds me of my ex-partner Jerry Pam's sage observation… *"Every Film Is Fifty Million Dollars And Five Nominations Until It Comes Out."* And that was when fifty million bucks was MONEY. Which, in turn, reminds me of Jerry's comment the time someone asserted to him that Guttman & Pam was one of the best PR offices in the business, to which Jerry snapped, "That's like being the world's biggest midget. You still can't slam dunk." I try to remember that sober truth every time I start to feel too good about myself. It keeps your feet on the ground. Another quote, not from Jerry but from Signoret, stays in my mind as a reminder that sometimes the client knows better than you do. Shaping a campaign that could help win her the Oscar for "Room At The Top" wasn't merely an assignment for me. It was a devotion. I was 26, still uncertain of how balls would bounce, and I worried that the Oscar was out of reach not because of the power of Simone's performance but because of its size. Simone was on screen

only for about a third of the film. I pointed that out to her, perhaps as an advance cop-out. She consoled me that "much more important than being on the screen is that when you're not, the other characters are talking about you."

Few Oscars have thrilled me more. Simone treated me like a little brother from the start, perhaps because Paris is where my life had started 23 years after my birth, perhaps because I fearlessly imposed my dreadful French on everyone. Most of all, we were attached because I had known her brother, who was an assistant director in Paris on "Love in the Afternoon" which was my first film overseas. Part of what developed into our friendship is that Alain and I dated the same girl, the vibrant continuity woman on the film. Asking Simone to give my love to Alain, I found out that he, as handsome and vivid as Simone was beautiful and vivid, had died when swept to sea in a swimming accident. Maybe that was the bond, but even after she abandoned thoughts of Hollywood, she would call me for years to ask, "Are you steel een that sheeety beezness?" When I was pushing "Room at the Top," we were doing an Associated Press interview and the reporter, Rick Dubrow, who was the same age as I (our mid-twenties,), asked if she minded that people knew she was 38. (Obviously, that fact was established before she fell into my age-sheltering hands.) I intercepted the question by saying "Oh no, in Europe there's no stigma attached to being middle-aged." Both Rick and I froze in the realization of what an arrested adolescent I had just revealed myself to be. But Simone came over to give me a hug and a kiss on the top of my head.

We last saw her decades later when Gisela and I were in Paris and were invited to coffee (black, French and in which a spoon could stand on its own) with her and Yves Montand at their storied apartment on Ile la Cite. We were sitting in the kitchen surrounded by dozens of hand-painted Picasso plates, each inscribed to them by their friend Pablo, sitting at the table where Sartre and de Beauvoir and Cocteau and, yes, Picasso had sat to nurse the same dark brew and the same wise and ironic musings. A lot of life had been shared between our conjunction on "Room at the Top," the international cause celebre of Yves' fling with Monroe not the least among them. But it was beautiful to see these two lovers and creative and political soulmates in their lair, still the spectacular mating of artistic legends and social rebels. We had been drawn into their epic leadership in challenging Charles de Gaulle and the French right wing on the matter of Algerian independence. It had cost each of them dearly both in France and in Hollywood. They were the

very soul of what Gisela and I had experienced when we were kids in the artistic and philosophical ferment that was the Left Bank in the '50s. The Café de Flore and the Café Deux-Magots had been infused with the humane concerns and historic debates enjoined by Simone and Yves and their existential compatriots. For Gisela and me, they still are, and the cafes-crème of the Parisian bistros runs in our blood. We make our pilgrimage to St. Germain des Pres every time we return to Paris. The square is now called Place Jean Paul Sartre et Simone de Beauvoir.

A few years after Warren Cowan's launching the concept of promoting Oscar buzz *during*-production ("planting Oscar seeds while the film's still on the floor,") I borrowed it for something that worked out, but backfired. I had Rex Harrison on my list while Joseph Mankiewicz was filming "Cleopatra." The PR pouring out of the Rome set, as the world recalls, was all Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, each of whom my own company would eventually and proudly represent. But at that time, Rex was my charge, and he was getting lost in all the Dick and Liz furor. I gave a columnist a story stating that the word from the 20th boys in Rome was that "'Cleopatra' is a Caesar salad." It's the kind of word play that sticks in the mind and gets pick-up," like a joke you heard last night on a talk show. Once you get a break like that, it works itself. *Everyone has the courage of someone else's conviction, right?* The someone else in this case was an unnamed (and, actually, non-existent) 20th exec in Italy, but quickly such things often become "everybody's saying." So the story showed up in various forms as did another line I floated, "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." Clearly, it's madness to infer that such bleeps of consciousness construct a nomination, but it's foolish to ignore that they do give things a nudge. What got rendered unto Caesar was a Best Actor nomination for Harrison. This actually came as an strange surprise to me. I had thought it would be for supporting and that Burton and Taylor would be nominated for Best Actor and Best Actress. Maybe romantic mojo overwhelmed deft performances when people put pen to ballot.

I had zero relationship with Rex Harrison, other than watching Carol Reed's "Night Train To Munich" and Preston Sturges'"Unfaithfully Yours" every time I had (or still do have) the chance. Even working on "Midnight Lace" and "Doctor Dolittle," I never sensed a moment to start an acquaintance. In truth, the Rogers & Cowan publicity campaign probably didn't have much to do with his Oscar win for "My Fair Lady," a thought which occurred to me as I led him through the

winner's press gauntlet. Rex Harrison and Professor Henry Higgins were born to hold that statue from the moment they stepped together onto a New York stage. The other four nominees were as brilliant a vintage of Best Actor nominees as any year had or has since provided, Burton and Peter O'Toole for "Becket," Tony Quinn for "Zorba The Greek" and Peter Sellers for "Dr. Strangelove." What that year needed was a five-way tie. But the world had become accustomed to and enamored of Rex Harrison's face in that role, and Oscar-worthy it certainly was. That year was a traumatic strain for Rogers & Cowan, even though we had the two actor award winners in Harrison and Peter Ustinov for "Topkapi." It was more bitter than sweet because Audrey Hepburn wasn't nominated for her rapturous Eliza Doolittle while "My Fair Lady" was nominated in all other acting categories. And the stinger was that during the voting period there was circulated (by persons unknown) the question of whether Audrey deserved honor since she had lip-synced Marni Nixon's performance of the songs. In Academy Award positioning, the first and last rule is that *a campaign presents its artists' or film's qualifications and never challenges those of a competitor.* However much the Academy cautions members not to discuss their choices among themselves, that is often vigorously ignored. People have opinions and are inclined to voice them. But an Oscar campaigner doesn't disparage the competition.

There's a fact that is not often noted because George Bernard Shaw's play took on another incarnation and primacy and size in our minds when Lerner and Loewe added music. Forgotten by many is the wondrous 1938 film, "Pygmalion" in which Leslie Howard, both as actor and co-director (with Anthony Asquith), gave readings and inflections to Henry Higgins' delightful exasperations which echo in Rex Harrison's infinitely and duly awarded interpretation.

The distance at which Rex Harrison seemed to have held his minions at Rogers & Cowan is very much an anomaly. Most relationships with clients are reciprocally personal. I recall one visit to Warren Beatty's aerie atop the Beverly Wilshire during which his career-long (because she is smart, efficient, human and funny) right hand gal, Jane Payne, advised him that a producer (another malefactor we shall call Frank) had called him. "Are you doing a film with him?" I asked. "He's trying. Why?" "Well, we're submitting a project which Michael Caine and his agent

Dennis Selinger like, and Frank's office turned it down." Warren asked Jane to place a call to Frank. "Frank, question, do you think Michael Caine's a good actor?… no, you're right. He's a great actor. And do you think he's smart?…. Witty, right, and smart… uh huh. Smarter than the 22-year-old readers in your development department?……. Then why would you take the opinion of one of them over that of Michael Caine on that project that was just sent you?…. OK, fine, I think you *should* take a look at it…thanks. Gotta go. We'll talk." Whether or not Frank read it is immaterial. What *is* material is that Warren made the call.

RENDER UNTO CAESAR THAT WHICH IS CAESAR'S… Yes that phrase which I shamelessly put in play for Harrison's "Cleopatra" Oscar momentum, also captured a key to Warren Cowan's dominance of his field. Warren was not only a great press agent. He was a great emperor. He and Henry Rogers were the duumvirate which ran an empire… the first great empire in the entertainment world's independent publicity field and certainly its most sustaining. Rogers & Cowan, quite amazingly, didn't miss a beat when Warren and Henry were sent into the wilderness after they sold it, such was the inertial power of that company name and its history, and such was the skill of those who succeeded them. And for whatever tensions we sensed or speculated had sizzled between Henry's and Warren's adjoining offices, I don't feel it ever showed up in the job the company did for such a variety of clients. Each addressed his own bailiwick, with Henry concentrating on the TV and corporate accounts, and Warren the film and personal artist representations. The most important thing I ever learned from the two of them is that I never wanted to oversee an empire, and I've kept Guttman Associates at a manageable (for me) boutique size, although Guttman & Pam did verge on empire for a while, to my distaste. Also, empires tend to become things that people sell to larger empires. That became all the rage at a certain point when Guttman & Pam had become a bit too imperial for me. Jerry Pam had become infused with the selling-the-empire idea. There were buyers, and I couldn't go along with it. For one thing, when you sell an empire, you're actually selling the people who inhabit it, and for me that was too much like selling the old family plantation with all aboard. And, in a larger sense, there are just too many things that can go wrong in an empire.

Empires, for instance, need receptionists, a position to which bosses don't pay much attention, so wires can get crossed. The receptionists at Rogers & Cowan, having to keep 150 or more clients straight in their minds, were a source of worry.

Burt Lancaster came in once (we didn't handle him, but we worked with him on ACLU and other charity or "cause" accounts and on several films) and he said to the receptionist, "Will you please tell Mr. Cowan that I'm here?" and she dutifully pressed a button and said, "Mr. Cowan, Kirk Douglas is here to see you." On another occasion, Tony Randall came in and informed the young woman at the desk that he was arrived for a meeting with Mr. Guttman. The receptionist, with great savoir faire, said, "And *whom* can I say is calling?" Tony, a grammarian par excellence, was amused. "Just tell him, please, that it's the King Of Comedy." She nodded her thanks, plugged in to my intercom and said, "Dick, do you have a meeting with Jack Carter?." It is a tribute to the character of those gentlemen that neither stormed out. Tony, in fact, told the story with glee.

I must be the one person whom the attraction of being part of an empire has eluded. Gisela and I bumped into Paul Bloch at a Malibu store recently. Paul, long a prince of the publicity world and master of the PR fates of many of the top stars, informed us that he was approaching his 50th anniversary at Rogers & Cowan and he noted that the company now had over 150 publicists, more than 30 in New York alone. My mind snaps shut at such numbers. We rarely have had more than 50 or 60 clients, and anything beyond that defies my imagination and my ambition. I've always thought of myself as a publicist, not a captain of industry, but through Gisela's veins flows the blood of Hanseatic traders… as well as robber barons, although all larceny had been sifted from the genes in the intervening ten centuries… so she keeps the business part clockwork smooth. Paul, with his imperial persuasion, said that it's the empire part of it which he loves, averring that men have been drawn to empires for ten thousand years. That attraction may have worked for Alexander and Caesar, for Warren Cowan and Paul Bloch, but very early on I cast my lot with Henry David Thoreau, and Guttman Associates has remained my little Walden Pond.

Warren Cowan and I had a close relationship until I resigned and started my own company in partnership with Jerry Pam. Maybe I left because I was ready for a new challenge, or maybe I'd tired of life within an empire, or it may be that it really was because of a clash Warren and I had over an idea I'd proposed for a specific campaign. In a business which relies largely on flexibility and compromise, much of my life has been shaped by my obstinacy and resolve. And I'm ok with that. For a year after that, Warren Cowan had an impulse to be somewhere else

every time he caught sight of me at some event. And, in Hollywood, events follow each other as the night the day. They are, in fact, night and day. Coincidental attendances happen constantly, so I started to position myself to avoid Warren's eye contact. The problem was, we each had to WORK these events. Neither of us could skip them or skip out on them. But where respect abides, friendship resumes. And so did ours in a year or two.

Twenty years later, Warren and Henry sold Rogers & Cowan to some mega-company which, strangely I thought, sent the business' two fountainheads into non-compete limbo. Warren's closest and most dearly-held clients went with a group of his staff disengaged from the mother company. I gave them an umbrella of office space and some oversight and honchoing of key accounts in their continued work for clients like Paul Newman, Aaron Spelling and Kirk Douglas, while Warren dutifully kept his hands off. Then, after a few years when Warren's proscribed banishment ended, he returned to the fray and the two companies continued under that umbrella and in the Guttman & Pam Beverly Hills offices. In one major way Warren's and my philosophies were diametrically opposed. I like a tight, small company with an elite, small clientele. Warren, long acclimated to empire, was always inclined to more staff, more clients.

One day, shortly after Gisela, the only financially and organizationally skilled part of my brain… had supervised the dissolution of my two decade partnership with Jerry, she came into the office of the co-functioning companies, the newly reconstituted Guttman Associates and Warren Cowan Public Relations, flowing side by side like two rivers of different colors and temperatures. She saw five members of the two staffs standing in line waiting to use the copying machine. She went into Warren's office and said "Warren, there are too many rats in the cage." "Meaning?" "Meaning that when there are two rats, they get along in a very accommodating fashion. But when there are ten, there's a lot of shoulder bumping and snarling. There are five rats out there waiting to get on the treadmill." "When do you want me out?" he asked. "That depends on how you define 'as soon as possible,'" she said. You have to understand that this was all amazingly amicable since they had really liked each other for thirty-five years." "Gisela," Warren said, "I've always thought Richard and I would go into partnership." "Warren, he's going to have one partner the rest of his life, and you're looking at her." Thus a very fine friendship was preserved and enjoyed by Warren and me until one of us took leave of mortal coils… and quite beyond that I discover as I write this remembrance.