

Speaker 1:

Drayton's going to talk again, and I think he's just going to tell stories, so fuck knows what might come out of his mouth, especially based on last night. You should have seen him trying to blow the candle. I have video.

Drayton Bird:

Desperation is a hard task, master.

Speaker 1:

Exactly. But yeah, he might tell stories of his personal life, he might tell stories about Ogilvy but it'll be entertaining assured, so please give Drayton a big welcome. Hey, mate.

Drayton Bird:

I can't wait to hear what I'm going to say. What would you like me to talk about?

Speaker 3:

The secret stuff.

Drayton Bird:

The what?

Speaker 3:

The secret stuff.

Drayton Bird:

I'm not fucking talking about that. No, we'll all get bloody arrested. Dear oh dear.

Speaker 1:

Talk about your failures.

Drayton Bird:

Failures?

Speaker 1:

Yeah, biggest failure.

Drayton Bird:

Oh, yeah. I'll be very happy to talk about my biggest failure. Have you got a day?

I'll talk to you about my biggest failure. Actually, it's a very close contest there.

When I started to think I would like to work for myself because I realised I was unemployable, I was actually ... I'll go back a little bit.

The hottest agency in the world in 1962, the first agency ever to go public, was an agency called Papert Koenig Lois. Koenig and Lois were well known for making the best commercial ever made.

I don't know whether any of you have seen it. It was a commercial for Volkswagen, and it was called the Snow Plow.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

It opened with a shot of a snowy scene and you heard this engine going and, you didn't know what it was.

You couldn't see anything, and then you saw a shot of a foot getting out of a car into the snow, and crunching.

Drayton Bird:

And then, you saw a long shot of a snowplow. It drew back slowly to see where the foot was from, where did it come from, and you could see the guy got out of a car and then a voice said,

"Have you ever wondered how the guy who drives the snow plow gets to the snow plow? This one drives a Volkswagen."

That is the best television commercial ever fucking made.

So, I got a job with these people, their agency in London.

They were setting up in London, and the other person, by the way, who applied for the job was a guy called Charles Saatchi, and they chose me, the silly fuckers.

Drayton Bird:

But, years later I met Maurice Saatchi, Lord Saatchi, when they'd approached me to ask if I would like to start an agency with them, and I said,

"Oh, I once got a job because your brother asked for too much fucking money."

He said,

"What agency was that?"

I said,

"PKL."

The next time I saw him for our negotiations, which came to nothing, he said,

"I was talking to Charles about PKL, and Charles said,

"Now, that was a fucking agency."

They were lunatics, fucking lunatics. I was the only ... Well, not entirely true. One guy worked there was called Alan Parker, of course Sir Alan Parker now, who made some of the best films made in the last 20 or 30 years, so they'll all talented people apart from me.

Drayton Bird:

I got the job, and the first meeting, we had a conference room just in Knightsbridge in London, very small, and it had folding doors, and it was in the center of the agency, and we were in a meeting talking about a washing machine, Hotpoint, and one of the copywriters who had worked at Ogilvy and was very helpful to me, a man called Peter Mayle who wrote some very good books said,

"Oh, we should use the line, 'Hotpoint can teach the others loads about washing.'"

So I said,

"That's rubbish."

And, the guy who was in charge, who was a guy called Joe Sacco, who was legend in Madison Avenue, looked at me and said ... He said,

"What did you say?"

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

I said,

"That is what David Ogilvy would have called flatulent puffery. It is not a good line."

And Joe said,

"Listen, kid, I'm telling you with all the authority born of 30 years on Madison Avenue, that is a great line."

Drayton Bird:

I said,

"You know what, Joe? Are you telling me that because you've been around longer than me your judgment is qualitatively better?"

You could have heard a bloody pin drop. After the meeting, everyone was listening to this shit going down inside, somebody came up to me and said,

"You're going to get fired."

Joe was actually off to see a client, and then the next day after he'd come back, he said,

"Come into my office."

I went into his office, and he's a fucking paranoid lunatic, yeah? He said,

"Can you tell me why I shouldn't fire you?"

I said,

"What are you talking about?"

He said,

"You came into this agency determined to get me."

Drayton Bird:

I said,

"What the fuck are you talking about, Joe?"

I said,

"I'm just a fucking copywriter."

He said,

"You came here determined to destroy me."

I said,

"What are you ..."

He said,

"You tell me why I shouldn't fire you."

I said,

"What can I tell you?"

I said,

"Look, I'll tell you what ..."

He said,

"Just tell me why I shouldn't fire you."

I said,

"If you're not sure ..."

This is true. I said,

"If you're not sure, I'll tell you what. Let's toss a fucking coin. Here's the fucking coin. If it comes up heads, you can fire me and if it comes up tails, I can stay."

He looked at me and he said,

"I love you, kid. I fucking love you."

Drayton Bird:

So, we became great friends and he nearly got me a job ... After he left the agency, he worked as a recruitment guy. Nearly me got me a job as a creative director for Rosser Reeves, who is the guy who invented the USP. And, it started his own agency and that was a narrow escape because he didn't succeed.

Drayton Bird:

Anyhow, so this agency ran for about two years.

It was highly political before they closed down London. As they were closing down London, this is how I got to connect with Ogilvy and Mather.

Peter Mayle had worked with Ogilvy in New York. And, it was very political. I mean, Joe took me out to lunch one day, he said,

"Kid, have a drink. You're going to need a drink."

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

He used to eat at a place called "Les Trois Canards", which means the three ducks in French.

He said,

"Listen, kid. Come and have lunch with me at the three ducks."

So, we went. He said,

"Have a drink."

I said,

"I'll have a water."

He said,

"No, have a real drink."

Drayton Bird:

He said,

"Have the drink I drink."

I said,

"What's that, Joe?"

He said,

"Scorpion."

I said,

"What the fuck is a scorpion?"

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"Brandy and Creme de Menthe" He said,

"You're going to get fired."

He said,

"There's a big fight going on here and you're going to lose."

I went to Peter Mayle and I said,

"I'm going to get fired. Blah, blah, blah."

He said,

"Why don't you go and work for Ogilvy."

He said,

"I'll give you an introduction."

So, I wrote a letter to David Ogilvy and he then said,

"My head of international blah, blah, blah is coming over to London and he will interview you."

Drayton Bird:

I didn't do because I had three small children. My marriage had broken up and I didn't want to leave them, and that was my first contact with David Ogilvy.

It wasn't until many years later that again, he contacted me and eventually I went to work for him, sold my agency to him and made a little bit of money.

But, after this happened, I then joined a creative consultancy and I used to go in and wrote copy and fuck off.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

One day, my partners came in and they said,

"We don't like the way you work."

I said,

"What?"

I said,

"You walk in ..."

I was living with a call girl at the time and she had a white poodle called Babette.

She said,

"You come in with your fucking dog at 11:00. You ask what needs to be written.

You write it, then you fuck off to the wine bar and we don't see you again."

Drayton Bird:

I said,

"Does the copy work?"

And, they said,

"Yeah."

And I said,

"Are the clients happy?"

And, they said,

"Yeah."

I said,

"Well, why don't you go fuck yourselves, give me my money ... Give me my money and I'm fucking off."

So, I took my money, which was 750 pounds, which was a lot more then than it is now, and I left. And, then a guy rang me up and he said,

"You don't know me, but I know you and I've got a proposition for you. I know you've been looking around for a mail-order business, and I've got one."

I said,

"How the fuck do you know me?"

He said,

"I can tell you everything you've written."

I said,

"Really?"

He said,

"Yeah, you wrote the Bullworker stuff, didn't you? Blah, blah, blah."

He said,

"Come and talk to me."

Drayton Bird:

So, we met in a pub in Fleet Street, and he said,

"I've got this guy who's got a product, which is a piano playing course, and he is in shit, and he wants to leave the country, and if you buy the company off him, he could fuck off back to Canada where he came from and you'll have the business.

And, I know how to make it work."

So, I said,

"Fine."

I paid for this guy, the guy called Altus to go back to Canada and leave his debts behind in England, and we started this business.

We worked out that the guy was doing something wrong. What was happening was that the thing was working because it had been featured on television on a well known show and the promise was that you could play the piano correctly and well in six weeks, or your money back.

Drayton Bird:

So, they had taken somebody on the TV show and he had done the course for six weeks, and there he sat down and played the fucking piano. But the thing was what they would do is they would sell a paper course and then six weeks later, they would try and sell you a recorded course on records.

What Martin Topley and I did was we said,

"No, the thing to do is to sell the fucking recorded course immediately."

And, that transformed the business.

Drayton Bird:

Well, what a pair of clowns we were. We started businesses all over the fucking place because we were making a lot of money. I used to get up in the morning, I would walk across the road to the Bunch of Grapes in Shepherd Market.

We would drink a bottle of Bollinger, fuck off down the road to Curzon Street, collect the bloody money, go out to lunch, get pissed and at that time, I was a very single man so we'd spend the rest of the day doing whatever we wanted to.

I actually ended up marrying his widow because he killed himself. I got a lot of stories.

Drayton Bird:

Is anyone interested in my autobiography by the way?

Speaker 1:

Yes.

Drayton Bird:

Well, that's the kind of thing I'm going to talk about. We started all these businesses, and one of them was, I have to say, a stroke of genius, which I stole and idea from America and I was selling franchises. And, it was fire extinguishers.

Suddenly, a review appeared in a major national newspaper saying,

"These fire extinguishers are dangerous. We put them to the

test ..."

My cashflow went into instant reverse. So in January, I was pissing it up in the nicest restaurants in town and in April, I was getting ready for the creditor's meeting.

And, what I did was I went to a lawyer and I also went to a very dodgy accountant, and I said,

"Tell me about creditor meetings."

He explained everything to me.

Drayton Bird:

He said,

"Well, the way it goes is the creditors vote for who should handle the liquidation."

All the people who handle liquidators are crooks. They just come into the business, rip everything off, fuck the creditors and go home smiling.

So, what I did was I went to everybody I knew and I said,

"How would you like to be a creditor of mine?"

People would say,

"What?"

I'd say,

"Just send me a fucking bill and be a creditor and just turn up to the creditor's meeting please and vote for me."

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

So, before the creditor's meeting, my partner was so terrified he wanted to leave the country, and I'd been terrified because I had people on the phone promising to break my legs. And in fact, the creditor's meeting came and I stood and I said,

"I'm very sorry about what's happened. I feel terrible it, but I'm looking around the room and as far as I can make out, you're all grown up, and I think you knew what you were doing when you invested and not all investments win."

Drayton Bird:

The guy who was going to break my legs came up and shook my hands and said,

"I'd like to shake your hand. You're an honest man," which was not strictly true.

And, one of the most famous advertising men in London came up to me and shook my hand and he said,

"You will undoubtedly become a millionaire."

I used to go to this guy's house, he lived in the house that used to belong to Beau Brummell just up Berkeley Square and we used to watch the World Cup on television.

He used to sit with his dog, which was a pug. I always remember sitting next to him, he said,

"You know what, Drayton? The dog loves football."

Drayton Bird:

So, what was the mistake I made?

I had all my companies under one roof, yeah?

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

If I had them under separate roofs, separate companies as my accountant had told me to because I was a complete asshole and didn't listen to him, I would never have had to work again because I had the lease of 100 New Bond Street.

So, that was one of maybe not my biggest mistake, but a serious contender.

Drayton Bird:

What else would you like to me talk about? I'll talk to you about Ogilvy. What happened with Ogilvy was that after the mail-order business went broke, and for the next seven years, I lived under a false name.

I was David D. McMann, which was the surname of my second wife's first husband. I had a bank account in the name of David D. McMann.

We lived in a penthouse in Harley Street, and I always remember the guy who owned the penthouse, he was a surgeon from down the road.

I would go to meetings with him when he would say,

"Where's the fucking rent?"

More politely.

He would say,

"Mr. McMann,"

and I would think,

"Who the fuck is talking to?"

And then I thought,

"Oh, it's me."

Drayton Bird:

Well, I'd worked on the Bullworker and I got another ... The same couple who invented the Bullworker, I got another product which he offered me and I started selling it, and the money was coming in in buckets, man.

So, I used to go to the Portman Square Hotel and get pissed every lunch time ... Just slightly repetitious story, my life story. There's a theme that runs through it. Alcoholic.

Drayton Bird:

Well, this thing was going like gangbusters and one day, I noticed that one newspaper, which was The Sun, was producing leads for half the price of all the other newspapers.

So, I thought,

"Right, put all the money in The Sun,"

which I did. And then, at the same time almost as I did this, maybe a few weeks later, the pound dropped like a stone against the Deutschmark and I was importing from Germany, so all of a sudden the numbers looked different.

And then, the other thing that happened was that The Sun converted about 1/3 as well as all the other newspaper, so once again, I was facing my creditors.

But this time mainly, they got my advertisement agency and he called me in ... George Gibbs on Fleet Street ... and asked me to explain.

Drayton Bird:

So, I cried. I fucking recommend it.

When it's shit and somebody wants to kill you, try crying. It works.

Actually, what's interesting is that George forgave me and he wrote a really good testimonial for Commonsense Direct Marketing when it came out. He said,

"This is a great advertisement for Drayton Bird."

Lovely man.

Drayton Bird:

So that business, that was up the bloody spout.

For the next seven years, I essentially did anything to make money.

I went to Australia to sell fake Chagall paintings.

I sold the franchise for France for a swimming pool company to [inaudible 00:19:55] in a nightclub on the Ile of Paris and he loved me so much, he said,

"I'd like to introduce you to a young lady that will interest you."

So, I had a great night. I also sold, not so successfully, the franchise for Germany and I can speak French, so no problem.

I can't speak German. I was working for this guy called Sammy Gold, who had left America in a hurry because the mafia were pissed off with him.

Drayton Bird:

And, he was very unreliable and I was there, having sold the franchise with not enough money to pay the hotel, and Sammy Gold had fucked off to an island somewhere.

So, I was there living on hamburgers once a day for about a week while I waited for him to get the money over to me.

Drayton Bird:

What else did I do for a living?

I would write anything for anybody about anything.

I wrote speeches for the Chairman of Imperial Foods.

I did a complete, very monster 54 slide presentation to sell ...

What the fuck was it I was selling?

I can't even remember what it was. I wrote a book about the Schlumpf car collection, which is the biggest collection of old Porsche's in the world.

I can't even drive.

I wrote a book about the cowboys.

And actually about three years ago, to my astonishment, I got a message from someone saying,

"Can we reprint the stuff you wrote about the cowboys?"

Drayton Bird:

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

Bloody, the things that I did, I can't fucking believe. Anybody who asked me to do anything, I would do it. One guy said,

"You are the faster guy with a typewriter, a pair of scissors and some sellotape in Britain."

Because, they would come to me on Thursday and say,

"Here's the draft material for the chapter. We want it on Monday or Tuesday."

This was the most painful period of my life, but also the most valuable because I had to do shit I didn't want to do.

I think I talked about Count Kapinsky yesterday.

That was how I ended up working for County Kapinsky, selling investments on the phone, dodgy investments on the phone.

It was terribly good for me, and the problem was that my wife, my second wife, had previously been married to a millionaire ... in Australia, oddly enough ...

And I remember we were living near Harrods and we walked into Harrods one day, and I saw something ... I think it was a briefcase and I said,

"That's lovely."

Drayton Bird:

She said,

"Why don't you buy it?"

I said,

"I don't have any money."

She said,

"How terrible not to have any money, not to be able to buy what you want."

I thought,

"Fuck me, I've got one here."

She was actually a very interesting woman.

When I met her, she told me about all these people she knew,

"So, I had an affair with Robert Mitchum. I was engaged to the leader of the Opposition in the Australian Senate,"

and I thought,

"Fuck off."

I didn't say anything.

You know how when you fall in love with somebody, you tell each other all the stories about your life, you confide in each other.

We gazed at each other with tears in our eyes of happiness that we'd found each other at last.

Of course, she was fantastically beautiful and she'd been a world class dancer.

She was the lead dancer with the Katherine Dunham Ballet, done all these things.

Drayton Bird:

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

She had lived with a leading entrepreneur in Australia, who introduced people like Chubby Checker and someone over there, and blah, blah, blah, blah.

I was fascinated, but I thought it can't be true.

And one day, I came back to our flat in Egerton Gardens and went up the stairs, knocked on the door, and the door opened and this big Australian with a red nose appeared and he said ... with a glass in his hand ...

"Here you are, Drayton. Have a glass of your own champagne. Lionel Murphy here."

Loud enough, it was the Attorney General of Australia and I got drunk with him in Sydney at his office in Australia Square, and he showed me how he was going to change the face of Australia when Labor got in, which he did.

He changed all the laws on homosexuality, on divorce, all sorts of things.

Drayton Bird:

So, she was interesting but she was suicidal.

She was very, very depressed. It's a very complicated story to do with her Maori heritage, and she was always trying to kill herself.

I used to say to people I had a season ticket to the fucking Middlesex Hospital Causality Department. I got to know the registrar very well.

We used to go drinking because I was there all the time. I remember going once ... Not the worst days of my life, but I remember going in and she'd tried to kill herself and they resuscitated her.

I was over her and saying,

"Thank God."

Blah, blah, blah. She just said,

"Why didn't you let me die?"

Drayton Bird:

Eventually, she never thought I would succeed again, and one day she went to Paris to sell some primitive works of art that we picked up in Australia, and I rang up to speak to her and I couldn't get through.

Kept on ringing, couldn't get through.

She was supposed to be seeing an attorney we knew called Jean-Michel.

Then the next day, she rang me up and she said,

"Hello, darling. I've got somebody who wants to talk to you."

I said,

"Where the fuck are you?"

She said,

"I'm in Stockholm."

It clicked.

I'd paid for her to go for a holiday in Israel with an Israel girl she knew, and she mentioned that she'd been playing tennis with two

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

guys. One guy was a leading lawyer in Stockholm and the other was the head of the Stockholm Police Department.

Drayton Bird:

She said,

"Do you mind talking to this guy?"

I thought, and it all clicked.

This guy got on the phone and said,

"Ana thinks you're a wonderful person, Drayton, but we're in love and we're going to get married."

I said,

"She thinks I'm a wonderful person?"

He said,

"Yeah."

I said,

"What the fuck does she do to people she doesn't like?"

So I said,

"Are you the lawyer or the policeman?"

He said,

"I'm the lawyer."

I said,

"Oh, do you do any divorce do you?"

He said,

"Yes."

I said,

"Well, tell her ..."

I said,

"How long have you known my wife for?"

He said,

"Well, we met in December."

I said,

"How many days have you spent with my wife?"

Drayton Bird:

"Oh, eight days."

I said,

"Okay, a client comes into you one day and says,

"I've just met this woman. I've known her for eight days and I'm going to get married to her. Would you say he was a fucking idiot or what?"

And he said,

"We're in love."

I said,

"Listen to me. One day, you're going to get on the phone to me and you won't know what the fuck to do because she was a difficult woman."

I remember she decided she wanted to marry me, I remember she sat on the banister of 139 Holly Street, 4th floor just below our fucking penthouse, Christmas Day, and she said,

"If you don't marry me, I'm going to jump."

Very, very excitable.

I thought,

"Fuck me, this is terrible."

I just rushed out, and I thought,

"I'll walk to the station and I'll go back to see my mother."

Drayton Bird:

I rang my mother up and my mother said,

"It's Christmas Day, the trains are not running."

I can't drive, so I went back.

Eventually, we did get married and so on and so on.

But, what was interesting perhaps about that was that was the time when I came into contact with David Ogilvy again.

I wrote him a letter.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

Oh, the letter I wrote the first time, it said,

"You've never heard of me, but I have a talent that I know you prize. I know how to make people buy things."

I got a reply instantly, and that was the first time. That was the time I turned the job down, but the second time somebody had written somebody rude about David in a magazine called Campaign, which is read by idiots in advertising.

In case you were in any doubt, most of the people in advertising are idiots, just like most of the people in marketing, which is why you're wise to be here.

Drayton Bird:

So, this guy wrote something. I wrote a letter to Martin, our agency became very ... In three and a half years, we were the biggest direct marketing agency in England, and we were approached by eight of the top 20 agencies to buy us.

So, I wrote this thing and then the next thing, the phone rings, the voice at the other end says,

"Hello, David Ogilvy here. That's a very nice letter you wrote."

I said,

"Thank you."

Then, he asked me about my partner, which is a whole other subject I could go into.

He said,

"By the way, is Glenn Ward still with you?"

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

Glen had worked for Ogilvy. Glenn was a guy that I advised in 1962 in how to get into advertising. I said,

"Don't try to get into advertising directly. Get a job in selling,"
which he did.

Drayton Bird:

And, eventually he'd run Ogilvy agencies but he was a bit of a scamp. I know he got most of his clients in Kuala Lumpur because he knew the madam of the local brothel, so he knew the right incentives to offer. So, I said,

"No, he's not with us anymore."

He said,

"What's he doing,"

and I said ... because, I found out later had Glenn Ward still been there, they wouldn't have done the deal.

Because Glenn was always ...

He's a very funny, interesting guy of low moral caliber.

Don't repeat this to him if you ever see him.

I know he used to drive around. He run the agency in Lagos and he used to be driven around while the girl gave him a blowjob.

Very shocking stuff, gang. Absolutely frightful behaviour.

Drayton Bird:

Anyhow, I said,

"No, he's a consultant now, David."

And David said,

"Isn't that the euphemism for unemployment?"

So, the next day I got another call,

"Hello, Peter Warren here."

Peter Warren was the highest paid man in British advertising and he ran Ogilvy & Mather.

He said,

"That was a nice letter you wrote about David the other day."

And, I turned to my PR and said,

"Ogilvy wants to buy us."

We had lunch, and this guy, Peter Warren, a lovely guy ...

Died now. Possibly died because one of his habits was he would go into a restaurant and he would say,

"Bring me some Sancerre."

He said,

"Put it in the bucket over there and when it's about 1/3 full, bring another bottle."

And, he would keep going.

Drayton Bird:

So, Peter took me out to lunch and we did the deal.

He was a fantastic guy.

He'd started out as a messenger boy and risen to the top. Absolutely phenomenal bloke.

And that's how he came to sell to Ogilvy.

We were negotiating with Gray until midnight the night before, and I went to have dinner with him and they had a guy who was their international something who had been in the CIA, and he kept on saying,

"Yeah, but if we do the deal, how will we know you're going to deliver?"

Stupid cunt.

The deal was over a three year period, we got paid so much money based on our results.

I said,

"Because we're going to get you results, schmuck."

Drayton Bird:

So, I went into the toilet with Brian Thomas, who was my managing director.

I said,

"These people are a bunch of assholes. Let's fuck off."

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

So, we just left and did the deal with Ogilvy the next day.

The deal with Ogilvy was a three year deal and the thing was it was a complicated deal because the idea was to put our two agencies together and we would get a payoff based on the joint profits.

Well, Ogilvy & Mather Direct in London was a shit hole. And after about a month, I rang up Peter Warren and I said,

"I know a lot of these people are in the mail-order business and the tradition is you can get your money back, but you're fucking clients all want their money back. American Express is pissed off. There's no way I can make a bloody profit here."

Drayton Bird:

So he said,

"Oh, let's go and have lunch."

So, we went and had lunch and I was quite surprised because he didn't order Sancerre.

He said,

"Can I have a Bloody Mary, please?"

I said,

"Peter, what's the matter?"

I said,

"You're not drinking Sancerre."

He said,

"I've got an upset stomach."

The guy's got an upset stomach so he thinks the solution is drink a lot of Bloody Mary.

So, I remember he got me phenomenally drunk and he said,

"What do you want me to do?"

I said,

"Well, it's a three year deal."

I said,

"Make it a five year deal and we'll do the deal."

So, he said,

"Fine."

And at that time, I was seeing a Jamaican girl in Clapham Junction.

I always remember I was so drunk I went to Clapham Junction, and you couldn't miss the bloody place. It was Number One, such and such, about a one minute walk from the station.

Drayton Bird:

It took me a half an hour to find it wandering about in the dark. So what happened with Ogilvy?

The next interesting thing that pops into my mind, the first thing was I was extremely surprised that I got on well with Ogilvy because people generally were frightened to death of him, but he was a great enthusiast for direct response.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

I think I said things to him that other people didn't tend to say. I remember the first meeting I had with him was in Amsterdam, and I'm completely clueless about getting anywhere from anywhere.

So, I arrived in Amsterdam and went to the wrong office, and then ran along the canal to the right office.

Got into the right office and there was Ogilvy sitting on a settee and he said,

"Oh, they're having a meeting in there. Come and sit here."

Drayton Bird:

So, I sat down next to him and he looked at me and he said ...

I used to wear a lot of cologne in those days ...

"My God,"

he said,

"You smell like a brothel. You smell like a bro ..."

I said,

"How do you know?"

So many exchanges that I had with him that I will never forget.

Peter Warren used to throw big garden parties every year, and I was there, David was there, and my wife was there and his wife was there, and David turned to a client and said,

"This is Drayton Bird. He knows what works in advertising."

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

I said,

"I hate to disagree with you, David, but that is not true. I normally know what won't work but I don't know what works."

I had lots and lots of ... He came in once to the office and he said,

"What exactly do you do?"

I think I told you this story yesterday, didn't I? I won't tell you that story.

I'll tell you another one.

Drayton Bird:

He came in to meet our directors, and I'm very lucky ... I honestly can say if I have a talent, I'm very, very good at spotting good people, and I had a young guy who was an absolutely brilliant art director, Chris Jones.

And, Chris Jones, I had hired him straight from art school. Chris said to David, he said,

"You know, these rules that you give about what works in terms of visual and so on, is this just your opinion or is it based on any research?"

So David said,

"I'm glad you asked me that, Chris. Hang on a minute."

He said,

"I'll just go to the car,"
and he got the car outside in Soho Square and he opened the

boot and he brought in a book, and he said,

"Have a look at this."

Drayton Bird:

The book, which I still have a copy of and which I go into some detail about in Commonsense Direct Marketing, was called Communicating or Just Making Pretty Shapes.

It was put together by the Australian Newspaper Bureau, and unlike nearly all the research into what people find easy to read, it's simply based on an incredibly simple premise.

And the premise is this, if somebody is exposed to a message, can they recall what they just saw?

Can they say I've just read this thing?

This is what I've just read?

It was how well is the message being communicated in this layer, that layer, this typeface, that typeface and so on.

It's the only research I've ever seen which does this. All the other art directors who know fuck all about what works and what doesn't, this is the only one that's just based on what actually works.

What do people actually understand of what they've just been exposed to.

Drayton Bird:

I was so enthralled by this. Immediately afterwards, I went to away and I said to Chris Jones,

"I want you to create an art. I will give you the copy and then what we'll do is we'll do different layers of the art based upon the different alternatives that you might use in terms of where the headline should be, how big the type should be, what kind of type it should be, whether it should be in columns or not in columns."

If you ever get that book, which actually this book, this is the one that when it first came out, this was a slim and elegant volume, but now it's the sort of thing that you can attack people with because so much shit has gone down the pipe that I've had to write about lots of other stuff.

Have I finished yet?

Speaker 1:

No, no.

Drayton Bird:

I've not? Why not?

Speaker 1:

Keep going.

Drayton Bird:

What else would you like to know? Is there anything else you'd like to know?

Speaker 1:

Which one of you is Don Draper?

Drayton Bird:

Oh, what?

Speaker 1:

Who is the Don Draper character based on?

Drayton Bird:

I don't think it was based on anyone.

I think it was based on a combination of people. I'll tell you I think ...

And also, I think Ogilvy probably more than anyone else because he was supposed to be creative and he was also supposed to be a pitchman.

David was a supremely good speaker. David used a secret weapon which I've always used, which never failed for me, or hardly ever and it's called blind fucking panic.

Every time I have to do anything, I'm frightened to death.

I've been working now for about six weeks on and off on one mailing for a charity, which I feel strongly about, and it's depressed the shit out of me because it took me a long time to get an idea.

Drayton Bird:

David, I remember we had a meeting in Frankfurt and all the Ogilvy people were there, and also some people from another agency that we bought, quite a well known agency.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

And, I was there with my wife, and David with his wife, and this guy, whose name I can't remember, with his wife.

It was quite a well known agency. David was fiddling with his cutlery and I said,

"David, everybody here loves you. Don't worry."

And, he said,

"Shut up."

I went to stay with him several times, and then after he died, I went to his widow because she wanted some advice about something, and I'm sure she asked people much better qualified than me.

This was after it had been bought by Martin Sorrell.

I can tell you a bit about Martin Sorrell if you're interested.

Drayton Bird:

And, the first time we went, I had just been speaking in Caen.

My wife drove me ... I can't drive ... from Caen to near Poitiers where David's chateau was.

We arrived there in this very beautiful bright red sports car, a Lotus Esprit Turbo.

My wife used to drive like a fucking lunatic. I'll tell you a bit about her in a minute.

She bought four fucking vehicles in one day without telling me once.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

Anyhow, we get there and David looks at the car and says,

"That's a beautiful car. What is it?"

CiCi says,

"It's a Lotus Esprit Turbo."

The next day, David said,

"CiCi," he said ...

My wife was an African American, most expensive woman I ever met in my life.

I would say she cost me about \$3 million quid one way or another ...

"Will you take me for a ride in your beautiful car?"

Drayton Bird:

CiCi said,

"Of course."

So, they drove into the local town and David said to her,

"How do you wind the window down?"

CiCi said,

"Oh no, you just press this button," and down the window came.

David said,

"Slow down. Hang on."

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

And then, he lent out the window and then he turned to CiCi and said,

"That's the local mayor. He hates me."

We went on another occasion.

He said

"Herta,"

that's his wife who was a German but born in Mexico,

"is going to Paris to see the children tomorrow, so the chef we've got to decide what we're going to have to eat. So, is there anything you'd like?"

I said,

"Well, as we were driving here, we saw a hare. Could we get jugged hare?"

Drayton Bird:

David said,

"Hare is almost impossible to obtain,"

which is true.

So, I said,

"What about rabbit?"

David said,

"I hate rabbit. When we were poor, we used to have rabbit every

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

week. I hate rabbit. Rabbit will never be served in this house."

So on Sunday, the rabbit casserole arrived. David looked at me over the table, accusing me, and he said,

"This is your doing."

He's a very, very funny man but like all very funny people, nothing funny about the way he delivered it.

Drayton Bird:

Oh, I tell you I used to have a great line in seminars, because you know if you want to get people interested ...

The secret of getting people interested, whether you're writing copy or doing a talk or anything, is to get them either physically or mentally nodding their heads in agreement.

So, I always used to say,

"My wife is very unpunctual."

Someone would say,

"All women are unpunctual."

I would reply,

"How about three fucking days late in Bombay?"

I remember I booked to go to the opera in Vienna once and she just didn't turn up.

Eventually, I'll deal with her and I'll tell you what I did about it.

I'll say,

"My wife is very extravagant."

People say,

"Very extravagant? All women are extravagant."

I said,

"How about buying three, actually four cars, without telling you, which she did on one day?"

Drayton Bird:

And, they say,

"Well, that's amazing."

I said,

"How about buying a fucking house without telling you?"

This is true.

What happened was when I was a little younger, I was easily smitten.

Smitten.

And, I became smitten with a ...

Well, my wife was unpunctual so she would always arrive late and one day, we had a flat in London and we had a big place in the country, which she's still got.

She's always late, and one day I arrived at the house in London, the flat in London, and there was this very attractive lady wearing a short, black leather skirt and a big smile from Guyana. I said,

"Can I help you?"

She said,

"I'm looking for Ci Ci Bird."

I said,

"Oh, I'm her husband. Why don't you come up and you can wait for her."

Drayton Bird:

Well, one thing led to another and eventually ... I was showing some people last night a picture of my youngest daughter who is the result of a singer.

So, she said,

"I can't get pregnant," but she did. The oldest story in the book.

And, one of my stepdaughters, the daughter of my partner, Martin, who hung himself, which is another story, was recording in Jamaica and she was in a band with a guy called Tricky.

He was quite well known, for those who follow, part of a band called Massive Attack, which goes around the world and does very, very well.

So, they were recording, a process which as far as I can make out consists of going to the studio around about 2:00 in the afternoon, drinking, smoking prodigious quantities of weed and getting on with their thing. Tricky always used to smoke weed on stage.

Drayton Bird:

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

So, we're sitting in a jerk chicken place and my wife says to me,

"Have you seen the baby?"

I said,

"Yeah."

She said,

"Have you touched the baby?"

I said,

"Yeah."

She said,

"Have you held the baby?"

I said,

"Yeah."

And, she turned to her daughter and she said,

"My God, he's bonded with the baby."

Now, I had to fly back to London while they stayed in Jamaica.

Well actually, I was staying in Somerset assisting in the kitchen and she rings me up and says,

"I'll forget all about this. Just don't see the baby."

She said,

"If you see the baby, I'm going to divorce you."

I said,

"I'm going to see the baby. Divorce me."

So then she said ... She rang up again and she said,

"Okay, when the baby is 15 you can see the baby, but not til then or I'm going to divorce you."

So I said,

"Divorce me."

Drayton Bird:

So she said,

"Well, you can see the baby once a year, or I'll divorce you."

I said,

"Divorce me."

I said,

"You know what? I'm going to see the baby every chance I get."

I feel really bad about my first children. And, I used to get up every morning and before they moved to America, she lived in a suburb of London.

I used to make my way down there and I would see the baby first thing in the morning, and when the baby was a little older, I would take her to nursery school and then I would go to the office and I would work in the office ...

The office was in Notting Hill Gate ... and then about 4:00, I would go back down to Mitcham, which is where they were, and see the baby again.

It was extraordinary.

You know the things about children that you remember, I heard that she was being taught French at the school she was at, in a Montessori school, and I said,

"You're really learning French?"

She said,

"Yes."

Drayton Bird:

I pointed to a rose, a red rose. I said,

"What color is that?"

She said, "Rose."

I said, "[French 00:52:27]."

One of the few things I can do is speak French reasonably okay.

I went to the school with her, and I was curious to know who was teaching her French in fucking Mitcham, which is like a shit hole?

Several of the ladies there were Indian, and I said,

"Who teaches my daughter French? That's fantastic."

And, there was this Indian lady, she said,

"I teach French."

I said,

"But, you're Indian?"

I said,

"Where are you from?"

She said,

"Pondicherry."

Now, Pondicherry was part of French India in the 18th Century until Clive of India beat the French in a big battle of Pondicherry, oddly enough.

Drayton Bird:

But, they still speak French there so I said,

"I don't know about you. I've never met you before ..."

I think that if you want to be interesting and interested, unusual and different, and if you don't, I don't know what the fuck's the matter with you, then you should really pay attention to odd things that happen. Yeah?

Very often there are things that are odd that stick into mind and that make life almost worth living.

And again, in our industry it works very well, I remember David talking to me about the man in the Hathaway [inaudible 00:54:19], and he told me how he was on the way to the studio and he suddenly stopped and got out and bought this black eye patch.

Sometimes, you do things for reasons that you don't understand.

Drayton Bird:

I've done practically everything that I don't understand. Have I finished yet?

Speaker 1:

No.

Drayton Bird:

No? How much longer? Where the fuck is it? I feel like a human toilet roll.

Speaker 1:

But, what I think we could do though is if people have some questions for Drayton about advertising or marketing, now is your time to ask. You okay with that old man?

Drayton Bird:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

So obviously, if you have a question please use the mic and then we'll listen to his answers.

Speaker 5:

Hey, Drayton. In Ogilvy on Advertising, at the end of the book he has 13 predictions on the future of advertising. I was wondering if

you can in your own-

Drayton Bird:

I have no recollection of what they were. I really don't.

My memory is shit at best, but I don't have any recollection of what he said. None whatsoever. It's quite a few years since I wrote the book.

How many people have read Ogilvy on Advertising? You see, you're an unusually well-informed audience.

Somebody told me,

"Always flatter the audience."

No, but you are. I used to do talks for the Institute of Direct Marketing for a long time, and I always remember having an audience full of Ogilvy people, more than half of them hadn't read Ogilvy on Advertising.

I said,

"What the fuck is the problem with you? It's a lot like saying you're a Christian and you haven't come across the Bible yet."

Speaker 1:

Any other questions for Drayton?

Speaker 6:

Drayton, you said that the person you learned most from is Denny Hatch.

He wrote a book, which I read, Method Marketing.

Obviously, as you said, you wrote anything from anyone, so obviously you know a whole lot about method marketing, so what I wanted to ask is what are your best advice about method marketing?

Drayton Bird:

Method Marketing? I've never read that book. Denny Hatch is a friend of mine. Denny Hatch and I ... Well, he's a bit too old now, so when we meet, I get drunk and he doesn't, but we used to get drunk together.

Denny Hatch, to my mind, is the most knowledgeable individual about this kind of marketing in the world. He's old. I think he must be ...

Well, I'm 80 ... He must be getting on to 90 and he's still putting stuff out, and it makes me laugh that people are always chasing after the joys of digital and so on and so on and there's a fucking guy who's a genius.

Done it all, whose father knew presidents. He's met presidents. And, he's a lovely guy.

Drayton Bird:

But, I have no idea what his method ... The book I have of his, which I refer to all the time is called Million Dollar Mailings.

If you're looking for an idea, don't fuck around.

Get a copy of Million Dollar Mailings and go through it, and if you can't get an idea after about 20 minutes, go and see a fucking psychiatrist.

Whenever I'm stuck, I don't know how you go about finding ideas.

My secret weapon, as I said, is complete desperation and fear. But, I just go things and look and see if I can get ideas. The guy that I knew personally very well ... Well, nevermind.

Speaker 1:

Any other questions for Drayton? Now or never.

Speaker 7:

You were going to tell us about Martin Sorrell.

Drayton Bird:

Oh, Martin Sorrell. Martin is a very, very interesting guy.

When he bought Ogilvy & Mather, he took me out three or four times for meals to find out what I wanted to do.

And, the reason for that was that David had told him that when you buy a business, get to know what he called the marzipan layer, the people just below the top.

And, I was on the board on Ogilvy & Mather but I guess just about qualified as marzipan. Possibly sludge.

Drayton Bird:

So, he was always trying to find out what he wanted to do, and I always remembered he took me out. He gave up eventually.

He took me out once and he said,

"What do you want to do?"

I said,

"I want to do some remarkable."

And, he said,

"What?"

I said,

"I have no fucking idea."

And, I still don't have any idea, but I'm not going to give up.

Drayton Bird:

By the way, if anybody has a question, I get questions from all over the world.

There are two ways in which you can get me to answer the question, and I normally do reply.

There's somebody here that I didn't reply to, but I will.

I don't know why because it somehow didn't reach me or I think I've drafted a reply.

The one thing is a thing called Ask Drayton, which is a continuity deal.

Basically, you pay me \$1.00 for a month.

Each month contains at least one hour of video or advice. If you think that the \$1.00 was a bit of a fucking ripoff, you can ask for your \$1.00 back.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

If you think it was all right, then you pay an extortionate sum every month, \$27.00, and every month you get an hour of advice and because it's called Ask Drayton, if you want to ask a question, as long as it's not,

"How should I rebuild my business?" ... relatively simple. I always answer questions.

Drayton Bird:

There are people who have been on that program for eight years, so it can't be all that bad. It's a lot less expensive than some of the stuff I see being offered, and many people think it's a lot better.

So if you've got any questions, that's a way of getting the answers. And if you're really cheap like me, you only have to spend \$1.00. Ask your question and then cancel.

Drayton Bird:

Can I say what a great pleasure it's been to be here? With the possible exception with the way that my friend from Australia got me drunk. Actually, the Irish contingent was responsible for that.

And, it's a joy to meet so many people who are actually serious about what they're doing and determined to learn, and again, if you've got any questions, I can usually answer.

And especially if you have to do slide presentations, PowerPoint presentations, I can tell you what to do and what not to do because one or two of the ones I've seen here demonstrate what not to do.

The trick is don't have a big slide with lots of things on it and you're talking, and people don't know whether to look at you or the slide, and even if they do look at the slide, they can't

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

understand what the fucks on it because they can't remember.
Thank you.

Speaker 1:

Thank you, mate.

Drayton Bird:

My pleasure. Thank you. Thank you, very much.