

# ROUNDTABLE



## Girls Don't Cry

WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD WON'T TELL YOU IT'S EASY: SO MUCH DRAMA AND TORTURED ROMANCE! NEVER ENOUGH ACTION! BUT, THEY ALL AGREE, IT'S WORTH THE FIGHT. A DISCUSSION LED BY LYNDA OBST

It couldn't have been more Hollywood: ten movie *mach'ers* walking through the plushly carpeted Beverly Hills Hotel, past the Polo Lounge where Bogart used to drink, and gathering around an imposing conference table. But for all its power-laced grandeur, this wasn't a scene typically found in nature, or at least in L.A.: All these masters of the universe were women.

Producers, screenwriters, and direc-

tors—even that rarest of Hollywood breeds, a female studio head—whose CVs run the gamut from *Sleepless in Seattle* to *Spider-Man*, and *Boys Don't Cry* to *The Bourne Ultimatum*, had gathered to talk about their work in an industry still run mostly by men. They were determined not to have the same conversation that some of them had been having for the past 20 years, and their generational differences ensured that they didn't.

While some of the veterans bemoaned the paucity of female directors and the stalled progress of feminism in Hollywood, the younger filmmakers at the table were positively jaunty about their jobs. As the director Kimberly Peirce said, "I love blowing things up!"

In two hours of conversational tussle led by film industry sage Lynda Obst, it was apparent that Hollywood, like the rest of the country, is stuck somewhere

### MEET THE MACH'ERS

**1**  
**DONNA LANGLEY**  
Universal Pictures  
Producer of Production who executive-produced *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* and oversaw development and production of *The Bourne Ultimatum*.

**2**  
**CATHY KONRAD**  
Producer of *3:10 to Yuma*, directed by James Mangold, starring Christian Bale and Russell Crowe. Other credits include *Walk the Line*, the *Scream* trilogy, and *Girl, Interrupted*.

**3**  
**CALLIE KHOURI**  
Director, writer, and producer who wrote and coproduced *Thelma & Louise*. She directed *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* and the upcoming *Mad Money*, starring Katie Holmes and Diane Keaton.

**4**  
**KIMBERLY PEIRCE**  
Writer, director, and producer who directed and cowrote *Boys Don't Cry*. Her second feature is *Stop Loss* (due out in March), starring Ryan Phillippe and Abbie Cornish.

**5**  
**LAURA ZISKIN**  
Producer of the *Spider-Man* movies, as well as *To Die For* and the 79th Academy Awards. She also cowrote *What About Bob?* and *Hero*. She is currently developing numerous projects, including *Spider-Man 4*.

**6**  
**LYNDA OBST**  
Producer of *The Fisher King*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, and 2008's *Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging* (Nickelodeon). She also wrote the best-selling book *Hello, He Lied*.

**7**  
**NORA EPHRON**  
Director, writer, and producer who wrote and produced *When Harry Met Sally* and wrote, produced, and directed *Sleepless in Seattle* and *You've Got Mail*. She is the author of the best-selling book *I Feel Bad About My Neck*.

**8**  
**PATTY JENKINS**  
Writer, director, and producer who wrote and directed *Monster*; she is producing 2008's *The Possibility of Fireflies* and has directed episodes of *Arrested Development* and *Entourage*.

**9**  
**MARGARET NAGLE**  
Writer and producer who wrote the Emmy-winning HBO movie *Warm Springs* and the forthcoming *The Lost Boys of the Sudan*. She is currently writing a musical called *Goree Girls* for Jennifer Aniston/DreamWorks.

**10**  
**ANDREA BERLOFF**  
Writer and producer whose debut screenplay was *World Trade Center*. Her next project is an adaptation of *The Fugees*, based on a *New York Times* story about a Georgia soccer team whose players are all war refugees.

Photographed by Emily Shur

between progress and perfect equality. Yet it was also clear that women in Hollywood love what they do, even when it's driving them crazy.  
—REBECCA TRAISTER

**LYNDA OBST:** A bunch of us in this room have had this conversation about the issues of women in Hollywood over the past couple of decades.

**CATHY KONRAD:** I remember when I first came to town, I really resisted being a part of [the nonprofit] Women in Film, because I was like, I do not want to go to a bunch of meetings of women in film!

**OBST:** That's because you're too young.

**KONRAD:** I wanted to be with everybody.

**MARGARET NAGLE:** Why can't you just be *in film*?

**OBST:** What I want to talk about is what's different about the experience for young women filmmakers like Kim and Patty now from when we were first breaking on the scene, say, in the '80s.

**NORA EPHRON:** Twenty years ago there were *no* women directors. Zero. I was a screenwriter then, and I remember the list that my agent used to give us whenever we finished a script, and there were no women's names on it. Maybe, *maybe* Barbra Streisand—

**LAURA ZISKIN:** Now there are four.

**EPHRON:** There aren't four. There are way more than that. We've now gotten to a point where we're at the bad plateau, but it's still way more women.

**CALLIE KHOURI:** And still, the good news is that whenever the annual meeting at the Directors Guild takes place, there's never a line for the women's bathroom. [Laughter]

**OBST:** I think it's much harder for women, whose peak career-making years coincide with their peak baby-making years, and directing is a job that requires 100 percent of your time and energy, and therefore it's hard to have children.

**KIMBERLY PEIRCE:** It's a huge issue. I mean, you can't get bonded [insured] as a director if you're pregnant.

**NAGLE:** Really?!

**PEIRCE:** Yeah. Is that shocking?

**DONNA LANGLEY:** It actually is.

**NAGLE:** I'm creator and executive producer of a TV show [*Side Order of Life*] that's shooting right now. And I wanted to fire somebody who needed to be fired, and the other executive producer on the show got so mad at me for saying "This has to be done." And he said to me, "You should get out of here and go home. You

should just go home and be with your children."

**ZISKIN:** Get rid of him, too.

**KHOURI:** Get rid of him before this issue of ELLE comes out. [Laughter]

**NAGLE:** Also let me just say that I could not get women directors hired on my show. I got one out of the 13 episodes—one.

**ZISKIN:** Now we're gettin' to it.

**PATTY JENKINS:** My mom was an active feminist, and I only had a sister, so I was raised in an all-female household. It was like, "You can do anything you want." "Oh, okay. I'm going to be a director." There is a generation [like Kim's and mine] coming up. When it comes to different genres, I do think that women work for different reasons. But if I could have made *Spider-Man*, it would have been like the Holy Grail—

**OBST:** Laura, are you listening? [Laughter]

**JENKINS:** Because that movie [has] a much deeper message behind it. When films are action films without that behind it, I'm not at all interested. I come from an emotional place, and that's my greatest asset. When it's devoid of that and it's about spectacle, I'm not the best director for it. There are music-video directors who should do it instead.

**PEIRCE:** There's something really interesting about that in terms of where we take drama, because it's like, "Oh, why did women like the *Bourne* [films]?" It's got all that testosterone, but I imagine it appeals greatly to women, right?

**[SEVERAL AT ONCE]:** Yes.

**LANGLEY:** Women don't drive the box office on that film right off the bat, but they do go. They're going because of Matt [Damon].

**EPHRON:** Yes, because they're hoping that Matt Bourne will wake up remembering them. [Laughter]

**NAGLE:** What about *The Devil Wears Prada*, where [the industry was] amazed that so many guys went to that movie? Because everybody's had a boss that was the best and the worst thing that ever happened to them. The studio was surprised at how that film rolled out and built an audience.

**JENKINS:** My sister's a professor, and she wrote her thesis on women writers throughout history. It turns out that women have been the No. 1 best-sellers of all time—

**PEIRCE:** Yes!

**NAGLE:** *Gone With the Wind, To Kill a Mockingbird...*

**JENKINS:** Romance novels have always been, since the beginning of the printing press, the No. 1 seller. So what is happening in film that hasn't been tapped?

**KONRAD:** I just think the movies aren't good. [Laughs]

**EPHRON:** But the reality of this business is not "if it's good, they'll go see it." What they're looking for is something everyone will see, even if it's bad. [Laughter] You make a really bad action movie, and you have the entire foreign market to recoup it with. They won't go see an excellent movie in the third world if it's dialogue driven.

### BORED WITH THE CHICK FLICK?

**OBST:** Callie, I want to ask you this because you wrote one of the great feminist movies of all time [*Thelma & Louise*], and then we had this fabulous conversation where you told me that you were going to do the NASCAR movie because you were completely bored with the chick flick. But I couldn't tell if you were bored with the chick flick or bored with being pegged to the genre.

**KHOURI:** The stuff that comes to me is still way girlier than what I'd go after on my own. I spent years trying to get a baseball movie made, and that didn't happen. I wanted to make that NASCAR movie about the Petty family—four generations of the greatest auto-racing family, or the reason NASCAR is on the map in the first place. The stuff that comes to me, I'm always like, I don't want to do this! There's crying in this. It is frustrating. I would like to work outside of the female-centric world. But if it's got a woman in it, I'm going to have a better shot at [getting] it.

**ZISKIN:** There are movies in general, and then there are women's movies. So we're still the other—we're still a secondary audience. My daughter's here, and when they remade *Little Women*, she was 11, and she went five times in one week. I thought, What is that about? It was because she never got to see herself and her experience on the screen.

**PEIRCE:** It's fascinating that you'd say a young girl would find a reflection of herself in *Little Women*. I don't really fall in that sort of typical female kind of thing. It's like, I love blowing things up. [Laughter] I just did a war film [*Stop Loss*], and there was nothing more exciting than when they set those cars on fire! People need the adrenaline. Women, if they identify with that sensibility, if that turns them on, then they're going to make

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those kinds of movies.

**OBST:** I loved blowing up a bus in *The Siege*. I mean, it was there for story reasons, but I was thrilled to learn how to do it.

**PEIRCE:** On *Stop Loss* I got to hang out with a bunch of young guys, and I couldn't have been more excited. It's like, "Okay, guys. I'm going to turn you into studs."

nario or the NASCAR movie. If it's an action film in the context of a story that moves you, you're not going after action for action's sake.

## THE LOVE CONUNDRUM

**OBST:** How have you all balanced your lives with the amount of work you do?

**PEIRCE:** We all need a wife.

amount of work I'd do. If I was off on another coast with a filmmaker, I wouldn't be with my husband. And I wanted to have a family. So when I did make a choice to have a child very late—my son is two and a half; I'm 44—that did mean not doing as much as I used to. But I'm very happy with that choice, too.

**OBST:** Anybody else find it a little more



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**OBST:** So how do we find wives in this business?

**KONRAD:** I'm married to my partner. My husband, Jim Mangold, is a filmmaker, so—

**OBST:** That works, huh?

**KONRAD:** On one hand I have an idyllic situation, because my partner in life is my partner in business. But it's very complicated. I would say I was much more productive prior to meeting Jim—I mean, I'd made 11 films before I met him. When Jim and I partnered, I did make a choice to winnow down the

difficult than Cathy? [Laughter]

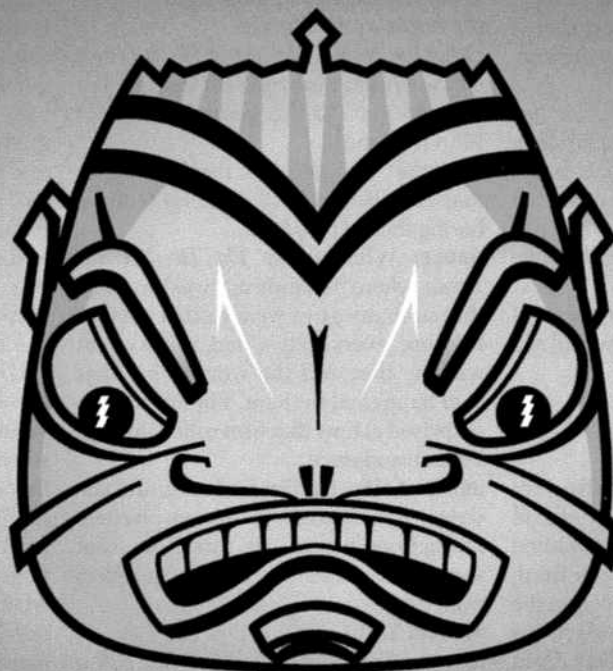
**ZISKIN:** I remember the exact spot on the Ventura Freeway where I started screaming in my car because I was trying to put a movie together, and I was racing home to nurse the baby, and the milk was coming, and the car phone wasn't working. And I thought, I am failing on all fronts. I will never have the career I want to have because I can't compete with the guys. So I'm a failure, an utter failure. I really had to twist my brain, because there was no model.

**KHOURI:** Well, I didn't have kids because

**OBST:** That sounds like a great job. [Laughter] But *Stop Loss* was still a very intimate and very emotional piece.

**PEIRCE:** It's intimate because it's inspired by my brother and my family.

**JENKINS:** It's like the *Spider-Man* sce-



**God of Efficiency!**

I felt like, I'm not going to be able to do both. I'm not going to fail at two things. My dog I can bring to the set and I don't feel so guilty about it. So I made a conscious decision. I know plenty of women who just go, "Okay, I've got to sit this period out while my kids are in school, and hopefully the world will change and I'll be able to get back into it in my late forties." Maybe they will. But I decided not to attempt that, and it was a big deal. I mean, people look at you like there's something wrong with you when you choose not to breed. I would tell any girl, "It's a choice. Go ahead and make it and live with it."

**NAGLE:** You say people look at you funny for not having kids. I had kids in my early twenties. People looked at me like I was a freak, like I must have a trailer parked out back.

**KHOURI:** What? You had your own kids? [Laughter] I've heard about people like you.

**NAGLE:** And I didn't plan either of them. I was just like, Whoa, man! And I went for it. They watched me struggle, and they watched me create a new life. Now they're 16 and 18. There were days where I went, Oh, my God! I don't know.... But you can't go down five roads at once. You can just go down the road that's in front of you.

**KONRAD:** It is more okay now, it seems to me, to have a family. There was this period where it actually felt like the edict was, "Do not have a family"—

**OBST:** That's when I was doing it.

**KONRAD:** Because the men acted like their families didn't matter, and they were never there anyway. A lot of men I know now leave earlier to go home and put their kids to bed. I don't want to take anything away from them, but it is very hard to get a guy on the phone between six and seven.

**OBST:** They're putting their kids to bed.

**KHOURI:** [Laughter] Now that's progress.

**NAGLE:** I'll never forget, I was working with this producer, and his kid would have an ear infection and he'd go home, and everybody would go, "Oh, God, he's so great. He is so great." [Laughter] If I'd taken that call and left a meeting because my kid had an ear infection, I'd have been vilified. It would've been over. There would've been a call to my agent. And I remember just thinking, You're probably going to see your mistress; you're not going to see the kid with the ear infection.

**KHOURI:** Or when you're working with a woman producer and they take that up with you. I worked with this wonderful, wonderful woman, and at six o'clock she'd go, "Okay, I'm going to my other

job." And I'd just be like, "Okaaay." I mean, I couldn't say anything. It was perfectly legitimate. But it's like, "We're going to be here till midnight. You go ahead." Even I, as a woman, who knew she was doing something that was absolutely important for the health and welfare of her children, there was a part of me that just kind of thought—

**OBST:** Six o'clock is early, in my humble view. [Laughter]

**KHOURI:** What, are we working half days now?

**JENKINS:** When I think about my friends who had full-time, dedicated parents, that was like some weird phenomenon that happened for 20 years, in the '50s and '60s. [Laughter] And that's it. I really do think, for whatever women are torturing themselves about doing all of these things, that actually we're supposed to be working and busy. And I think it's good for kids.

**ZISKIN:** But there's a mirror in the industry that mirrors the culture at large. Unlike you, Patty, I don't think the blip on the radar was nuclear families and women staying home with the kids. The blip on the radar was the feminist movement.

**ANDREA BERLOFF:** Well, my big question is, is it self-selection? I just did a thing at the Writers Guild, and [we



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learned that] 17 percent of movies are written by women, and that has stagnated for years.

**EPHRON:** It stagnated at 12 percent for a long time.

**BERLOFF:** So 17 percent is better...

**EPHRON:** If you want to be mathematical, which who does? [Laughter] That's almost a 50 percent jump! I don't mean to be so positive about it [laughter], but I believe in what you're about to say, so go on.

**BERLOFF:** I've gone after some very male-centric jobs and have gotten them, and I don't feel that I'm being prevented from getting them because of my gender. So I'm not sure what to attribute that statistic to.

I just wonder, why aren't more women trying?

**LANGLEY:** I don't know many female directors who work in every genre the way male directors seem to. If I were thinking of a "tent pole" movie like *Bourne*, I would love to have a female director to

discover or consider, but they're so few and far between. I really don't know if it's a gender and sensibility issue, or if it really is that women feel held back in some way, that they shouldn't bark up that tree because that would be a harder gig to get.

**EPHRON:** Every so often when I speak at film schools, I'm at a table like this—but with a group of almost entirely timid women. I ask them what they want to do, and they timidly tell me that they want to be directors. The one thing I know is that if you want to direct a movie, you have to be possessed.

**OBST:** Exactly. [Laughs]

**EPHRON:** You have to be insane.

**PEIRCE:** Indestructible.

**EPHRON:** And that's to direct your first movie.

**OBST:** Exactly.

**EPHRON:** You have to be out of your mind to get the second or the third or the fourth [laughter], and it doesn't get any easier for anybody but Steven Spielberg.

**PEIRCE:** It's a blood sport, right?

**JENKINS:** Yeah, it's god-awful.

**EPHRON:** This is the life we've chosen, as they say in *The Godfather*.

**ZISKIN:** I call it torture-fun. [Laughter]

**PEIRCE:** I think it's necessarily difficult because you've got all these forces coming at you on a movie set. But I don't know if women are choosing not to go into that arena.

**JENKINS:** People have said to me so many times, "Women make first movies and don't make a second one." But almost all of those women, I don't think, *tried* to make a second movie. I think that they didn't *want* to do it. [Laughter]

**KHOURI:** I don't agree with that. It's hard for any director to get a second movie made.

**JENKINS:** I did have a project

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(Q&A)

## The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

OUT WEST, WHERE MOVIES, MOGULS, AND MILLIONS ARE MADE, "DEADLINE HOLLYWOOD"'S NIKKE FINKE IS THE SHERIFF IN TOWN

"I've always thought that if I wrote a novel about Hollywood," says Nikki Finke, "it would start, 'That bitch!' the studio mogul cried, but the secretary didn't know which woman journalist he was talking about."

Finke—from her perch as the *L.A. Weekly* "Deadline Hollywood" columnist and queen of [deadlinehollywooddaily.com](http://deadlinehollywooddaily.com)—has been poking, prodding, and often disemboweling movie executives ("Another Reason Why Bob Shaye Is a Prick," reads a typical headline) since the 1990s. She has zero interest in celebrities, instead going after the juicy business dramas of film moguls and agents. "I want to know who's doing what to whom and why in the boardrooms of Hollywood, not the bedrooms," she says. Consequently, Finke has created her own badass niche in entertainment reporting, which is both copied and criticized by her more mainstream colleagues. "I always felt there was something missing in showbiz coverage—what I call the culture of the moguls and the culture of the agents and just the inner workings of interconnected Hollywood," she says. Recently, she got on the phone to talk about power, putzes, and whether women will ever get ahead in the movie business.

**ELLE:** You are a powerful woman in Hollywood,

Nikki. A lot of moguls there are scared of you.

**Nikki Finke:** Look, I'm *not* powerful, and no one is scared of me. But here's why I think women make the best reporters in Hollywood. It's such a testosterone-fest out here, such the preserve of alpha males, that when you have a male reporter interviewing a male mogul, it's basically swinging dicks aimed at each other. What the Hollywood guys like and respect is smart. They like a sense of humor. And they like women. Actually, being a woman and being Jewish helps. It's one of the great jokes out here that gentiles are handicapped when it comes to Hollywood. They can learn the Yiddish words. But they'll never have that, "Oh, I get it." So best of all for them is a smart, funny, Jewish woman.

Frankly, there's a part of me that looks down on Hollywood because of the way I was raised—I mean, I went to a finishing school and then Wellesley. I'm not awed by money and power. How do I put this? I consider Hollywood money totally *nouveau*.

**ELLE:** How do the male executives treat you? Do they think of you as a woman?

**NF:** Yes and no. I'm sure in their eyes I'm sexless because I'm so tough on them. I'm a testosterone-loaded woman. I write like a guy.

**ELLE:** Do you swear when you talk to them?

**NF:** Oh, totally. I do it mostly for effect, to show them that I can mimic their patois. So if I think someone is a prick, I say so. Or a butt-boy, an asshole, a schmuck. Believe me, there's nothing worse in Hollywood than being called a putz and having all your pals read it.

**ELLE:** *Moron*. I've seen you call them morons.

**NF:** Well, that's a given. All moguls are morons. I can't believe what they do on an almost daily basis. I approach this town from the point of view of "You're all making terrible mistakes." The content is terrible. The process is tainted. It's an accident, almost, when a movie is good and comes in under budget. Everyone in Hollywood is part of a very broken system. Feed it with praise and you'll never get the players to step back and say, "What the hell are we doing even playing this rotten game?"

I waged a campaign this year against horribly violent horror movies and especially torture porn. I really shamed the Hollywood execs making money on these movies. I do believe that no Hollywood player should earn a dime from a film he's ashamed to show in his own home. Then other journalists started doing the story. I'm not saying I'm solely responsible, but it's been gratifying to see that those movies have gone from doing very well at the box office to doing almost no business.

**ELLE:** When you write something incendiary, it does free up other reporters to follow you.

**NF:** People will perpetuate the myths until someone like me pushes the envelope by telling the truth. Then other reporters can go to their editors and say, "Look what she's reporting," and they can do a tougher piece. It's always hard to be the first, and I've

suffered a terrible price for that.

**ELLE:** What have you suffered?

**NF:** I've had jobs disappear out from under me because someone high up in the Hollywood food chain complained to editors about even hiring me. I've been fired! [Rather famously, from a job as the West Coast entertainment/business writer for the *New York Post*. That resulted in Finke filing a \$10 million lawsuit against the paper, its parent company News Corp., and Disney, which Finke says started it all by complaining to *Post* editors about her and her stories.] We won every major court battle, and ultimately the matter was settled. But it's very difficult when suddenly editors are afraid to publish your stories because you're telling the truth about powerful people and companies. There was a point at which I really thought I'd have to become a barista at Starbucks. I'd worked for the Associated Press in Moscow, *Newsweek* in D.C., the *L.A. Times*, *The New York Observer*, and *New York* magazine—and I had to beg for my current gig! That's another thing that helps me as a reporter: I am never too proud to grovel.

The people in this town I really admire are the ones who kept talking to me, no matter whom I was writing for. Sometimes they didn't even know if I was employed. Now it's unbelievable who gives me tips—everybody from screenwriters to TV executives and studio moguls to agents and assistants galore. It's fun when I get an e-mail saying, "You were reporting that my pilot was getting picked up hours before I even heard it from the network."

I want to note that I'm also a student of Hollywood history. I feel the need to teach people about the way the industry works and bring some background to my stories. There's the generation working in the industry that doesn't know anything about Hollywood before *Star Wars*. There's the generation that doesn't know anything before *Pulp Fiction*. Now there's a generation that doesn't know anything before *The Bourne Identity*. Hollywood has no institutional memory. In fact, it's purposefully amnesiac.

**ELLE:** So that they can justify whatever—

**NF:** Because they don't want to remember. Most of these people are not in therapy because they don't want to talk about the past. They don't even want to talk about the business with their wives. Nor do the wives want to—a lot of Hollywood players say their wives are jealous of the business because it cuts into family time. There's a reason my phone starts ringing at 7:30 A.M. on a Monday morning. It's because these guys have been cooped up with their families all weekend and they're going crazy. They're all on the phone like, "Oh my God, I need to know what's happening!" In Hollywood, information is everything because so few people have it. It is concentrated in very, very few hands.

**ELLE:** I want to talk to you a bit about your elusiveness, this notion that you never meet sources in public anymore, that you haven't been seen out in Hollywood for years.

**NF:** I don't quite understand all the rumors. The most persistent is that I never leave my apartment. Which is ridiculous. I think that's because when these guys call me I'm available to them 24 hours a day, because I never know what great story is going to come to me over the phone. They just don't know exactly where I am when I'm talking to them. Lately, a lot of the time I'm in Home Depot. There is such

a thing as call forwarding.

**ELLE:** I've sometimes thought that the fact that you aren't circulating socially is helping you get great scoops. [Disclosure: This interviewer edited Finke at another publication several years ago.]

**NF:** When I was doing a Hollywood business book way back, I was out and about at a lot of cocktail parties, charity dinners, and all the trendy restaurants. The problem now is that I never know how to approach my sources. Am I supposed to give someone a kiss or a hug or a handshake? Most of the time, I'm even afraid to lock eyes. To me, socializing with Hollywood types is a potential minefield. So I just started avoiding them in public. I also refuse to go to those private movie screenings. Because more often than not I wind up wanting those two hours of my life back. I don't have time for bad films. So I started doing a lot of interviews at home. I remember one time this mogul looked around my apartment and said, "You people really don't make any money." I looked at him and said, "Yes, and thank you for being so polite." What a total lack of breeding!

**ELLE:** You talk about them like they're a subspecies of person.

**NF:** Oh, they are! That's why I watch the Discovery Channel's *Shark Week*, to get behavioral pointers. I would love a tank of baby sharks. I'd name them after all the agents.

It's a certain kind of guy who is attracted to this life. It's interesting, most of the women, many were secretaries who moved up. A lot of the men weren't even assistants. They just kind of snagged their way up.

**ELLE:** Okay, so where does that leave women in Hollywood?

**NF:** Reporting to men.

**ELLE:** Why is that?

**NF:** Women are very good at dealing with the alpha males. They can lower the temperature when things get hot and bothered. They can turn you down and make you feel good about yourself. Most men in this town turn you down, and it's just brutal. The motion picture business is as brutal as it's ever been. I believe that's a direct result of the lack of women. But they can't get ahead, because here's why. The men all golf together at the Riviera Country Club or the Bel-Air Country Club. They all take vacations together, they rent yachts together—right now the European seas are littered with Hollywood moguls. The women will sometimes get together for the kid-birthday-party thing, but they don't have as many opportunities to bond. Because they're not just running networks and movie studios, they're running households and families. Sure, they have tremendous amounts of help at home, but it still falls on their shoulders. I can't tell you how many times I've been on the phone on the weekend with a male executive and he turns to his wife and says, "Look, don't bother me with that. That's your thing." Women working in Hollywood don't have princess fantasies, but the men are princelings. There are a lot of Jewish mothers whom I blame for these people's behavior. It is interesting, however, how much I've learned from them. I'm a much better negotiator now. One thing I've learned is never put people in a position to say no; you say, "Think about it, don't give me an answer yet."

**ELLE:** So how does that work? You're asking someone for an interview and he says no—

**NF:** Nobody ever says no.—LISA CHASE ●

# ELLE



## Fabulous Makeover

### ENTER TO WIN \$25,000!

At *Elle*, we value your opinions! That's why we're inviting you to sign-up today at [www.elle.com/dreams](http://www.elle.com/dreams) to participate in future surveys and for a chance to win big in the **Dream of a Lifetime Sweepstakes**. When you enter, you'll be eligible to win one of over 1,000 incredible prizes including:

**FIRST PRIZE:** 3 Carat Diamond Tennis Bracelet - a \$2000 value!

**SECOND PRIZE:** Schwinn® Elliptical Trainer - a \$1000 value!

**THIRD PRIZES:** Sharper Image® Professional Steamer - a \$100 value! (50 prizes)

**FOURTH PRIZES:** Helbros Dress Watch - a \$64 value! (1000 prizes)

or the **GRAND PRIZE:** \$25,000 Wardrobe Makeover or \$25,000 in cash! No purchase is necessary, but hurry — you need to be entered to win!

For official rules and details, visit [www.elle.com/dreams](http://www.elle.com/dreams)

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER. Sweepstakes begins 10/15/06; ends 1/31/08. Sweepstakes open to legal United States and Canadian residents and to residents of other countries and U.S. territories and possessions only where offered & permitted by law. Void where prohibited by law. For a copy of the official rules, which govern this Sweepstakes, visit [www.elle.com/dreams](http://www.elle.com/dreams) or write to: "Dream of a Lifetime Sweepstakes" Official Rules, c/o Ventura Associates Inc. Customer Service, 1040 6th Avenue, New York, NY 10018. Sweepstakes registered by Ventura Associates, Inc., 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018 & may be presented in different creative presentations by different organizations (the "Presenting Promoter(s)").