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**INTERVIEW SERIES**

**How To Get The Results You Need  
From Your Copy... And Your Career**

**An Exclusive Interview With Direct Marketing Genius  
Drayton Bird**

 Michael Senoff's  
**HardToFind Seminars.com**

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I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com).

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

*Michael Senoff*

Founder & CEO: [www.hardtofindseminars.com](http://www.hardtofindseminars.com)

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## How To Get The Results You Need From Your Copy... And Your Career An Exclusive Interview With Direct Marketing Genius Drayton Bird

Drayton Bird is one of the world's best direct-marketing copywriters, but he wasn't always a success. In fact, when he started his agency back in the late 1970s, he was so far in debt, he went by an alias so that tax collectors wouldn't be able to recognize him.

Although he can laugh about that now, he can also pinpoint the mistakes he made that kept him poor and the steps he took that made him rich. And in this two-part audio, you'll hear all about Drayton's amazing story, including exactly how he went from being bottom-of-the-barrel broke to running David Ogilvy's multimillion-dollar direct marketing agency.

### Part One: 15 Lessons About Results That Will Make You Rich...

#### (Or At Least Keep You From Going Broke)

Even though you'd probably think that all marketing is done for results, according to Drayton, a lot of it is done just because someone said, "Hey. Let's do some marketing." And not surprisingly, this ego-driven, "make it up as you go along" approach usually ends in disaster.

So Drayton learned early on that advertising isn't the guessing game many people think it is – you really have to put in your time and study the techniques that work in order to be successful. And in Part One, you'll hear how Drayton did it. You'll also hear about the big names in marketing he's met, worked with, or studied along the way such as Eugene Schwartz, Monroe Kane, John E. Kennedy, Claude Hopkins, John Caples, David Ogilvy, and the list goes on and on.

Drayton says that as a creative person, he's tried many things in life. And although he admits that they weren't all successful, they all led to significant lessons. And in Part One, you'll hear his top 15.

#### You'll Also Hear...

- A little-used secret that earned Drayton two-and-a-half times his

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- salary for doing half as much work
- Exploding the myth about popular Super Bowl commercials and their advertising revenue
- A working strategy to use when things go wrong, and they will
- The kinds of guarantees that are guaranteed to work
- The three biggest mistakes Drayton made that almost ruined him
- A quickie “idiot’s guide” to creating the kind of newsletters people look forward to receiving
- The scary side of forming partnerships and why Drayton says you always need to keep an eye on the money
- How to produce the kinds of headlines, over-lines, and subheads that sell
- All about Drayton’s first big piece of direct mail and how it landed him three job offers right away

## Part Two: “ Sometimes You Don’t Have To Ask Where The Gravy Train Is. It Stops Right Outside Your Front Door. ”

Drayton started his successful agency in the UK with only 700 pounds and a couple of partners. Three and a half years later, they were the biggest direct marketing organization around. And in Part Two, you’ll hear how they did it, along with how Drayton turned that success into the opportunity of a lifetime – working with David Ogilvy.

### More Key Points From Part Two:

- The wild ways Drayton sold the idea of direct marketing to businesses
- An exclusive look into the winning business model Drayton used to make money
- The unusual (almost-crazy) ways Drayton overcame his fear of speaking
- Exactly what it is about Drayton’s book that helped him sell more than 200,000 copies
- The creative solutions Drayton came up with for meeting clients and “paying” rent when his fledgling company had no money
- The surprising jobs Drayton has had to take to make money and how that experience helped him when he formed his own company

Sometimes in business, it seems like one failure will inevitably lead to another. But fortunately, just as often, one success will also lead to a bigger and better one as well. And you'll see those patterns in Drayton's remarkable story.

But the most important thing he did to become successful was that he never gave up. There may not be a magic pill for success, but according to Drayton, if you go about things the right way, you'll not only make a lot of money in life, but you won't get bored in the process. And in this informative yet entertaining interview, Drayton tells us exactly how to do that.

*Hi, I'm Michael Senoff, Founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds. Along the way, I've created a successful publishing business all from home from my two car garage. When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home. Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable mp3 audio business interviews. I knew I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions and inside angles to help you live better, to save and make more money, to stay healthier, and to get more out of life. I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills you need to survive.*

Michael: I like your intro here how you wrote, "Oscar Wilde said that the experience is the name we give our mistakes, and I'm extremely experienced. That's not because I'm very old. It's because like most creative people, I love to try new things, and quite a few have been stupid or crazy. Of course, some have been sensible, but everyone has a story attached, and everyone has lead to a revelation, a valuable lesson." So, I'm glad you're going to pass these on to me.

Let's start with the first one, and "It's my first job in advertising," when you learn hardly anyone studies, but you did. Tell me what does that mean.

Drayton: I went to Manchester University, and my father never forgave me because I got a scholarship to University, and at the end of the first year I was doing the Spanish Oral, and the lady who was conducting the exam said, obviously in Spanish, "(in Spanish)" which means, "And, how do you like University?" I said, "No me gusto mucho," which means I don't like it very much.

So, she said, "Really?" I said, "Yes." She said, "What are you going to do?" So, I said, "I'm going to leave." She said, "You're going to leave?" I said, "Yes, I'm going to leave right now."

Michael: What year was that, your first year?

Drayton: That was my first year, the end of my first year. I said, "I'm going to go and get a job. I want to write. I've always wanted to write, and I'm going to get a job as a writer." Then, I went to work, got a job as a journalist. I was making no money at all. As I said originally, being creative, I like to try things, and one of the things I tried was sex.

So, I had a child, and I had no money. A friend of mine who was actually very well connected, he was a friend of the royal family, who seemed to be doing extremely well in advertising. He said, "You'd do well in advertising." I was aware of advertising. I knew what advertising was, but it never occurred to me that you could make money out of it.

Michael: How old were you at this time?

Drayton: Twenty-three. I then went and took an advertising course, and at the end of the first sort of semester, I went to the guy who was teaching it and I said, "Look, I'm bloody desperate. I need money desperately. I need to get a job in advertising." He said, "Well, I can't really help you," and then he said, "But I know somebody who might help you."

So, I went and got an interview with a man. I remember his name to this day, Arthur Frushon. We're going back over fifty years. I have to say I use low coming. I think low coming is a very, very under rated commodity. I picked up one thing very early on that when you're being interviewed for a job. It's the opportunity of the person who is interviewing you to express themselves because they're far more interested in themselves than they are in you.

So, I gathered very quickly this man was a rather right wing conservative guy. So, I came out very quickly with some right wing conservative views. He said, "You seem a very intelligent young man. I'll get you an interview with this agency in Liverpool." I lived in a place called Manchester, which is in the north of Liverpool. It was about forty miles away.

Michael: Were you married with a child?

Drayton: I was married with a child. I would say further, we were the only people on our road who had a bath.

Michael: A bath?

Drayton: Yes, nobody else had a bath, and people used to come and borrow our bath. We had an outside toilet. I was very poor. I went and got an interview with this man in Liverpool, and he said, "So, what do you want to do?" I said, "I want to be a copywriter." He said, "We don't employ feeless copywriters. They have to go through the ranks."

Michael: How did you even know that term "copywriting" at twenty-three?

Drayton: My friend, Sandy Radcliffe had told me. What I'd done is I'd gone to the Manchester Public Library, and I read all the books on advertising. There were only two.

Michael: Which ones were they?

Drayton: I know what one of them was. It was called, *Copy, the Call of Advertising*. It was written by a man named Esop Glen. It was actually a nom de plume. It wasn't his real name. He was an editor for a magazine called Printer's Ink.

I read this book, and I remember to this day he explained how writing copy, imagine there was a canoe going down the middle of a river, and you're on the bank, and you have to find some way of attracting the attention of the people in the canoe, and getting them to come to your side of the bank. I thought, "Wow, this is all about writing to persuade people to do things."

I always wanted to write, but the other thing I was interested in was I wanted to be a lawyer. I realized that this combined – my interest in writing with my interest in persuasion. So, I was immediately interested with being a copywriter. So, when I went to see this man in Liverpool, he said, "Oh, no, no, we don't hire people like that." He said, "Why should I give you a job anyhow?"

I said, "Well, I'll give you three reasons. The first reason is that I was brought up in a pub. When you're brought up in a pub, you see people at their best and their worst, and when they've had a few drinks, you really understand human nature. So, I understood human nature." I said, "The second reason is that I can write. I've been writing for two and a half years now," which I had been doing because I was the

assistant editor of this little magazine, “and, the third reason is I have a vast knowledge about all sorts of things and I think these three things qualify for me to be a copywriter.”

So, he said, “Really, tell me, what’s the difference between how a two-stroke engine works and the way a four-stroke engine works?” Luckily, I knew, then I sold him. He said, “Hm,” and then he said, “What’s the name of the Plymouth evening newspaper, and I guessed and I was wrong, but he asked me ten questions, and then he said, “You do indeed have a knowledge. I might hire you.” He said, “Look, how much are you getting paid now?”

I said, “Well, after tax, six pound, thirteen, which is about three dollars.” He said, “All right, I’ll pay you that.” I said, “The trouble is I’ve got to come all the way from Manchester. I’ve got to pay my train fare.” So, he said, “All right, I’ll pay you two pounds extra.”

So, I used to get up every morning very early, about six o’clock, and I would take the train to Liverpool. I would work in Liverpool. I used to go to the Liverpool market, and I would buy tins of Spam and cheese and bread, and that’s what I lived on during the week.

I was a very, very rebellious person, really unconventional. After a while, I was called in and I was told I didn’t really fit in, but the thing that I noticed when I got there, and this is my first revelation, was that nobody in the advertising business really studied it, but I was reading books all the time. Everytime I could find a book on advertising, I would read it.

There’s a guy called Gary Halbert who runs a thing called the Gary Halbert Letter, and I was mentioning some of the books that influenced me, and I said that I read a book written by the advertising manager of the international correspondence school, and I can’t remember his name, but it had a great influence on me because he tested everything, and I hated the way in advertising that people would just guess what would happen. They didn’t study what worked and what didn’t work, and I was fascinated to know what worked and didn’t work and why.

This is one of the books that influenced me enormously, but my first real surprise was that this is a business full of amateurs. I thought, “Well, I may not be a genius, but by God, I can do better than most of this lot.”

Well after a while I was told lots of big, unconventional things for wearing fancy worst coats and for saying rude things about the vice chairman. Actually, I can remember my boss said to me, and this shows you how long ago it was, he said, "We like our young men to wear a hat." I thought, "Sob this."

I wrote my first really effective piece of direct mail. I wrote letters to five advertising agency in Manchester telling them why they should hire me, and I got job offers from three and moved straight into Manchester.

I was there for a while, but my dream was to get to London where the big money was, and eventually I started writing to agencies in London, and I got interviews. I nearly had a nervous breakdown to be honest. I made myself very ill because I kept on turning down money. I was offered fifty percent more than I was getting, and then eighty percent more than I was getting, but I kept saying, "No, no, I want more."

Eventually, just by sticking to my guns, I got paid two and a half times as much money for doing half as much work.

Michael: That's great. So, what's the lesson in this where hardly anyone studied, but you did.

Drayton: I don't think this is just your advertising. Now that I've done this for many, many years, I think that most people in most businesses do not study sufficiently. They make it up as they go along.

I've written a few books, and there's another book I'm thinking of writing which is just called Marketing for Results, and I was thinking about it today, and I was thinking about to begin it. I would say, "You may think that marketing for results is a strange topic. You would mention that nobody markets for any other reason, but this is not the case. The great deal of marketing is just done because people say, 'Let's do some marketing,' or because somebody likes to see their name in print. Also, they might win an award or whatever, but not for results."

So, I thought this is an interesting business. Nobody studies. Nobody into results or certainly as much as I thought they should be, and then when I went and applied for jobs, my second revolution was that asking for a little more usually pays, and this lesson was underlined in a startling way because after I had been in my first job which was just an agency was bought by the big American advertising agency,

somebody came on to me and said, "Would you like to interview for the job of copy chief at CTV International?" That was a very, very famous name in London.

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Michael: Let me just actually get a little bit of a timeline. That first job, how long were you there before they asked you to leave?

Drayton: I was there for fourteen months.

Michael: Fourteen months, and you learned a lot in that first job?

Drayton: I learned mostly by studying.

Michael: Okay, then, they wanted you to leave, and then you wrote.

Drayton: They didn't want me to leave. They just annoyed me.

Michael: They annoyed you. So, you quit, and you wanted more money, and maybe a better job.

Drayton: I wanted to go back to Manchester. I didn't want to be in a job where people told me what to do. I wanted to do things my own way. First job they mentioned oddly enough, very strange offer. I had been there for about two months. The boss called me in and he said, "Drayton, we're thinking of starting a public relations division. You seem like a good man for the job how do you feel about that?"

So, I said, "I'm not very keen." So, he said, "Why?" I said, "Well, because I think the difference between advertising and public relations is like the difference between lying and perjury." He looked at me and he said, "Well, it's either that, or you're going to have the shaft." So, I said, "I'll do public relations, Mr. Knowles," which is his name.

I did public relations for about six months, and then we chatted, and he said, "It's not really working. I think we're going to have to fire you." So, I started laughing. He said, "Why are you laughing? It's not funny. I'm serious." I said, "What do you want me to do?" So, he said, "I think it'd be a great shame to lose a bright young lad like you to the North," which is where I was, "I didn't like people going down to London, and so I've arranged for you to have an interview next door." I got an interview with the biggest agency outside Manchester.

Michael: What were they called?

Drayton: This is called Osborne Peacock, and they eventually became the McCann-Erickson. So, I went next door, had an interview, and the man who interviewed me said, "You seem quite bright. I've arranged for an interview with the creative director."

I went into the creative director, a man called Keith Bright, and he said to me, "So, tell me, what's your view on advertising?" I talked to him for an hour, and he said, "Look, we don't really have a job for you, but I met your employee." Then, somebody came in after me to talk to the creative director who told me after the creative director said to me, "I've just had a young lad talk to him that knows a lot more advertising than I do."

So, it really paid off all that study at that point, and at that point, I then started working on big accounts at a big company that sold cleaning materials, all sorts of things.

Michael: Were you doing the campaigns and writing the copy?

Drayton: I was writing the copy. I wrote one line of copy, which you mention it today to people of not of my generation. It was made into a jingle that ran for years and years and years. You started singing and they all laugh, and they say, "Oh, I remember that," and I say, "Well, I'm the bloke that wrote that." That's a great deal of claim for one's life work.

Again, I was very rebellious. One day, my boss came and he said to me – I was sitting there doing nothing, and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Nothing." He said, "Why are you doing nothing?" I said, "Because you've given me nothing to do." He said, "Well, you should go and look for work." I said, "I'm not bloody running this place. You are."

Now, I'll tell you something, Michael. I was wrong. I was wrong, wrong, wrong. Arrogance is wrong because the truth is if you want to succeed, you've got to go looking for work, and when I was actually employing other people, people I valued most were not the people who ignored me and sat around scratching their bottoms. They were the people who went out and found things to do, or came up to me and said, "Is there anyway I can help?"

But, I was very arrogant. He had five copywriters in the agency. I persuaded three of the others and myself to get other jobs. In one text, I actually wrote the letter for him, and eventually, he was left with one copywriter.

As I left, I went to him and said, "Look, next time you pick a fight, don't pick a fight with London."

Michael: Let me ask you this. You say you grew up in pubs. What do you mean by that?

Drayton: A pub, the English pub.

Michael: Yes, you hung out in pubs like when you were younger and stuff?

Drayton: No, my parents had a pub.

Michael: Oh, your parents owned a pub, okay.

Drayton: Not only did they own a pub, they owned a very good pub, and when suddenly the English staff was getting interested in food in the 1950s, the thing that really changed the face of British food a lot was the thing called the Good Food Guide, and they were in that Good Food Guide right from the first year.

For perhaps the first money I ever actually made was cooking when I was sixteen. So, the thing about a pub, this particular pub was unusual in that it was in a fundamentally working class area, but it had a lot of wealthy clientele. So, there's a very mixed clientele.

So, one day, I would be talking to some very, very rich cotton business man because cotton was a big industry there, and ten minutes later, I'd be talking to a guy who worked in his mill was in the other side of the bar. So, I had this tremendous perspective of human nature, an understanding of human nature.

My parents didn't like me going into the bar and listening to conversations and so on. I must have anyhow, so I developed this great interest in human nature.

Of course, the kind of people we are is determined to a large extent by background and hereditary and in terms of hereditary, my father and my grandfather were both fantastic sales people. So, I had selling in my blood anyhow, and my father and grandfather, again, were both

extremely literate. So, there's writing in my blood. It all came out – the right background, the right set of circumstances, the right influences, and a certain amount of honesty of my part.

Michael: When you worked in your first advertising jobs, you've got a look at how an agency was run. What were your initial impressions especially being rebellious? What were your opinions on it? Did you think it was legit, or a lot of fluff?

Drayton: Well, to be honest, I was rather disappointed. I didn't think it was very imaginative. I was quite surprised that it wasn't really fluffy. It was pretty down to earth.

They way they operated then was quite different from the way they operate now in the sense that I was sit at my little desk, and I would write the copy, and then I would send it to the art director or designer or visualizer as they called them then, and then he would do the layout. We didn't really work together. That was a strange thing.

The other thing was that I really did educate myself, and one of the guys who worked with me who was also interested in learning – it's rather said actually because I didn't keep in touch with him very much, but I communicated with him in the last few years once or twice, and he never went anywhere. He just stayed in the pool, doing what you do. He never had a go.

I wanted to have a go. I wanted to be successful, but no it wasn't fluffy at all. It was just dull in that first agency. Well, the second one was really a little proprietorial business. The third one, the big one, they were pretty good, but again, it was very down to earth.

Michael: Were these agencies making a lot of money?

Drayton: Oh, yes.

Michael: They could make a ton of money.

Drayton: The first one was making good money. The second was a bit of a hobby. The guy was running a restaurant. He had quite a small agency, only about twenty people. The third one, there may be a hundred or more people. They were making a ton of money. They were the biggest agency outside of London, and in those days, you could make a ton of money. You could tell by the kind of cars the chairman was driving, which was a Rolls Royce.

Michael: Where did the money come from?

Drayton: The agency business is a cushy business because the agency business grew out of the people who sold advertising on permission. This is how the advertising agency business started in America, and in England.

You had representatives who went out selling space for newspapers. After a while, they realized that if they were going to sell more space, it was a good idea to help the advertiser get results for his advertising. So, they'd say, "We'll prepare the advertisements for you." Eventually, they sort of switched over from representing the newspaper to representing the advertiser, and they got their fifteen percent commission.

The thing is you got that fifteen percent commission. If you ran, say for one of our clients, Imperial Leather, which is the biggest selling soap in Britain. If I wrote an ad for Imperial Leather, that ad would run for years, and everytime it would run, we'd get fifteen percent, and it wasn't until I would say the late 70s that that system starts to break down. I just realized that this was ridiculous, and they didn't have to pay that kind of money. They started beating agencies down on price, but it was a wonderful business for those people at that time.

Michael: Back then, before the 70s, was it accountable advertising. So, if they're running that ad year after year, would the agency measure and be able to show a return on investment for their advertising dollars spent?

Drayton: That's an extremely good question, and the answer to that is, and this is really what determined the strength of my career, there were two types of clients. There were the clients who did measure their results, and the clients who didn't. I was fascinated by the clients who did.

So, we had particular things to sell like sewing machines door to door and vacuum cleaners, or selling by mail order. If they didn't sell, they didn't eat. If they didn't get results, they went broke. It's a totally different approach to advertising, to for instance, one of our clients sold paint and wall paper, and I always remember with great amusement that one of the chief things that the agency did was they made sure that on your route of the man to work, and opposite his house, there was always plenty of posters featuring his product. This was nothing to do with measurable results at all.

A lot of it still isn't. I was writing today in Facebook about a campaign that's running in America by Proctor and Gamble for Old Spice deodorant. It features a football player who is very good looking, and they spent millions on that commercial that ran at the Superbowl, and they attracted a huge amount of attention. In fact, so much attention that this man made his own little messages in reply to all the people who have commented on the commercials.

More people have actually watched his little messages, his little videos than the original commercials. The client, which is Proctor and Gamble won the top award at the Cannes Advertising Festival, which is a sort of back slapping affair, which they run every year. Interesting enough, I found out today that sales are down seven percent.

I was writing about this other day, I think in my blog and just remember, if your celebrity is more interesting than your product, you're in trouble. It's helping him, but it's not helping you. It's what they call a vampire video, sucking the life out of your product.

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Michael: That's funny. All right, you have here, my first business disaster, when you learn whatever can go wrong, will. Tell me about that.

Drayton: After I got this first job, I then got a job as a copy chief, and then a creative director at CTV. Once again, I asked for more money than they were prepared to offer. They offered me a certain amount of money, and I said, "No, I want more." It was a Friday, and I remember the managing director said, "Well, look, there's a wonderful opportunity. You really should go out and think about."

I said, "Well, I do want 500 pounds a year more, so why don't you think about that?" Well, on Monday morning, he rang me up and said, "Okay, you're on." So, I got that job, and at that point, that was the last I had the freedom to try and make people do the things that I believe should be done.

We already had some clients, which is the British Travel Association, who measured their results. They needed to get rid of brochures to sell holidays.

The other clients I would go to, they would try measuring their advertising, and I can remember, there was one client that had sold a

material insulated for curtains. They had run an advertisement the previous year, which they were very happy with.

I said, "Let me try and run an advertisement with a coupon and see what happens." So, eventually, I persuaded them, and I ran one little ad which ran in one paper once, and it got more than all of our previous year's advertising. I thought, "Well, this is wonderful," and I started to understand the mail order business. So, I thought, "I must try this."

So, I got together with a friend, and we tried to run a mail order ad, which didn't do too well, and then we tried to do another mail order ad.

Michael: What were you selling, insulation?

Drayton: Well, the first time I was selling little identity bracelets with your initials. That didn't work, but the second time, we noticed there was a fashion then, and this is in the mid 60s for little what they called wiglets, which were little wigs, little hair pieces. Do you remember they used to have these bouffant hair styles? I thought, "Let's run an ad for this."

So, my friend had a good connection, and we got together, and I wrote an ad which ran in the Daily Mirror, and we borrowed his parents' offices. His father was a furrier in the fur trade, and we ran in the ad, and we went in on the Monday. We ran it on a Saturday to see what would happen. We went to the office. We could not open the door. What the hell was a matter? Wasn't the key working? What was going on?

We pushed and pushed, and eventually we got inside, and the reason we couldn't open the door because there was a huge pile of envelopes with money in them.

Michael: Oh my god.

Drayton: We thought, "Bloody hell, we have made it." Here I am 25 or 26, and I thought, "I'm going to get rich. We're rich."

Michael: Literally, how many envelopes were in there?

Drayton: I could tell you this much that that advertisement, I know was one advertisement was going to make 5,000 pounds, which today would be say in pounds probably at least 40,000 pounds, say \$60,000 from one bloody advertisement.

Michael: Was it a newspaper?

Drayton: It ran in international newspapers, the Daily Mirror, one of the biggest circulation newspapers.

Michael: What section did you run it in?

Drayton: It was run in the ordinary news section.

Michael: How big of an ad was it – just a little display?

Drayton: It would be about an eight inches, so eight inches up and triple column. We got in there, and we thought, “This is great,” and we thought we made it. The next thing that happened was obviously people have to send locks of their hair that we could match with a hair piece. The first thing that went wrong was that the man who was doing the job, a hairdresser, left all the locks of hair on a window sill, and somebody opened the window. The wind blew, and all the locks of hair got mixed up. So, despite this appalling mess, we made a bit of money.

The next thing that happened was the hairdresser decided that he would go into the business. So, that went wrong. We lost our supplier. We didn’t make any money. He tried to copy us. He didn’t succeed. We just gave up in despair, and I was really, really upset.

I found that you can be fairly certain that whatever will go wrong, can go wrong, and quite possibly a few things you can’t possibly imagine going wrong will go wrong. I always say to people, “Hope for the best, but plan for the worst, and you won’t be disappointed.”

Michael: Tell me about your second business disaster.

Drayton: Our second business disaster, when I was in this agency, they made me an associate director and the creative director, and this agency was famous for being creative. I wrote a memo, which I wish I kept, to the chairman of the board of the company that owned it, and said, “You should put me on the main board because you’re supposed to be a creative agency, and I am the creative director, and we can see bloody good results, which makes sense.”

Anyhow, I said, “I’ve done a survey of the top 25 agencies in the world,” which I had, “Eighteen of them are owned by copywriters.” So, he rang up, and he said, “Why don’t you come and have lunch with me

in the Grove and the House,” which is a very small hotel of offices. So, he took me to lunch at the Grove and the House, and more or less patted my hand and said, “Calm down. There, there, be patient, blah, blah. You’re not very patient.” So, I thought, “Screw this for a game of soldiers. I’m not going to stick around here.”

Around about that time, the guy that I worked with rang me up and he said, “I’ve got a mail order product that we’re wondering if you might be able to help us with. Come and have lunch with me.” So, I went and had lunch in an Italian restaurant in Paddington called Bizarro, and I said, “What’s this product?” He said, “Well, it’s a body building device. Here it is.”

I said, “Hm, show me what you do.” He showed me what they were doing. I said, “Show me the results.” He showed me the results, and I said – I don’t know what prompted me to say it, I just said, “Look, I reckon I can sell a thousand a week of these.” He said, “If you can sell a thousand a week of these days, we’ll give you twenty percent of the business.”

Michael: What did the device do? Do you remember?

Drayton: This is a very famous product which sold all over the world, and quite a few people in America – one or two famous copywriters actually, one that I interviewed, a guy called Joe Vitale, who rang me up and said, “Hey, I bought one of these things, I want you to talk to me about how to use this.”

Another guy called Clayton Makepeace is also another very well-known copywriter. He said, “Oh, I bought one of those.” A lot of people bought them. It was just a nice exercise.

I wrote ads and direct mail for it, which ran all over the world. I thought it was a quite a very good thing until I found out after about five or six months that it took me until May to sell a thousand a week, and they discovered they got all their numbers wrong. They were losing money on every one. So, the whole business went belly-up.

Michael: Your advertising was selling about a thousand a week.

Drayton: Oh yes. It really was a huge success story, even today. This was like fourteen years later.

Michael: Was there a brand name for it?

Drayton: Yes, it was called a Bullworker.

Michael: So, they had their numbers wrong, so you didn't make any money with it.

Drayton: I made no money, and it was bought by another person I knew, and I went to this person, and I said, "How many of these things do you think you can sell?" He said, "I don't know, 150 a month or whatever." I said, "Listen, I'll tell you what I'm going to do for you. I'll come along, and I'll work for you for nothing to sell 250 a month. If you sell 250, will you give me say a shilling for each one?"

I worked out that I would make 60,000 pounds a year if we did the deal I wanted him to do. He said, "Yeah, that's a good idea. I like that deal. I think we'll do it." Then, he rang up his cousin who is one of the legends of the mail order business, a man called Sam Gogefovits, who lived in a chateau in Switzerland. His cousin Sam said, "No royalty deals."

Michael: No royalty deals?

Drayton: Yes because I was going to say, "Everyone you sell I'll get a certain number," and he was quite happy to do it.

Michael: Now, had you – all the copy that you produced to sell the thousand a week, did you own that? Was that yours?

Drayton: No.

Michael: Were you working as a copywriter for the client?

Drayton: I was working as a paid consultant.

Michael: I see.

Drayton: But, in those days, it was a lot of work. Nobody owned anything really, and the thing is that they didn't know what I knew. If they knew what I knew, they never would have said, "Oh maybe we could sell \$150 a month." I knew precisely what they could sell because I've got myself a pretty fast education in the mail order business.

Michael: But, if he had said, yes, would you have used the winning elements of your campaign with him?

Drayton: Absolutely, yes. If you've got something that works, you don't have to ask where the gravy train is. It just stops right outside your front door. So, that was almost my – don't count your chickens, and find out who really makes the decisions. Lenny didn't make the decisions. His cousin did.

Michael: Number six, my first lessons in real copy, when you learn from some of the world's best direct response copywriters.

Drayton: This is I would say one of the great, great benefits of that period.

Michael: How old are you now?

Drayton: I'm about 28.

Michael: Did you just learn about these great copywriters?

Drayton: No, no. What happened was at that time, one of the people at the firm that I was dealing with was a man called David Geller. David Geller was an incredibly clever business man – they used to call him the Octopus of Madison Avenue – who did deals with all the mail order operators in the US, and as a consequence, people would come over from the US who worked with David Geller, I think maybe just to look around and see what they could do in England because the actual first place for people in the states who were looking to make some more money or do something else, was to come over to the UK. It was the same language.

What was it somebody said? Two countries divided by a common language, so all these people would come over to see what could be done, and I met in particular a man named Eugene Schwartz. If you mention the name Eugene Schwartz to anybody today in the online marketing business or in the direct marketing business, Eugene Schwartz is generally thought to be a genius.

Michael: How did you meet him? You met him in person?

Drayton: He came along, and he was thinking of running some of his things in England.

Michael: He came over to England?

Drayton: Yeah, he came over because he knew David Geller.

Michael: I see.

Drayton: David Geller had an interest in the Bullworker and a couple of other things.

Michael: Did Eugene Schwartz write for David Geller?

Drayton: Well, the way that that business worked is it was a very incestuous business. They all worked for each other. All of them had deals, and one of the things that gave David Geller lots of strength was that he had interest in one or two publications where he could place advertising for you cheaply so that you could test your route with David Geller, and he would make money on whatever happened.

There was another guy whose name I can't remember, also very, very clever, who owned Ladies' Home Journal. Again, you could run that through him. So, it was always a very, very, everybody in everybody else's pocket.

So, somebody like Gene Schwartz would be running ads with David Geller, nearly all Gene's ads were actually to sell books of one kind or another. He took a bit of a shine to me because he's a great lover of modern art, and he actually introduced me to modern art. He took me to an art gallery to look at Robert Rauschenberg's works. I think he used to spend all the money he got on mail order on modern art.

Michael: How old was Schwartz at that time?

Drayton: I would say he was probably about eight years older than me. He died young of course. He was a wonderfully enthusiastic man, and he said, "What did you want from me kid? Why don't you write some copy for me?" He said, "Here's a book. Why don't you see if you can write some copy for this book?"

Michael: What book?

Drayton: The book was called The Art of Selfishness, and I can remember I worked on it, and I came up with a headline which pretty much said, "Is this the most immoral book you ever read?" Gene smiles and he says, "Would you like to see the headline I'd written?" So, I said, "Yes," and the headline he'd written was, "Is this is the most immoral book you've ever read?"

Michael: Really?

Drayton: Yes, it was extraordinary, but he said, "Would you like to work for me?" I said, "I can't compete with you." I think this is a big mistake on my part. I would have learned a lot. It's a mistake I made twice. A few years later, a man named Joe Carboro who also was an absolutely brilliant copywriter wrote a marvelous headline, which has been copied by just about everyone which was the Lazy Man's Way to Get Rich.

It's been copied by lots and lots of people, and he also offered me a job. He said, "Why don't you come and work for me?" I said, "I can't compete with you." That's a cowardly streak in me which I regret.

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Michael: You weren't really going to be competing with him. Were you?

Drayton: I don't know. I just felt overshadowed. I think now as I'm older, and people say to me, "As you're looking back on your life, what do you regret?" I think, "Well, I've done pretty well, but I think I didn't aim high enough."

Michael: Was that the first and only time you met Eugene Schwartz or did you have any other-

Drayton: Oh no, he came over a number of times. I met him a few times, and there were other guys who I met. There was a guy called Ed Axle, who used to amuse me quite a lot, who wrote a hilarious advertisement for a product called Slumber Slim, and I learned lots of tricks from the guys.

This thing for Slumber Slim, he had this marvelous punch line. It said, "Lose weight while you sleep, through the miracle of auto-oxidization." I looked at him, and I said, "Ed, what is auto-oxidization?" He said, "Sweating, kid, sweating."

His guarantee was wonderful. His guarantee was, "If this book doesn't do everything we tell you, just tear the cover off and send it back to us, and we'll give you your money back." Of course, this was an absolute encouragement for people to cheat. It's always a good idea to let people screw you a little bit, if that's possible.

Michael: Had Eugene Schwartz run into any of his legal entanglements at that time, or was that after?

Drayton: He certainly had his problems. I wasn't following it in great detail, but I remember this hilarious story about the fact that he had one problem where I think he had gone broke and his actual business had gone broke, but he started running out somewhere else. I remember he had to climb into his old office.

There's another guy called Monroe Caine who is another guy I learned a lot from. I was looking at one of his advertisements.

Michael: Was Monroe Caine a US guy?

Drayton: Yes, yes, they were all Americans. There's no doubt the people who do it best are Americans. I count myself a mere amateur compared to some of these guys.

Now, the thing is when you write an advertisement, you have a line above the headline that makes them some sort of promise, and then you have the main promise in the headline, and then you'll have something underneath it which elaborates the promise. I'm simplifying, but I noticed with Monroe that his overlines are pretty much the same thing as his headline, which is pretty much the same thing as his subhead.

I said to him, "Why do you do that, Monroe?" He said, "Listen, kid, when you've got a good promise, you repeat your promise." So, I learned something from him.

The other thing that needs to be addressed, he was one of these guys that the minute he started writing, his imagination went away with him. So, he'd come over with a distinguished looking elderly gentleman, who didn't say very much.

I said to my English associates, "Who's that guy who is with Monroe?" They said, "That's his lawyer." They were a bunch of gumps.

Michael: I've got a list of some of the old time supposedly great advertising and copywriting guys. Can I list some names, and just off the top of your head, make a couple comments about each one, maybe even a story? How about John Caples? Did you ever meet him?

Drayton: No, I wish to God I had met John Caples. Over dinner one evening in Frankfort, David Ogilvy, who eventually of course I got to know extremely well. He said, "Reeves and I were talking one night, and we agreed that we'd learned everything we knew from John Caples," and I

turned David and said, “Well, all I can say is I’m a second emcee because I’ve learned everything I know from you and Reeves,” which is not strictly true because I used to read John Caples regularly.

John Caples was the man – he wasn’t the man who originated testing, but he was the man who systematized it, and wrote down what he learned better than anyone else. I would say that anybody who wants to succeed in any kind of marketing should read John Caples, and not just read him, but reread him.

He was a very quiet gentleman. In fact, the man who is in partnership with me Ray John did meet him, very quietly spoken.

Michael: Did he own his own agency?

Drayton: He never owned his own agency.

Michael: So, he was just a copywriter.

Drayton: He was a copywriter with an agency called Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, BBD&O which WC Fields described as, “It’s a name which sounds like a man dragging heavy trunk down flights of steps.” So, he was a copywriter for BBD&O, which strangely enough was run by a man who very well may have been the better copywriter than him, a man called Bruce Barton, again a remarkable person.

BBD&O, I mean, it’s a very incestuous world. In fact, I’m curious to know what other names you’re going to come out with, but for instance, Rosser Reeves, the man who developed the concept of the Unique Selling Proposition, the USP that people talk about. I nearly became his creative director much later on. Somebody wrote to me and asked if I would be interested in working for Rosser Reeves.

Michael: How about Claude Hopkins?

Drayton: Claude Hopkins is the man. If there were two people that people ought to study if they really want to understand the essential principles of this business, they are Hopkins and Caples.

In fact, if anybody goes on my website, I offer a thing called 101 Helpful Marketing Ideas, and I also say, “And you can also download this book free.” This is a 48 page book called *Scientific Advertising* written by Claude Hopkins in 1926, which remains in my view the best



Kennedy did not enjoy good health and died rather young. A yard away from me right now, I have a photo static copy of a book written by John E Kennedy called *The Book of Tests*, in which they talked about the importance of testing. So, that's who John E Kennedy was.

Michael: Robert Collier.

Drayton: Robert Collier is the man who wrote in my view the best ever book on the subject of letter writing. In fact, I think Robert Collier left a book, marvelous writer of sales letters. The funny thing is about two years ago, I was having lunch with somebody, and I've written a book called *How to Write a Salesletter that Sells*, and this man said to me, "That is the best book ever written on the subject."

I said, "Oh, no it isn't the best book ever written on the subject. It's the Robert Collier letter book." He said, "No, your book is better than that." I've never been so flattered in my life. He was wrong, but nevertheless, I could stand there and say no all day long.

As you know very well because the subject is creative, and you know that good creative work comes from studying what other people are doing. I do a lot of interviews myself, and when I'm interviewing people, I model my interviews on a very, very fine interviewer on the subject called John Friedman. He did a wonderful series of television interviews.

When I'm writing, I always study what other people have done. I don't copy it directly, but it's a good starting point. I mean, after all, when Mozart wrote great music, he did because he studied Italian composers.

Michael: Tell me about John Friedman. What's something about his interviews that you admire that you model?

Drayton: Oh my god, well, John Friedman was very, very gentle, and he did this series of things called face-to-face, and what was interesting about it was the only face you ever saw apart from his at the beginning was the face of the person that he was talking to. The camera would focus very, very closely on this person's face.

He would very, very gently ask them questions. He managed to breakdown some of the tight people or the most difficult people you could imagine, just gently probe with questions.

He himself was almost invisible, and I never forgotten that because the play of emotions on somebody's face, extraordinary. I remember in particular he did an interview with the great novelist, Evelyn Waugh, who I believe one of the two greatest English comic novelists of the twentieth century, but extremely unpleasant, very bad tempered and generally a bully, but John Friedman virtually reduced him to tears.

Waugh, apparently very public as a writer, was a very private man, and he had undergone a period where he thought he was going mad. He had written a book about it called The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold. It was a very, very delicate subject, but John Friedman managed to get him to talk. He was very good at that.

Michael: These were televised interviews?

Drayton: Yes.

Michael: I wonder if they're on YouTube.

Drayton: I don't know. It's a very good question, back in the sixties.

Michael: So, he was a UK guy?

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Drayton: Yes, although in fact he became the British ambassador to Washington. He was a very distinguished man himself. I'm sure you can get to interview many people because you've got a reputation, and you're amongst the most listened to people on the internet.

Michael: Thank you.

Drayton: I manage to get to talk to people because I'm quite well-known in my own little field.

Michael: Let's get back to your listen. So, we're on the one, my first lesson real copy when you learn for some of the best direct response copywriters. Do you want to expand on that?

Drayton: Those are the people I learned from. I just learned lots of tricks from them, and I learned what I was doing before was not really selling. These guys really knew how to sell. Well, when I hire copywriters myself as I have done over the years, people ask me what do I look for, and there's something I was never looking for then, but I always look for now.

I always say I look for a burning desire to take money off of people. I think I learned to put passion into my copy, the real desire to sell to people. It raised my game. When you read the best, it raises your game.

Michael: We're on My First Business Partnership, when you learned that appearances often matter more than reality in three equal partners.

Drayton: Yes, very, very interesting. What happened was I go this job because after this business went broke, the one I was mentioning, the Bullworker business and my plans to make a lot of money failed again, I went to work for an agency called Papert, Koenig & Lois, which was the first ever agency to go public. It was an American agency in London, and I got the job because Charles Sarchy who became very famous later on wanted more money than me.

I left that agency because the place is like the lunatic asylum. I learned a lot and went into partnership with two other people in a creative consultancy. The thing I learned there was that I thought I was doing a fantastic job because as far as I was concerned, what people wanted was results, and everything I did got results, but the two other equal partners, ganged up on me, really. They ganged up on me because of appearances rather than reality.

They say, "Look, you come into the office whenever you please with your little dog." People must have thought I was gay because I used to walk around with a poodle. "You waltz in here with your poodle, and you sit down and write a bit of copy and then you go after the wine bar. That's it, and we think that's not right."

I said, "You're in charge of getting the business." This is to one of them, I said, "You'll be the art director, and I'm the copywriter. Can I ask you a question? Does my copy work?" They said, "Yes." I said, "Has it ever failed?" They said, "No." "Have any clients complained?" They said, "No." "Then, what the hell are you talking about?"

But, I left because what message from them is that I just showed up. As far as I was concerned, what message was did I get results? So, I took my money and rage, very little money. As it happens, I'd been approached by a young man, and this is my first experience of building a business.

Michael: Is this your second business partnership story?

Drayton: Well, no, no, the second business partnership had just broke up.

Michael: So, the first business partnership where you learned about appearances often matter more than-

Drayton: That is when I went into partnership with these two guys in a consultancy.

Michael: Then, the second business partnership.

Drayton: This came about because a young man rang me up and said, "You don't know me, but I know all about you." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yes. I can tell you which advertisements you wrote." I said, "Can you?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Well, tell me."

So, he did. He said, "You wrote those Bullworker advertisements, blah, blah, blah," and then he said, "I know that you're looking for a mail order business." I said, "You're right." He said, "Why don't you come and have a drink with me?"

I did, and he was a young man, twenty-one, and he really knew what was going on in the mail order business. He said, "Look, I've got a client," he worked for an agency, "I've got a client who is going broke because he spent too much money, and he wants to leave the country in a hurry, but he's got this business which I believe can make money. He just hasn't been handling it right."

So, I said, "Explain to me what it is." So, he explained to me. So, I said, "Hm."

Michael: You've got to tell me what was it in a nutshell.

Drayton: It was a course that taught you to play the piano. The thing about it was it had been featured on television, and somebody on a well-known television sort of reality show had taken the course for six weeks, and the promise of the course was if you take the course for six weeks, you

will play the piano correctly and well. This guy had done it, and he sat down in front of millions of people, and he played the piano correctly and well.

So, fantastic, and I thought, “Bloody hell, if we can’t sell this, we’re really in trouble.” So, I said, “Very interesting.” I called my savings and I paid for the guy who owned the company. I paid nearly all my savings, which were not very large, I can tell you, to leave the country in a hurry in exchange for which he gave me the business.

Michael: Let me ask you this. Had you known about the famous piano ad?

Drayton: Yes, John Caples, they laughed when I sat down at the piano.

Michael: Was that in the top of your head?

Drayton: Not at all. We literally just said, “You can play the piano correctly and well in six weeks or all of your money back instantly without question,” something like that.

Michael: Let me ask you this. If you had known that Eugene Schwartz, one of his very first infomercials that he wrote was called The Piano Man, where they sold hundreds of thousands of piano courses through the mail, through TV, television infomercials.

Drayton: Bloody hell. Michael, you are a genius. I’m very disturbed when people tell me things I don’t know. I’m not sure we shouldn’t stop this conversation now.

Michael: I’m just curious had he maybe-

Drayton: I am extremely impressed.

Michael: I don’t know if that was before you met him or after.

Drayton: It would be before. One of the other people I met, incidentally since you sent me off on a tangent here about television, I met a guy called Charlie Castro.

Now, I lived on the King’s Road in Chelsea, and near my flat, there is a shop that sells movie posters. In that shop, there is a poster for a film featuring Michael Caine and the producer of that film is Charles Castro. Charlie Castro made all of his money out of TV, direct response television, in the good old days doing thirty minute television

commercials in exactly the same way I mentioned Gene Schwartz did. I couldn't remember them all. How interesting.

Michael: About five years ago, or six years ago, I did a recreation of a Eugene Schwartz speech that he did with Phillips Publishing. I hired an actor, and this actor phenomenal, and he played the part of Eugene Schwartz. He did a reading all the way through of the transcript. We added a few things in there, and just recently about two weeks ago, I finished a recreation with the same actor six years ago. He's right here in San Diego. We did a recreation of the Eugene Schwartz speech that he did to Rodeo. I put it up on my site. I'll send you a link to it.

Drayton: I've looked at it.

Michael: Listen to it because it sounds better. All we had was the video tape of him speaking at Rodeo, but we took the transcripts and we added a little stuff, kind of made it our own and did a recreation of it. It's an audio download, but it's very good.

I think in the Phillips speech, he talks about the Piano Man, that he was doing one of the very first infomercials. I can send you both of those. You can check them out. They're great stories.

Drayton: I'd love to.

Michael: Let's continue on. So, this guy had a piano course. So, continue on, what happened?

Drayton: The problem was the agency said you can't advertise. This guy owes too much money. So, I went to the chairman of the agency, and I said, "Look, if I pay you upfront for the advertising, will you let me advertising?" So, he said, "Yeah, all right."

We ran an advertisement. We had long discussions with my partner, Martin, who is the guy who brought the business to me. I said, "I think the mistake they're making here is that what he was selling was a paper course, and after you bought the paper course, then after six weeks, he would sell you a record." I said, "I think the time to sell the records is almost immediately."

So, we changed everything, and sent out the paper course, and then almost immediately afterwards, we sent out something saying, "Would you like to buy the records?" So, that made the thing twice as possible.

Then, we thought, “We’re being idiots. Let’s just sell the record course right from the start,” and that was really making money. That’s where if I had been start I would have said, “Right, this is good. This is the foundation of our business. Let’s carry on in this field.”

What we did do is we started trying to do too many things at once, and there were two lessons here, actually. When I say my second business partnership, the 50/50 partnership I had with Martin, we were wonderful friends. He was a wonderful guy who was very, very clever. Neither of us had control. I couldn’t control him, and he was very, very easy on spending money, very good at spending money.

He spent too much money, but I couldn’t control him. I decided that if you can’t have a partnership, unless you’re very lucky 50/50 is a very, very dodgy situation because nobody really has control. That was definitely a big mistake.

Then, the expense side of building a business, which is what we did next, was that every time I saw something I liked the look of, I would have a go.

Michael: You wanted to sell it?

Drayton: Oh, no. I wanted to try. Let’s go. We’ve got a mail order business. Let’s try this business. Let’s try that business. So, in no time at all, in less than two and a half years, we had a newsletter. We had a mailing house that sent out stuff to people. We had a little studio where people could go and record themselves singing songs to back up charts we had pre-recorded. We got all sorts of things going.

Michael: Did you have employees at that time or was it just you two?

Drayton: Oh, yes, we had quite a few employees. We had three offices. We were making a lot of money. As I said, we were trying to do too many things. We couldn’t keep our eyes on these things, and one of these things bringing it to point number ten, the three big mistakes that almost ruined me.

One of the things I looked at was the newsletter. It was the newsletter called the Business Idea List. It was up for sale, and I was fascinated by it because of my background in journalism.

Michael: Who owned it?

Drayton: It was owned by a man, and if I had known him – I wasn't able to pull anything from him because he was a man about ten times smarter than me called Sylvester Stone, and Sylvester was a South African who had forgotten more about bloody newsletters than I've ever known.

So, what you should do if you buy a business from somebody is ask them what they think about the secrets to success, but what most people do and I've seen this time and time again, is they buy the business and they think, "Oh, now I've got this thing. I can change everything." It's absolute lunacy.

So, I got this newsletter, and I thought, "Well, it doesn't really look very good. So, let's make it look better." So, I made it look a little bit more like a magazine. That is the first massive mistake with a newsletter.

The nature of a newsletter is totally different from the nature of a magazine. The newsletter is like inside information that nobody else can have. I've done a speech on this actually in one or two countries where I compare a well known newsletter, which is published by a friend of mine with the most popular magazine in Britain, which is called Grazia, which is a woman's magazine.

I looked at this woman's magazine. It costs you two pounds. You could buy it anywhere. It's full of wonderful pictures. It's got great writing in it. It's got 120 pages in it full of advertising. It's fascinating. It's hugely successful, makes a lot of money, and it costs two quid.

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Michael: What's the newsletter?

Drayton: The newsletter is called Subscription Strategy, and it's how to generate subscription, a very specialized area. It's only sixteen pages long. It's double spaced, typed in courier. It comes out only six times a year, and it costs 187 pounds a year.

Michael: Who writes it?

Drayton: This guy Peter Hobday, a friend of mine. I'm on the editorial board of it. On the face of it, this is insane. People are paying far, far more for this pay of pertinent junk as opposed to this beautiful magazine because the nature of the things is totally different.

One of them is a mass publication for everybody, where the newsletter is full of secrets, inside stories, this, that and the other thing – never, never make a newsletter look like a magazine. That was the first mistake I made.

The second mistake I made, which is if anything, was that I was so pleased with the changes that I've made, my partner and I were both very pleased with ourselves, and the publication was so marvelous, and they had a huge list of people who had inquired but not bought. Obviously, we couldn't sell simply by sending out a mailing, with the magazine, to say, "Look at this wonderful newsletter you should subscribe."

The second big mistake, never, ever send a publication out, if you're trying to sell a subscription because the publication never lives up to all the wonderful things you can say about it.

Number two, it's bloody expensive to send out the publication as well. So, that was my second mistake, but even if that were not enough, I had managed to make it even better. We send the mechanism on the twelfth of December, absolutely insane. Everyone is out celebrating. Nobody is really going to think. The kiss of death, we nearly went broke. So, that was a big, big lesson, big mistakes you shouldn't make.

I think the biggest mistake of all was not what I did. It was the conceit. I think one of the big, big problems with business, the big problem and I see it all the time particularly in mergers and acquisitions which are mostly done for reasons of ego, people do things for reasons of ego.

So, I should have gone to Sylvester Stone who was far cleverer than I was and said, "Sylvester, what's the trick with this publication?" I should have asked him why he wants to sell it as well, but I was just stupid. I was a stupid fool.

One of the things that I could say about myself, when I was very, very young, my mother had a friend, well, she had a lover actually who was a wonderful doctor from Vienna. She told me this after he died, Louis Versanne, wonderful man, and she said, "Louis was very fond of you." I said, "Really? I never knew it." She said, "Well, he was. He once said something very interesting to me."

I said, "What was that?" She said, "Louis said to me, 'That boy will do very well, but only when he gets much older.'" I'm 73 now. I'm hoping to get successful fairly soon.

Michael: Yeah, you will.

Drayton: I have this ego. You see, I thought I was wonderful.

Michael: That'll get anyone in trouble, the ego. All right, magazines, when I hear you talk about magazines and then I've heard you talk about Bill Jamie. Tell me about Bill Jamie.

Drayton: Bill is wonderful. Bill approached me quite out of the blue. I don't know how the hell he'd heard of me. I think he'd gone to speak about who was the top copywriter in the UK, and this was 1979, and I just started my public speaking career. He said, "Will you come and talk with me at a convention in Monte Carlo, Monaco?"

I went to Monaco, and we did this thing together. I learned a hell of a lot from him, first of all because he was an absolutely brilliant speaker. He was extremely funny, and one of the things about most people who speak about business is that they are bloody boring. I learned then not that it surprised me, but I determined then that if I was going to be a good speaker, I was going to be extremely entertaining.

My old boss, we used to say, "You can't bore people into buying, and you can't bore people into learning." So, Bill was terribly witty. He didn't just come over in his speaking, although I do remember some of the things he'd say would just make me roar.

Somebody said to him, "Sir, how do you feel about long copy, Bill?" Bill smiled and paused and he said, "Well, nobody ever complained that *Gone with the Wind* was too long."

Michael: But, that wittiness was in his copy, too, right?

Drayton: That's what I was going to say is that this came out in his copy. I was actually doing a webinar yesterday where I went through a number of things, but I went through three of Bill's copy openings, and I didn't go through this one, but I remember. I went to visit him and his partner in San Francisco, and we spent a couple of hours going through all those old files, and he gave me lots of stuff to take away.

There was one thing he wrote for Andy Warhol's Interview magazine, which I thought was vastly clever and funny. It began, "When they seat you next to Bette Midler, do you ask her what her brother Bobby's doing, or do you just say, could you pass the salt?" He was doing wonderfully.

Michael: I ordered that collection I think. Someone was selling it. I think it was maybe Boardroom or someone from Boardroom was selling a collection of bests. I have that.

I know he made money, and he charged his big upfront fees for doing the copy, but do you know if like the Warhol magazine was successful? Were all of his pieces winners?

Drayton: I don't believe all of anybody's pieces are winners. In fact, I know that all of his pieces were not winners. The reason I say that is Bill had three prices he charged. His minimum price when I knew him really well was \$20,000. That was just for writing the copy.

If the copy beat what it was tested against, it was \$30,000. If it was a new publication and it beat what it was tested against, it was \$40,000. So, the clear implication is that it didn't always work.

I was talking to a guy. I don't know if you know Perry Marshall. I had a few minutes with Perry. I said, "Not all my copy works," and then I said, "To be honest, about 97% of it does." So, I'm not tested to the same rigorous degree that Bill was. I mean, it's the most competitive market. It must be the subscription test group.

I'm just taking on a client myself, and I'm already worried about would I be able to do the tricks.

Michael: How do you charge? You have to charge an upfront fee.

Drayton: I just charge a fee. If I had to list my many shortcomings, the first one would be I'm absolutely lousy at charging. I don't charge anything like the money that people charge in America. At the moment, I'm rejigging everything I'm doing, and I'm probably going to change my charging.

I am starting to do things on the basis of charging them either a royalty or a share of the business. I've got one guy who has got a product, and I won't do it unless he gives me fifteen percent of the profit. It's as simple as that.

Michael: So, a lot of people came to Jamie, people who wanted to start publications, new publications, so it was really nothing to test it against.

Drayton: Yes, in a lot of cases, but I'm going back to what you're saying about Interview. Oddly enough, I was saying something I put out two or three days ago, that Bill was widely regarded as the best copywriter of his time, and Denny Hatch sent me something today saying, "I beg to disagree."

I sent something back. I very carefully didn't say, "I thought he was the best copywriter of his time." I actually thought he had a very narrow compass, and Bill said himself, "I write for people like me," which is wonderful, but that's all right if you can do that.

I was going through about seven different pieces of copy that I'd written myself with Perry today, and I started by talking about something that sells for one pound ninety-nine, which is a model of a London bus.

I also mentioned I'd written copy to sell Liab, which is an airplane that sells for millions of dollars. I sold an enormous range of things, but the only damn thing I would say about myself. I sold about just anything you can think of, and quite a few things you can't.

America tends to be more specialized, but certainly Bill only did one thing.

Michael: He did magazines.

Drayton: Gene Schwartz, I was unaware he sold the piano course. When I knew Gene Schwartz, and just about every copy that you see for Gene, it's a self-publication. You take plate and make these. Again, he specializes in certain areas. John Carleton is the same. The only thing I would say is I don't specialize. If you want to sell it, I'll sell it for you.

Michael: Okay, that's great. We're on number eleven, My First Dealings with Real Crooks, when I learned again to keep an eye on the money.

Drayton: Oh boy, yes. One of the things that we did in that business was that we decided.

Michael: In what business?

Drayton: This is the same business, the one I had with Martin, the one that had the newsletter. It had lots and lots of things, and one of the things we discovered is that the hit parade in Sweden was about seventy percent the same as the hit parade in England, but about two or three months later.

So, what we did was we did copies of British picks, and we put them into Rex, the news agents in Sweden so that we could be there with copies of the hits that were about to appear. It was quite a good idea except that the guy that we put in charge of it - I remember to this day, a guy called George Tab – was a bloody thief, and ripped us off something shocking. He was a charming man. I couldn't believe it. We actually sort of figured.

We saw that he was stealing, stealing like mad. We should have been making money. We weren't, and we could have been in serious legal trouble. I didn't see him. He used a weapon, which I recommend to everybody. He just sat there and cried. So, he cried.

Then, there was another guy. There were quite a few of these rogues that came over. They were the real suede shoe artists that came over from the states, and some of these guys get businesses which eventually are going to be very good, but they rob them blind so they never get off the ground.

This guy had the idea of going into the German market, and selling frozen food by delivery, which is not a bad idea. It's a perfectly valid business model, and the trick was you sold people the freezer to put the frozen food in. One way or another, you made a lot of money. I put about 20,000 pounds into that business, and boy that vanished as well.

So, I got well ripped off. I was a very trusting person, very, very trusting. One of my partners in the eventual business that I did do well in which was the advertising and direct marketing agency, said, "Listen to my stories." I've known him for a long time, and he quoted to me Samuel DeFoe in Robinson Crusoe who said, "The mariner to sail with is he who has been shipwrecked, because he knows where the reefs are."

I was learning where all the reefs are at some considerable personal expense. I should have kept an eye on the money. The next thing that happened to me was one of the things that we were making an absolute bloody fortune on was selling fire extinguishers.

This is a deal I discovered by watching what David Geller was doing in America. What he was doing was selling fire extinguishers through agents, door to door agents, and the deal was that you sold the agents the fire extinguishers and said, "You can make so many dollars a week. If you don't succeed, just send them back and we'll give you your money back."

So, this is based on a very simple fact of human cycle, which is that people think they can sell them, can't be bothered, feel ashamed and don't ask for their money back. That's as simple as that.

We went into this business, and we were making an absolute bloody fortune.

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Michael: Were you selling the fire extinguishers to dealers?

Drayton: We were selling to our agents.

Michael: The agents were putting a crew together to go out and do direct sales.

Drayton: In theory, that's what they were supposed to do, but most of them didn't.

Michael: You were selling an opportunity.

Drayton: I was selling an opportunity. It was doing extremely well, and then one day there was an article in a national news article in People, which as millions of readers, which said that these fire extinguishers we were selling, which were actually aerosol. That was interesting. They were among the first aerosol fire extinguishers. They said they were dangerous.

They tested these extinguishers with some firemen, and they've got photographs and they were dangerous. Of course, my cash flow went right into. By the most bizarre coincidence, it was a girl who was working for me. She was really the editor of the business ideas letter, which by that time we'd managed to source out, she said, "You know they're not going to believe this." She said, "This newspaper actually used some firefighters from Wimbledon," which is where I live, and I know these firefighters, "and the tests were rigged. They were prepared to testify they were rigged."

Furthermore, the newspaper said, "These extinguishers do not adhere to British standard number 1562A," and the thing was there was no British standard for aerosol fire extinguishers. It was a rigged test, and they refer to a standard that didn't exist or was not relevant.

So, I then went to a lawyer to say, "Look here, what do you think about this?" The lawyer put his fingers together in a steeple, in the way the lawyers did and looked at me over them and said, "You will undoubtedly recover, Mr. Bird." I said, "What do you mean I will undoubtedly recover?" He said, "You'll undoubtedly recover the damages, considerable damages." I said, "Considerable, like what?"

He said, "45,000 pounds or something like." I said, "Oh, that's good. How long will that take?" He said, "Oh, these newspaper Johnnies, they tend to stick these things out. I would say a couple of years." "Bloody hell, I'll be broke in six weeks." He said, "Well, I'm sorry about that. My fee is (inaudible)," and I was broke in six weeks.

Michael: So, you didn't hire him.

Drayton: At the time, I didn't have the money. We used to spend our nights in discotheques, the sort of sex life that people dream of. I used to wake up every morning and go to pub and market and drink champagne. It was wonderful. It lasted – as I said, my first experience of being libeled. You can't meet people with big pockets and no scruples, and we went broke.

What happened then, I learned a tremendous amount from. From some of the rogues that I've met, I had met a very, very sharp accountant, and the accountant drove up to see me in his Rolls Royce. I said, "What should I do?" The first thing was that we'd done all sorts of things with our expenses that we shouldn't do. He said, "First thing you ought to do is lose your books."

I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Just say you left them in the car, and somebody stole them." I said, "I can't say that." He said, "Why not?" I said, "It's not true." He said, "Well, who can prove it's not true?" I should have taken his advice, but I didn't.

Then, the next thing he said, "Since you're going broke, make sure you can steal as much money as you can out of the business." I said, "No, I don't really want to do that. So, tell me what's going to happen." Eventually, I went to a lawyer who specialized in liquidations of

somebody going broke, and I asked his advice. I said, "Tell me how this happened when a company is liquidated."

He said, "Well, there's a creditors' meeting, and they all get together, and they vote on who is going to be the liquidator." I said, "What is a liquidator?" He said, "The liquidator is the person who takes your assets and sells them. What you want is a joint liquidation, or even better, your own liquidator who will look on you very, very favorably and not pry too carefully into some of the things you've done, instead of whether you've paid your tax right, whether your expenses were right."

He explained it to me. He said, "You'll never get your own liquidator because the Inland Revenue, the IRS in America, they are the main creditors. They are never going to give you your own liquidator."

I then, went around London, and I've got some friends of mine, and I would say, "Hey, would you like to be a creditor?" They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Give me a bill for services rendered, which I won't pay, so I will owe you money. Come to the creditors' meeting, and vote for me, and also here are one or two things you'd like to say to the people who are trying to get the liquidation."

What I discovered was that all these people in liquidation business were crooks, and what they would do is they would take the assets and sell them off very, very cheaply, and pocket a lot of money. They didn't give a damn about the creditors, and the creditors would never get any money or very little.

When it came time for the creditors' meeting, my partner Martin was so frightened, he wanted to leave the country. I was terrified. I said, "I'm going to stick it out," because there were a lot of very angry people. One guy came upon me and said, "I'm going to break your legs." I was frightened, but eventually I sat down and made the best speech of my life up to that point.

I looked at everyone and said, "I'm very sorry about this. We didn't intend this to happen, but I'm looking around the room and as far as I can make out, everyone here is over eighteen, and most of you are over 21. So, you're old enough to understand that sometimes businesses go wrong. We're very, very sorry, blah, blah, blah."

I got my shills, the people that I recruited, to ask the main villain – there's a man called Phillips who was famous for defrauding to get the

liquidation. So, when he stood up and asked questions, I got my people in the back saying, "Tell me Mr. Phillips, tell me how much did the creditors get from your last liquidation?"

Michael: What did he say?

Drayton: He said, "rrrrrrr," (mumbling) and we got a joint liquidation.

Michael: That's good.

Drayton: A man came up to me, a very famous advertising man in England, and he came up and shook me by the hands, and he said, "I'd like to shake you by the hand Dray because undoubtedly one day you'll be a millionaire," which of course in those days, a million was quite a lot of money. So, I was very heartened. A lot of people turned up and I managed to survive, and then I spend the next seven years going mad, but the lesson I could have learned from this was very, very soon.

My lesson thirteen, I learned to keep my businesses separate. I had all the businesses under on umbrella, absolutely bloody fateful. I had an eight year lease on number 100 New Bond Street, and I think most people heard of Bond Street, the shopping center or shopping streets in London. Just owning that lease, I could have lived off of that for twenty years.

But, it went down with everything else, and was sold by this ghastly liquidator, who actually the day after the liquidation, his cousin came in and said, "Take a look at the furniture." They even looked at the books. They were absolute rogues.

Michael: Tell me about this seven years in the wilderness. What was that all about? How old were you now?

Drayton: I was then 34.

Michael: Had you worked with Ogilvy yet?

Drayton: I never worked with Ogilvy, very interesting. When I was at the agency I mentioned where I got the job because Charlie Sarchy wanted more money, that was a highly political agency, and they were at each other's throats.

Eventually, the man that had hired me who was an American called Joe Sufko, actually quite a legend in his day, said to me one day,

“Come and have lunch, kid.” So, he took me to lunch, and he said, “Have a drink.” I said, “I’ll have a white wine.” He said, “No, have a real drink.” This guy was a real drinker. He said, “Have a scorpion.” I said, “What’s a scorpion?” He said, “Brandy and Crème de Menthe.”

So, I had a large one. He said, “You’re going to lose your job because there’s a big fight, and the other people are going to win, and you’re not going to win. You’ll be out,” but the other people who are going to win were very nice. One of them had worked for Ogilvy.

I had been reading Ogilvy and studying Ogilvy, and he said, “Why don’t you go and work for David Ogilvy? I’ll write you a testimonial.” I wrote a letter to David Ogilvy, which I wish I’d kept because it must have been very, very good.

I remember how it began. It said, “Dear Mr. Ogilvy, you’ve never heard of me, but I know I have a talent I know that you prize. I know how to make people buy things.” I sent him five examples of my work because I seen that that is what he asked for when he was asking for people wanting to join him. I told him who I was, what I can do, and I sent him three testimonials, and I got a reply back instantly saying, “My head of international operations, Gene Pummel, will be in London next week, and he would like to meet you.”

I didn’t go to the meeting because at that time my first marriage had broken up, and I still had three fairly young children. I decided I didn’t want to go to America, and I think I made the right decision for my family, but for myself because now I’ve dealt with lots of people in the states and I’ve been to the states many time, and I used to sit on the main board of the Ogilvy group and so on. So, I know I would have done very well in America.

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Michael: So, if you got hired, you would have worked in America?

Drayton: Oh, yeah. I would have worked in New York.

Michael: When his main guy wanted to meet with you, were you to come to America to meet with him?

Drayton: Oh, no, he was coming to England. I just decided I didn’t want to do it.

Michael: Was he established back then in the UK?

Drayton: Oh yeah, well, you see, David's agency was set up by a partnership of two agencies, H&A Bensen and Mather and Crowder, and it was really arranged because David's elder brother Francis was the boss of Mather and Crowder. It was much later on that Mather and Crowder and H&A Bensen were merged together to become Ogilvy Bensen and Mather.

The agency that was funded by these two agencies, in America, David's original agency was called Ogilvy, Bensen and Mather. Then, eventually Bensen was taken over and the name disappeared. That's when it became Ogilvy and Mather.

But, by that time, David was already a legend on Madison Avenue, and I knew people who had worked for him. I read his book, and I learned from it. I just thought he was the bee's knees, but I didn't take that job. Then, I was saddled with massive debts after the fall out. The group of companies went broke.

In February of that year that we went broke, I at the times Business News was one of the business magazine, and I owed so much money to the tax people. I'd married a very beautiful girl who was a princess from New Zealand, but who had also actually left New Zealand. She was very beautiful, very much like Ava Gardner. She had gone to Australia. She had been a top model. She was extraordinarily talented person.

The year before I met her, she was voted top model in Australia. She was a world class dancer with the Katherine Dunham Ballet. She was extremely able and talented, and I met her and fell in love with her, but she was as mad as a hatter.

Michael: Did you have children with her?

Drayton: No, the whole thing was the saddest experience of my life to be honest because I fell in love with her. She fell in love with me, and I didn't realize until about six months after the marriage that she suddenly went completely bonkers and started attacking me and God knows what. I stayed with her for seven years, but one of the problems was that her previous husband had been a millionaire, and she really knew how to spend money, and I had no money.

I couldn't work in my own name because I owed so much money to the tax people. So, between 1970 and 1977, I operated financially and personally under a false name. I was David D McMann as far as the taxes were concerned.

That was the name of her previous husband was McMann. It was really funny, but these seven years were very valuable to me. Let me just do point fourteen, and then I'll talk to you about the seven years.

Point fourteen, my second experience of a firm going broke, this happened because I was approached by the man who invented the Bullworker, a man called Gert Kolbel who was a very, very stubborn man, also a body building expert.

We used to use Cassius Clay as a model for our advertising for the Bullworker, and he approached me and said, "I've got a new product. Would you like to sell it?" I said, "Yes," and I took the product, and I started selling it, and it was going like gangbusters and then two things happened. One was a mistake of mine, and the other was something I had no control over.

We were importing these things from Germany, and I had no control over the fact that in April, suddenly the pound took a nosedive against the Deutsche Mark, I mean really took a nosedive. It was devalued considerably, about twenty percent.

So, my cost to sell ratio went up. Previously, I had made a decision which prove to be fateful, but quite a learning experience. I had been looking at all the response rates I was getting from the various papers I was advertising in. I discovered that one of them, which is called The Sun was producing inquiries at a far lower rate than any of the others.

I put all my money into it. What I didn't know was that it was also converting at a far lower rate than all the others. So, I was hit with a double-whammy, and that business went broke, but this was during my seven years in the wilderness.

One of the things that I say in my notes I've learned you can survey under a false name for a long time, and then doing things you don't like is good for you. I had to do all kinds of things to survive. I sold franchises for swimming pools. I acted as a marketing director for swimming pools.

I wrote parts of books for people. I wrote parts of a book about the evolution of the American cowboy. I wrote a book about how the motorcar was developed, parts of a book. I wrote parts of a book on the world weather. I wrote parts of a guidebook for London. I wrote speeches for the chairman of Imperial Foods. I wrote presentations for the Ford Motor Company. I did every bloody thing and anything that people asked me to do to make money, and I hated a lot of it.

I sold investments on the telephone. By god, it was good for me because when eventually I started after all these years my own agency with my two partners, there was very little that I didn't know. I had made every mistake you could make, and I had done just about anything you could do, not necessarily very well, but well enough to give me a fantastic advantage and to overcome my natural incompetence.

Michael: It was all good experience.

Drayton: Yeah, and then we started this agency with no money, not a penny between us. We all owed money. I owed 10,000 pounds to the tax man. We used to work in the mornings before we went for our various jobs, and then at lunchtime and then in the evening. In no time at all, we couldn't afford an office, which we never had to pay for. It was unbelievable.

In three and a half years, we were the biggest in the business. We didn't need anything, but we were really well known because we promoted direct marketing like nothing. Anybody who wants me to stand up and make a speech anywhere, on the steps on Christmas Eve, I'd be there. The opening of an envelope, I'd be there.

I used to write six columns a month for various publications for at least ten years.

Michael: So, all of this, these fifteen life lessons were all before your direct response agency.

Drayton: Yes.

Michael: Why don't we do this? Why don't we stop here, and maybe we'll set up a time that we can do another one? We can do a before/after.

Drayton: My pleasure because there's lots of hilarious stories about that.

Michael: Why don't we do that? We've down about two hours. I've got a lot of great content, and this will be a before the agency. Let's do another one within the next two or three weeks for stories after the agency, or during and after.

Drayton: Wonderful, yes.

Michael: I was on the internet. The guy who invented that Bullworker, now I see what it was, is it Gert Kolbel?

Drayton: Yes, he was from Hanover.

Michael: Is that UK?

Drayton: No, Hanover in Germany.

Michael: Oh, in Germany. This is the product you were selling, this Bullworker, still being sold today.

Drayton: Oh, it is indeed. The man who had the English rights came to me about four years ago, but he wouldn't do what I told him to, so I said, "Well, it's a waste of time talking to you." Now, he wants to sell it. It's a wonderful product. I used to make a joke that I was the Mr. Before in the advertisements.

I tried it for a month. I tried it for 30 days. I put on a solid fourteen pounds of muscle.

Michael: I've seen this. Let's set a time. I'll get with your assistant, or I'll email you direct, and I want you to give me another fifteen stories from the time right when you started your agency, some of the stories that may be case studies and stuff with accounts that you had.

Drayton: It'd be my pleasure.

Michael: It's very nice talking to you. Thank you for taking the time with me. I really appreciate it, and we'll talk soon.

Drayton: Okay, bye.

Michael: Have a good evening.

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Michael: So, let's talk about how you ended up meeting Ogilvy. So, the first letter to Ogilvy, the job you never took, how is it that you even came to think about writing a letter to him? Did you know you wanted to work with him at that time?

Drayton: I had been a fan of his since he wrote his first book. I mentioned in our last talk about the job I got in this agency because Charlie Starchey wanted more money than me. That agency was full of very talented people. One of them is a guy named Peter Mayo who wrote some very successful books that were made into films.

Another was a guy called Allan Parker who is now Lord Parker who became a film maker, made some films that people would recognize. It was also a highly political agency, and I was in the middle of a war. I was on the wrong side, and eventually the guy who ran it, who was an American, a very funny guy name Joe Sacko, took me out to lunch and said, "Have a drink Drayton." I said, "Okay."

He said, "Have a proper drink?" I said, "What do you mean a proper drink?" He said, "Have what I have." He was drinking this mixture of Crème De Menthe and Brandy, and he said, "Look, you're going to get fired because we've lost now." I was very friendly with Peter Mayo who had worked for David Ogilvy.

Michael: In what capacity did he work for him?

Drayton: He had been a copywriter in New York. He writes for Oglivy, and wrote a little testimonial. I wrote for David Ogilvy, and I was very careful to do exactly what I learned I should do. Again, this is a study coming into it. I read that Ogilvy liked people to send him five pieces of work.

So, I wrote a letter wished to god I kept with five pieces of work, and I remember it began with something along the lines of, "Dear Mr. Ogilvy, you never heard of me, but I have a talent that I know you prize. I know how to make people buy things." I sent quite a long letter, and I got a

reply instantly inviting me to have an interview with his international VP who was over in London.

Michael: Was it from him directly?

Drayton: It was from him directly. Actually, I got a reply. I notice the important people do reply directly. I correspond with (inaudible). Everytime I send him an email, I get a reply.

Michael: How did Ogilvy reply, through the mail or phone?

Drayton: He went through the mail because it cost a bloody fortune to phone anyhow, and one thing that David was careful with was money. He's Scottish.

Michael: Were you surprised that he replied?

Drayton: I was thrilled to bits, but I didn't go for the interview, and I didn't do that because at that time I was divorcing my first wife, but I had three young children and I didn't want to go to America and leave them. From a career point of view, I no doubt would have done better in America, but there you are.

Michael: How old were your kids at that time?

Drayton: They would have been seven, eight, nine, something like that, quite young.

Michael: Were you divorced at that time?

Drayton: Oh, yeah. Their mother was looking after them, and she was in Manchester. No, she was in London at that time, and eventually she went to Manchester, but I used to see them fairly regularly.

Then, one day, I was in a pub – where else – in Knights Bridge in London talking to a young man, who might have actually been an advisor. One of the things that I did during my years after (inaudible) is I would act as a sort of temporary creative man for agencies, and I would solve problems for them, and I got quite well paid for it.

I got to know one or two people wow re fascinated by the fact that I knew the mail order business. This guy was one of them, and he started doing quite well working in direct marketing, and we were having a drink, and he said, "You know, you know more about this

direct marketing business than anyone I've ever met. You should start an agency."

I had another friend who had just come back from working I think in France he had also worked in Africa or Malaysia, and he was looking around for what to do, and we got together in a wine bar and got extremely drunk on champagne.

I remember one of them said, "Let's have a partnership one third – one third – one third." Now, I already had the experience of being in a partnership of one third – one third – one third, but I didn't say anything at the time, but when the youngest of the three left, I turned to the man who suggested it, and his name was Glenmore, and I said, "Glenmore, that is probably the more expensive single mistake you will ever make in your life."

He said, "Why?" I said, "Because I think that John would have been very happy to have accepted a minority share because he was younger than both of us."

We went into this agency, and we had absolutely nothing. I was in debt to the England Revenues, living under a false name. John and I can remember had one jacket with a rip in the back, one pair of jeans, and he drove around in a clunked out car which only had one seat in the front. Glenmore was also very short of money.

I had money, but I owed a lot of money, and once again, I put up all the money I had to start the company. I think again, I had about \$700 pounds, and I used to work first thing in the morning, over night, at lunch time to carry on with the jobs we had.

Michael: You three started this agency, and was this specifically a direct marketing agency?

Drayton: We actually applied direct marketing. We did a test. I wrote two letters. One was to sell the other people who might want direct marketing work, and the other one was to sell to people who might want some international advertising because both Glenmore and I had both worked in the international field.

Michael: So, this was your plan on getting clients using actual direct mail.

Drayton: We used direct mail and what happened was – I think we sent out fifty letters. We got twelve replies, and then we'd call up on the phone, and we got three jobs.

One of the people who replied and said, "We're not really interested. Don't call us, we'll call you," was the Reader's Digest Association, but we got enough interest to start the business.

What I did which I think looking back was a smart thing I did which I don't think many people do, this was something new, and people were making money out of it, but nobody was really proselytizing. Nobody was really promoting the idea of direct marketing itself.

So, we started vigorously doing so. We started doing house advertisements, and you may have noticed the advertising agencies never advertise. They don't believe in it, but we got started running advertisement. Then, I started writing articles for the first magazine on the subject, which was called Direct Response Magazine.

Then, we had the idea of running conferences, and again, I wrote a letter to sell these events, one day events, up and down the country, selling the idea of direct marketing.

Michael: What year was this?

Drayton: This was 1977.

Michael: So, you were selling the idea of direct marketing to businesses.

Drayton: We were selling the idea of direct marketing. My idea was the first person who sells the concept if nobody else is selling it owns the concept. You go back to the early days of the advertising business, there's a new book about Albert Lusker who made more money out of advertising than anyone before or since.

The reason Lusker had done so well was that they sold the concept of advertising as salesmanship in print. I studied all this, and I thought, "Wow, nobody else is really selling the concept of direct marketing. We must sell the concept of direct marketing." The other thing I was determined to do was to be everywhere.

So, anybody wanted any comments on direct marketing, I would make it. At one point, I would look through all the marketing magazine, and if I wasn't in them every week, I was bloody furious. We'd go to every

event, but only on the condition that we thought we could get enough business to pay for the cost of attending the event.

We had a rule at that time. We needed a thousand pounds a week to live. I used to say to Glenmore who was a very good salesman, "We need a thousand pounds a week. That's all I want you to think about." Every Wednesday, I would say to him – I still joke about it because we're still friends – "Glenmore, where the fuck is that grand?"

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Michael: How would you guys charge? When you got a client, how did you end up making money with them?

Drayton: We would charge fees because of course with direct marketing, much of which was direct mail, some of it was advertising there was no commission basis as there was with advertising.

So, as a way of making money, the direct marketing agency was not a very good model compared to the advertising model that I was talking to you about in my last talk with you where you had this commission basis.

So, you have to charge fees, and charging fees was quite a difficult job, but again the other principle we have, we charged more than anyone else. I can remember we had offices eventually in Common Garden, and I can remember a man coming in to see me, and I quoted a price to him. He said, "That's very expensive."

I said, "You know something. I can save you a lot of trouble. I can point you in the direction of about eight other agencies within five minutes walk of here, all of them who will charge less than us." Everyone knows if it's cheap it's no good.

I remember the first significant client we ever got. Because we had no money, we used to have to rent an office by the hour. We had this client come in from a big mail order company. We said, "If we get the business, we'll buy them lunch." We got the business, but they were 250 pounds for a mailing package, and we said, "We want 500."

They said, "We don't pay that." We said, "Okay, how about 500 if it works?" So, they said, "All right, you're on." So, then we took them to

lunch. We took them to a pub around the corner called The Crown and Two Chairmen.

We couldn't pay for the lunch. We had no money. We secretary had to persuade the landlord to give us sandwiches and beer. After we got the business, which became our first big client, the client said to me, "We knew very well it wasn't your office." We were pretending it was our office.

We were really, really short of money. We had absolutely nothing, but what we did was the first thing that happened was that I found somebody who needed some creative services on Carnaby Street in London. It's a street full of fashion. We did a deal with them where we didn't pay rent. We paid for the rent by way of giving them creative services.

Then, eventually we had to pay them rent, but we never did because they went broke. Before they went broke, somebody had approached my partner Glenmore, and asked him if he would like to be managing director of quite a big agency. Glenmore came back and said, "You know they've asked me to be managing director."

I don't know why I said this. I must have been crazy in those days. I said, "Why don't you go back to him," his name was Bob something or other, "Go back to him and tell him we'll buy the agency?"

I had done a bit of research, and we'd found out what this agency was actually also owned by a big American agency called Warwick and Legler. The reason for this was Warwick and Legler had accounts in the UK that they wanted handled.

We knew that this agency was in trouble. They had a big account and they lost it. They were losing money. They were just being kept afloat. So, what I did was I had lunch with my partners and the guys from New York, the Warwick Legler guys, and said, "Listen, we'll run the agency for you," because the guy who was running it wanted to retire. He had made his money. He wanted to get out while the getting out was good. We said, "Well run the agency for you, and we'll take it over."

Michael: Did you meet with them in the UK?

Drayton: We had dinner in the UK.

Michael: How many accounts did he have at that time?

Drayton: Not very many, about four or five. I think they were crazy. I've seen a lot of this. I've seen a lot of American companies coming over here thinking it's an easy market, which it really isn't.

Michael: Were these just traditional advertising accounts?

Drayton: They were traditional advertising accounts. Because I had been brought up in traditional advertising, I didn't care what people wanted me to do. You want a commercial? I'll do a commercial. You want some direct mail? I'll do some direct mail. You want an advertisement? You'll get surprised. I'll do that. I'll do anything.

Michael: Would your agency handle all the media buying and everything for your clients?

Drayton: We couldn't for a while because we didn't have sufficient financial status to do so, and eventually, we did a very complicated deal where we borrowed money in order to put on an account to show that we had the status to be able to place advertising. So, at that point, we started making money.

At the same time, we weren't paying anything for our offices again. We were sitting in these smart offices in SoHo in London which really belonged to this other agency.

It was a hilarious experience because the first thing we did is we came in, and I got rid of a lot of people. The agency was overstaffed, and we ran it for quite a while, a better part of a year, and then just before the year came to an end, the people from America contacted us and said, "Look, we don't want to do the deal with you anymore because we found some people to buy the agency."

I was furious because we had put in a lot of work, and what happened was that these people were coming in the next day on a Saturday. On the Friday, I wrote a memorandum to all the staff. The thing is this agency has a lot of vicissitudes and changes. I remember the memo began with the words, "I think you will agree that Gramm McGillis," which was the name of the agency, "May not have been well run, but has been frequently run, and I have news of another change for you."

These three guys were coming in, and I met them the next day and had a chat with them. I said, "Could you tell me something? Have you buy any chance mortgage your houses in order to do this deal?" They

said, “Yes.” I just knew they’d done this because advertising people are really not good business people.

Michael: Were these American guys or UK guys?

Drayton: No, they were UK guys, but quite senior guys, one of the head of account heading (inaudible), which is a big agency. Then, I said to them, “And, tell me something. Have you actually seen the accounts of the agency at Gramm McGillis?” They said, “No.” I said, “Well, you’re in for a very, very interesting ride.” They lost all their money.

Michael: They had already made the investment, came in, and then they lost their money.

Drayton: Yes, what idiots. The one thing that strikes me about business is that I may think I’m stupid, but my god, I’ve met a few people who are even more stupid than I am.

Michael: Who had sold them the agency?

Drayton: This guy, boy he was a smart guy. His name was Bob Carpenter. He sold them a bill of goods, absolutely. They were seduced by the brand name.

Michael: So, what happened?

Drayton: What happened was that we moved out, and of course, we’d been looking around because we didn’t particularly like these offices anyhow. We thought they were too expensive. There was an area of London that was coming up called Common Garden, and you could get cheap offices there, and so we moved into Common Garden. I think there were eight of us, and we had room for fifty other people.

Michael: Did you take some of the people from the agency that went down that you were working with?

Drayton: Absolutely not. There was only one guy there. We couldn’t afford him. He was a brilliant media guy – a very direct man, but the rest of them were a waste of space.

Michael: Who were the eight people?

Drayton: They were people that we’d recruited ourselves from when we began. Of course, by this time, we were beginning to be significant. It took us

three and a half years to get from nothing to being the biggest agency around.

Michael: When you say the biggest, how are you measuring the biggest?

Drayton: In the terms of the amount of business.

Michael: Dollar-wise?

Drayton: Yes, money.

Michael: During these three years, were you still out selling the idea of direct marketing through speaking and writing and stuff like that?

Drayton: That's a very interesting question because one of the things that made a big difference was these events. First of all, we made money after selling the events.

Michael: What was an event?

Drayton: We actually did a thing called the printed shop, and it was a whole day in which most of the day, we analyzed in great detail the process of direct marketing and how it related to retailing, and people loved it. We got business. That's actually the funny thing about these events was that I wrote this mailing, which again I wished I kept which won an award for being the best mailing of the year.

I won an award. We made 10,000 Pounds and we got some business. I hadn't wanted to do any public speaking. I was actually invited to do it. I was terrified because the only time I'd ever spoken in public, I made a complete fool of myself.

Michael: Tell me about it. What happened?

Drayton: Well, what happened was that when we started this business, I turned to my two partners who were younger than me, and I said, "Look here. This is probably a wonderful adventure for you, but for me, this is a real thing. I'm forty years old, and if I don't very well make it now, I never will. So, I'm prepared to walk up and down the street strangling people to make it work."

Some while later, somebody rang up and said, "Well, you come and do a talk to 270 publishers about their mailings." I said, "I'll get back to you." I just said to my partners, "Look, I just can't do this. I've only

spoke once before. I was terrified. I made a complete fool of myself.” They said, “Look, you are the one who is going to walk up and down streets strangling people, so you better do it.”

In order to do it, I had to have either one or two large brandies, and two tranquilizers. I remembered absolutely nothing about what I said, but I said to somebody afterwards, “Was I any good?” They said, “Yes.” I said, “Why?” They said, “Because you knew what you were talking about.”

It’s interesting. One of the things that I have certainly discovered about public speaking is that knowing what you’re talking about is more important than anything else. So, that’s how I started public speaking, but you were saying, “Did we carry on promoting?”

Boy did we carry on promoting. I would say that for a period of fifteen years, I was churning out about six articles or pieces for various publications every month, and I still do.

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Michael: Do you have any of your old stuff or no?

Drayton: Yes, I still have it. It’s fascinating because one of my partners here found these things that were lying around in my office and said, “Hey this is terrific. What is it?” I said, “Oh, that’s something I used to send out to my creative directors. We made it twenty years ago.” He said, “It’s marvelous. We must reprint it.”

I used to send this thing out to fifty odd offices of Ogilvy, and I couldn’t get to all of them. So, I started writing this thing called Common Sense Creative. Of course, very soon, somebody called them bird droppings, but years later, I was speaking at this big event in Melbourne in Australia. A guy came up to me, and said, “I saw all your lectures,” and I got a letter eighteen months ago from a girl in Bangladesh. She said, “I’ve got all these things. I’ve still got them.”

Michael: Since we’re talking about for over those years you were still promoting, you said the start of your public speaking, is that that time you started your public speaking? Was that the reason why, and the writing of the book?

Drayton: I was forced to do it, and once I learned I could do it, I started doing it a little bit better, and I was terrified. I still am terrified. I don't think you're any good if you're not a bit frightened.

Michael: What happened was that John Watson said to me, "Why don't you write a book? Nobody has written a decent book." John Watson was this young copywriter I had met when I was a consultant in this agency. He was the one that actually suggested going into direct marketing. Eventually, we split up, and we split up because once again, there was a three way partnership, and throughout the period of the whole thing, people were at each other's throat, and in particular John and Glenmore who never met each other before were at each other's throats.

There was this wonderful thing I always remember. We were going to do a presentation to Chrysler in Knights Bridge again, and we were downstairs, and John said something so rude about Glenmore, I can't repeat it. He said, "Glenmore is a complete blank, blank, blank. I've had enough of this. I'm leaving."

I remember saying, "John, will you do me a favor and leave after the client presentation." We were always fighting with each other.

Michael: Okay, so you have this presentation with Chrysler. What did John do? What was your responsibility? What was the other guy's?

Drayton: Again, the structure of business is very important. So, the thing that was wrong with the structure of this business, to be honest, was that both John and I were copywriters. John was a brilliant copywriter. We were very combative. So, we duplicated each other's efforts, and in the end, he left.

What happened was he wanted to hire a girl that he met. I said, "It's not a good idea to hire people you know or family members, or this, that and the other. It could get very political." He said, "If you don't let me hire her, I'm leaving." Of course, he was very talented. So, we said, "Oh, all right then."

In no time at all, he was sort of vanishing into dark corners. We'd see him go off with her, and we wouldn't know where they were. Eventually, one day, I called him and said, "I'd like to have a chat with you." We called him into the boardroom in Common Garden, and said, "What are you up to? You're up to something." He said, "I'm not up to anything." I said, "You are."

We had this very extraordinary situation where I thought, “You’re not bloody well leaving this room until you tell us what you’re up to.” Eventually, he admitted he was up to something, and he got someone else to finance him.

In fact, when he was leaving, he actually came up to me and said, “Look, I’ve got no argument with you. Why don’t you come with us?” He then went away, and he built what became the largest marketing agency in Europe.

Michael: Really? What was that called?

Drayton: It was called Watson Ward Albert and Vondel. He was very, very fortunate because he went for growth. I went for profit. He would always say, “This could be bigger. This could be bigger.” I would say, “This could be more profitable.”

Going for growth is sort of an interesting strategy if you’ve got the nerve, but I didn’t have the nerve. I could remember when I was running the Ogilvy direct business in London. That business is up for sale, and it was losing money. It was big. Not as big as we were, but it was big.

Eventually, he managed somehow to sell it to some Italians who must have mad. He did some pretty good deals, and then they sold it to one of the big advertising groups, Omni Com group, and then his agency was running Europe.

Then, he retired, and then he left. Then, he started up again. He’s actually got a business around the corner from me now.

Michael: Did he make millions in the business?

Drayton: I think he did make millions. I don’t know how much he made. I really don’t know how much he made. He was fortunate in that he had a very shrewd advisor, very, very smart man who advised him.

Michael: Did you wish you had gone with him?

Drayton: No, he took it very seriously. I mean, I do take it seriously, but he was very solemn about it. He got out of sense or proportion, but we duplicated each other.

Michael: Let's do about writing the book. Tell me why were you writing a book?

Drayton: Because I was looking at everything that had been written about direct marketing including everything in America. Nowhere could I see something that simple, that described it as simply as John E Kennedy did when he said, "Advertising is salesmanship in print."

In 1981, I went away, and I wrote the whole damn thing in six weeks. It was called *Common Sense Direct Marketing*. The title has changed, but it's still in print today, and it's out in eighteen languages or seventeen languages.

There's a thing called The Institute of Direct Marketing here, and they tell me every year it's been the best-seller.

Michael: You've sold over 200,000 copies?

Drayton: Yes, probably more, and eventually I was approached by one of the top leading business publishers – a firm called Cogan Page. Philip Cogan rang me up and said, "We'd like to publish the book." I said, "All right." We published it ourselves to start with, which reminds me of the old joke about the tailor is always the worst dressed man in the room.

I was very good at selling other people's books, but absolutely bloody useless at selling mine.

Michael: What kind of deal did you negotiate with them as far as royalty? Did they give you money upfront?

Drayton: No money upfront.

Michael: So, ten percent of their wholesales.

Drayton: Of the retail.

Michael: Are you still getting royalties on that?

Drayton: Oh, yes, I still do get royalties. One of the things that happened is I never, ever gave away the copyright. Every year, they would say, "Can you sign this form?" Every year, I would ignore it.

Michael: The publisher wanted the copyright?

Drayton: Of course, yes, but the first copyright was a novel, which I wrote when I was in my twenties, which got very well review, but didn't sell that well. It got into the paperback, but no big deal, and the reason it didn't sell as well as it should was well put by my partner who read it and said, "It's extremely well written, but I'm waiting for something to happen."

There was no real plot, and I think the reason why they Common Sense Direct Marketing book did well is that it is a very easy read, and people have written to me and said, "You know, it's like a novel. I want to know what's going to happen next."

It's really ridiculous because when I wrote the novel, nobody wants to know what's going to happen next, but nothing did.

Michael: What made the book so good? Why was it so unique?

Drayton: It was extremely simple. My model was David Ogilvy's book, *Confessions of an Advertising Man*. I thought, "I'm going to make it interesting." I made it personal. I talked about the fact that I started out with nothing, and I talked about the way I discovered direct marketing.

Then, I tried to say, "This is why it's a good idea because you can measure." I gave examples of all the different kinds of industries and services that could use direct marketing and why. Then, I described how it operates. This is what people want to know. You do this. You do that.

So, I made it extremely simple, and I gave lots and lots of examples. I covered lots of the questions that people ask like, what is positioning? What do mean when you talk about the brand? How do I get a good deal from the media? How do I choose a mailing list? What makes good creative work? What makes bad creative work? How should you deal with a client? How should a client deal with you?

I went to interview a client because as you know, I often do interviews. Not as well as you, but I went to interview a client who said to somebody that he built his business on my book. He was doing about twenty million pounds a year. He said, "I'll tell you what. The book I bought from you years ago is better than the one you've got now. It's the same book, but much bigger. The industries have got much more complicated with the internet and so on, databases and so on."

Michael: Set the stage with your first conversation with Ogilvy, what you were doing at that time. I want to know how you got involved with Ogilvy.

Drayton: What happened was the last team obviously helped promote the agency, and we were really doing very well. We had been approached by eight of the top twenty advertising agencies because they're all thinking, "We better get into this direct marketing stuff, and get it going."

Michael: When they approached you, what did they want?

Drayton: They wanted to buy us.

Michael: Did offers come in?

Drayton: Yes, we would say, "No, not really interested." We had preliminary conversations, but one day somebody wrote a very insulting article in one of the advertising magazines, the only real advertising magazine which is called Campaign, about David Ogilvy.

I then wrote a vigorous defense and said this man wasn't fit to kiss Ogilvy's ass, and the next thing that happened was the phone rang in my office. I picked it up and the voice at the other end said, "Hello, this is David Ogilvy." I put my hand over the phone and said, "David Ogilvy's on the phone." I was so pleased as punch my hero was ringing me up.

He said, "I just wanted to thank you for that very kind letter you wrote." He said, "By the way, is Glenmore still with you?" I said, "No, no. He's a consultant," because I had gotten rid of Glenmore, which is another story because he was a big spender. He said, "Oh, he's a consultant." He said, "(inaudible) for being unemployed." I probably agreed.

Well, the next day, I had another call, and it was from a man called Peter Warren. He said, "I'm Peter Warren." I knew who he was. He was the highest paid man in British advertising, the chairman of the Ogilvy group.

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Drayton: So, I liked the idea, and the one thing, I made one mistake. I thought, "Wow, they've got big accounts. We'll be able to start doing direct marketing for all these big accounts." That didn't happen at all. The only account we ended up with was American Express, which is our

biggest account. It was hard finding one. We actually took the agency over.

The first thing that was funny was that somebody sitting there that I fired previously from our own agency. I thought, "I'm going to have to fire him again." The only thing was the clients wanted their money back. American Express, for instance, wanted money back.

I rang up Peter Warren and I said, "Look here, Peter. I know the basis of this business is mail order, satisfaction or you money back, but some of your bloody clients want their money back. This is ridiculous. This is a terrible deal."

He said to me, "Oh, let's go and have dinner, and we'll talk about it." He was such a charming man, but he was also an exceptionally accomplished drinker. He could drink anyone under the table, very difficult to negotiate with.

He said, "What do you want me to do?" I said, "Well, we've got a three year deal. Make it a five year deal." We just sat there over dinner, and changed the deal, and very satisfying it was for me in the end.

Michael: So, what was the deal you made? You got rid of the other guys because you didn't like them, and you accepted a deal to run the Ogilvy direct marketing agency – for five years?

Drayton: For five years, and it was just the period too in which I got paid. I gave away about forty percent of the money to my staff.

Michael: Did you get a salary?

Drayton: Oh yes. What really happened was that David Ogilvy came over to meet one of our clients, and I got along very well with him, and I also got along very well with the man who was running the business, a guy called Bill Phillips.

Someone stole a wonderful picture, which is hilarious, of me gazing at David when he came to talk to our staff. I look like a star struck moon calf gazing up at him. God he was brilliant with clients because you know how I was talking about how you do your research? He did his research.

One of our accounts was the British (inaudible) who sold stamps to people, and the first remark to the man, our client was, "Tell me what

happened to George the Fifth's stamp collection." So, he had done his research. He knew that George the Fifth was very fond of collecting stamps. That's the kind of man he was. There are many other very interesting things about him.

Michael: Did he dress impeccably all the time?

Drayton: David, no. He used to wear old well-made clothes. His only distinguishing mark was he always had these red braces. He was known as Old Red Braces.

Michael: What do you mean "red braces?"

Drayton: Suspenders you'd say in America.

Michael: I see. Was he a drinker?

Drayton: Not particularly.

Michael: Was he married with a family?

Drayton: I still talk to his widow. We just got along extremely well. After this thing, I went to a meeting in Amsterdam. I was late, and I had some aftershave on. I had been running. I had gone to the wrong office, and this, that and the other, sort of all over fluster.

I got into this office, and David was sitting having some tea rather than having a meeting. He said, "Come here. Come sit next to me." So, I went and sat next to him, and he said, "My god, is that you?" I smelt of aftershave. He said, "You smell like a whore's boudoir." I said, "How can you tell? How do you know?"

We immediately had this relationship where there were lots of jokes, and then he said, "How much did you get for the agency?" I said, "I have no bloody idea. It's taken me forever to pay for it."

Then, we went into this meeting, and I saw him. Wow, if he didn't approve of somebody, they knew it. So, this meeting were all these people were doing presentations.

Michael: What were they presenting?

Drayton: What they were supposed to do is to say, "This is our office. This is what we've done this year, blah, blah, blah," like all heads of country.

This man from Switzerland stood up and started talking, and did just a terrible presentation. "This is our office building, blah, blah, blah," and then after a while, David said in a very loud voice, "I can't stand another minute of this. I'm leaving."

Michael: Were these Ogilvy owned agencies?

Drayton: Yes, they were all the Ogilvy owned.

Michael: And, they're presenting like what's been going on with their offices.

Drayton: Yes, what's been going on, but as I got to know him, there things he did that just made me laughed. I didn't realize that he liked me, but he did like me. I realized this when what happened was the guy in New York rang me up and said, "Could you persuade David to do a video for South Africa?" He refuses to go there because he has very strong views about race. I said, "Why would he do it for me?"

My partner knew. He said, "He loves you, you know?" I said, "Does he?" He said, "Oh, he thinks the world of you. You ring him up. He'll do it." So, I rang him up and said, "Will you come and do a video? I'll buy you lunch."

We went to this video studio, and all the time, David was bumming cigarettes off the camera man. He was always stealing other people's cigarettes and cigars. So, he took his jacket off to reveal these red suspenders.

He had no tie on or anything, and he said to me, "You know why I do that? Why don't you take your jacket off?" I said, "No, David." He said, "So, I won't think I'm an old fart." So, at the end he said, "I'll tell you what. I'll buy you lunch." So, I said, "All right."

So, we went to this restaurant, and when the bill came, he said, "Do you take American Express?" The waiter said, "No, monsieur." David looked at me in a state of panic and said, "God, we're going to have to pay cash. It's 47 francs," or whatever it was." I said, "It's not 47 David. It's 147. You're living in the past." He said, "I preferred it then."

He said, "By the way, have you got any cash?" So, I had to pay for my own lunch. He went back to the office and I said, "Thanks very much for lunch." So, then he invited us to stay in his chateau.

Michael: Who is us, your whole staff or just yourself?

Drayton: This was my wife, myself, and off we went. He's got this marvelous chateau.

Michael: Had you remarried at that time after the seven year deal?

Drayton: I was on my third marriage by this time.

Michael: Okay, so this is your third wife.

Drayton: Who actually David Ogilvy liked a lot, but we drove to the chateau. I don't drive, but she had a Lotus Esprit Turbo, very flashy car. I had a speech in Cannes. We drove up to the chateau, and David came out and said, "What is this?" My wife said, "This is a Lotus." He said, "Wonderful, can I go for a drive in it?" She said, "Well, you can't drive it, but you can go for a drive."

The next day, he went for a drive in the local village, and suddenly David said to her, "How do you wind the window down?" Press that button, and down went the window, and he waved at somebody rather like a king, in a very lordly fashion, but he turned to my wife and said, "That's the local mayor. He hates me." He was such a character.

Michael: He was a good guy.

Drayton: Well, he was a good guy if he liked you. If he didn't like you, he wasn't very nice at all, but he was very becoming. The first real business connection I had with him after I had sold the business, the advertising agency in London rang me up and said, "Would you be willing to look at this piece of copy that we're about to run for the Save the Children Fund? Could you comment on it?"

I said, "Yes," and so I looked at the copy, and I wrote a little report. I said, "This advertisement is nothing seriously." David Ogilvy talks about advertisements which are headless wonders. That's advertisements without headlines. I said, "This is a tailless wonder. There is no request for action at the end."

I sent it off to them, and the next day, the phone rang, and David said, "Hello. They are very interested in the comments you made about this advertisement which I wrote," and he said, "You're quite right. I will rewrite it."

Oh god, we had so many funny conversations. He was a complete workaholic. He rang me up one day ten-thirty in the morning. He rings me up and says, "David here." I said, "I recognize your voice." He said, "Look, what's wrong with Ogilvy and Mayer." I said, "It's funny you should ask me that. That's a subject I've been talking about." He said, "Why don't you write me a report about it?" I said, "I will." He said, "By the way Merry Christmas." It was ten-thirty on Christmas morning, and the funny thing was that I had already been asked.

This was after the business was bought after Martin Sora. I was writing something for Martin. I was able to combine the two. Also, he was the most insecure man I had ever met.

Michael: Tell me why.

Drayton: Two examples – one which was one of the greatest moments in my life, but we were sitting in London, and he was about to make a speech to all the assembled big wigs from the Ogilvy group and all the agencies that they owned, and we were at the table with David and his wife and two people from an agency that they owned, a man and his wife.

David was fiddling and not eating and this that and the other, and I could tell he was very nervous. I said, "Look, David. Everybody loves you. Don't worry." He was just really, really nervous.

The other thing that I'll never forget was that he rang me up one day, and he said, "I'm very worried about money." He was always worried about money. He said, "Would you be willing to do some seminars with me?" I've never been so flustered in my life. I said, "You don't need to bloody well get me involved, David. I can always find lots of people who would be delighted to hear you say anything." He was very, very insecure.

Michael: Did you do seminars with him?

Drayton: No, I never did. Again, I had a very flattering moment. I was doing a speech to the heads of office in Barcelona, and he was there. I had never spoken in front of him, and I was absolutely terrified. I didn't sleep a wink that night, and I got down to do my talk, and he wasn't there.

I was so disappointed. I thought, "Oh, god, I didn't sleep for nothing, bloody hell." I stood up and started speaking, and then he came in.

After somebody had told me what had happened. He had been interviewed by a journalist, and the journalist said to him, "Tell me, Mr. Ogilvy, what's the worst interview you've ever had?" David said, "This one." The journalist said, "Why?" He said, "Because I've got a friend next door who is about to make a speech, and I'd rather listen to him than talk to you. Good morning."

He rang me up one day and he said, "Why do you go around the world giving away all of our secrets?" I was running around making speeches like that. I said, "David, for forty years, you've been telling people exactly what to do in considerable detail. They can't do it because they're owned by Rudyard Kipling because the last line talks about they copy this, they copy that, they copy the other, but they can not copy my mind. No body can copy your mind. You know, you and I know we can talk until we're blue in the face, and people still don't know how to do it."

He used to ring me up and make fun. He rang me up one day and said, "Morning. David here." I said, "Yes, David." He said, "Just back from making another speech, eh?" He was funny.

The second time I was staying with him, his wife had to go to Paris with the children. She said, "I'm going away now. Is there anything would you like me to get the cook to prepare while I'm away?" I said, "Well, when we were driving through, we saw a hare, which you don't see very often. It would be lovely to have some jerked hare." She said, "It's impossible to get jerked hare, but we could do rabbit (inaudible)." David said, "I hate rabbit. We were poor when I was young. We had rabbit all the time. Rabbit will never be served in this house."

So, the next day, when dinner came and they served rabbit, David looked at me and said, "This is your doing."

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Michael: What does rabbit taste like?

Drayton: A bit like chicken. Well, during the war, you'd cook chicken with rabbit, during the Second World War, and they used to serve rabbit disguised as chicken. I can remember my mother who was a very fine cook, my parents had a very good restaurant in their pub, won a bet with somebody when she went to a restaurant and said, "This is rabbit, not chicken."

Michael: So, if you were to sum it up, what was remarkable about him?

Drayton: Well, two people who knew him very well, both of whom I still talk to. One is Joel Rayfelson, who co-wrote a book with the other one whose name is Ken Roman. Ken is the chairman of the Ogilvy group. I've got to do an interview with him. You reminded me.

They'd written a book called *Writing that Works*. I had seen Joel quite a few times. One time I was in Chicago for some reason, and I had lunch with Joel. I said, "What do you think made David so remarkable?" He said – he was an incredible work. He said, "I'm a hard worker. I would go in an office on Saturday to do some work, and David would be there. I would drive past on Sunday and the light would still be on." He was a very, very hard worker.

I asked Ken Roman over breakfast in New York once, "What do you think made David so remarkable?" Ken said to me, "Look, I've done pretty well, and I think the reason I've done pretty well is that I don't give up. If it doesn't work first time, I'll try again. If it doesn't work, then I'll keep going. I'll keep going for a couple of years. I just won't give up. David never gives up – twenty years, thirty years, he never gives up."

One person I don't know or didn't know very well is no longer with us, was the man who succeeded David as the chairman of the Ogilvy group, Jacque Elliott. I was having lunch with a friend of mine, who was actually a director of Jay Walter Thompson. I was talking to him about David.

He said, "Oh, Jacque Elliott told me that the thing that was remarkable about David was that not that he was a great copywriter, not this, not that. He knew precisely and in some considerable detail exactly what kind of business he wanted to have before he had it. He was a multi-faceted individual."

Michael: How did you end up getting on the Ogilvy board? What did that mean?

Drayton: He went to board meetings in exotic spots. What happened was after I had been there for quite a short time, Bill Phillips was replaced by Ken Roman. Ken Roman, for whatever reason, rang me up and said, "Look, I'd like you to take on a wider role, and I'd like you to be the worldwide creative director of Ogilvy."

I see this as a lie. They asked me to come to New York and talk to him. I went to New York, and had breakfast with him at the Hyatt. He said to me, "What do you think you could do for Ogilvy?" It was a very interesting question.

I said, "I don't know. I'll think about it." I went to him, and I wrote him a memo. I said, "Look, number one, I think that you have all these offices around the world. Some are good. Some are not so good, but there is no coherent central policy, and I think that I could instill a sense of common purpose to people. The other thing I think I can do because I've been doing it for quite a long time is I think I can help people raise their creative standard. The thing that gets people excited is the thing that they say or the thing they hear or the thing they look at."

So, he rang me up in London. He said, "I'd like you to be the world-wide creative director and vice chairman, but there's one other job I would like you to do." I said, "What's that?" He said, "I'd like you to handle the American Express business." So, I said, "All right."

Michael: Was that good news to you?

Drayton: Well, it was good news and bad news. It was good news because it was obviously sour premier account. It was bad news because it was a very tricky piece of business. As it happens, I was fortunate. The people at American Express never noticed how useless I was. I still have some very good friends from American Express. In fact, in the end, they hired me to do a training program for their senior marketing people.

Michael: So, you accepted the world wide creative position?

Drayton: Yes, I did all that. I used to walk around like a maniac. In fact, it's really funny. I was talking earlier on today with the present chief executive of Ogilvy Warren which is the name of Ogilvy May. He was a director. He now is a global kind of Ogilvy Warren.

I used to go and visit him, and transfer when he ran transfer. He was running around and I said, "You remind me of me. You're running around like a maniac."

Michael: Did more money come with that?

Drayton: That's a very good question. I think I'm a very bad negotiator, but this is one of the rare occasions when I was a good negotiator. I thought, "

Well, what I should (inaudible)? No idea.” I thought about it, and then eventually I rang up Ken and I said, “How much would you normally pay somebody running half of a business turning over however many million it was.”

That way, I got a very big salary. In those days, a lot of money, the first year, I managed to pull a sum not unadjacent to a half a million dollars.

Michael: How many years were you handling that?

Drayton: I handled it for about five years, I think. I was only with him for about eight years because what happened was that when I was on the board – the two interesting things about the board – there were twenty-three people on the board, which I thought was ridiculous. I think you can do anything with twenty-three people.

I think a lot of it was to do with status. I remember when I was put on the board. I got lots of congratulatory messages from people all over the place, and they only person who wasn't (Inaudible) was me.

I noticed when I went to the first board meeting that the person who took more notes than anyone else was David Ogilvy, which reminded me of how I started. It was all about study. He was still studying and still learning. Eventually, Martin Sora came along and bought the business.

Michael: Describe who he was at that time.

Drayton: Martin Sora was an accountant who had been the financial partner and Sarchi and Sarchi. Sarchi and Sarchi were two guys who built up a hugely successful agency, first of all in Britain, secondly around the world. One of them is now Lord Sarchi, and I think the other one, Charles, is not. They're very, very famous in this business.

They also were very instrumental in helping Margaret Thatcher win a couple of elections, and if you were to live near where I live in Chelsea, you walk down the road for fifteen minutes, and you've come across an enormous beautiful building which is the Sarchi Gallery because Charles Sarchi put all his money into art. He was a very famous art connoisseur.

Michael: Was Sarchi and Sarchi comparatively as big as Ogilvy and Mathers worldwide?

Drayton: No, they were not, but they were the fastest growing agency. They were a phenomenon. They grew incredibly fast, and they over reached themselves. They got so pleased with themselves that at one point, they made a bid for the Midland Bank, which is one of the five big banks. They were hugely ambitious.

At that point, everyone said, "Look, this is ridiculous," and they lost a bit of credibility. They were actually thrown out because they were a public company. They went to work and they staffed at again, a firm called M&C Sarchi, which did extremely well again, a worldwide agency. It must be the only agency I can think of offhand that's not Sarchi & Sarchi, M&C Sarchi, both very successful agencies worldwide. So, they were pretty remarkable people.

Well, what happened with Martin Sora is that he left Sarchi & Sarchi, and he bought a small company called Wire and Paper Products, which I think made supermarket trolleys, and he used this as a financial vehicle to start acquiring businesses.

After a while, he acquired Jay Walter Thompson, which at that time was the third largest agency in the world, and he did it because he had noticed two things. Number one, they were not well managed financially, and number two, they had property in Tokyo which was worth, I think, 800 million dollars, and which on its own was able to finance the whole deal.

Once he bought Sarchi & Sarchi, he then looked around, and wanted to buy Ogilvy & Mather. He overpaid for Ogilvy & Mather. I remember our share price was 20-odd, and he paid 54 or something. He paid far too much. He is a very smart man.

Starting from that standpoint, he built up the second largest advertising agency and communications group in the world, the only person that had done that so quickly.

He was always interested not in the very, very top people, but the people just below the top, and he went through a lot of trouble to try to find out what I wanted. He took me out to lunch, and breakfast and dinner, "What do you want to do?" I didn't have any idea. I had done what I wanted to do in a way.

Michael: The deal had been done.

Drayton: The deal had been done. I wasn't going to make any more money anyhow because I had sold my business to Ogilvy, so I had no real interest in Ogilvy itself because I hadn't taken shares.

He spent time trying to figure out what I was doing or wanted to do, and one day, I run into him near his office in Mayfair early in the morning, and he says, "How are you?" I said, "Good morning." He said, "What are you up to?" I said, "I'm going to resign."

He said, "Why?" I said, "Because I don't want to spend the rest of my life working like a dog to pay back all that money you borrowed." I'm not sure I was lying, but I'm definitely sure of one thing. I was very wrong about thing – two big mistakes I made at this point. I was approached by a very, very smart young man who took me out to dinner and said, "What are you going to do now?"

I said, "I don't know. I'll do a bit of consulting." He said, "We all thought you would activate all your clones all over the world and start another business," and that's what I should have done, but I didn't. That was a huge mistake. That was a huge mistake. That was one big mistake, one big, big mistake.

That young man went away. He was a checked dog spotted as his talent. He became creative director of Ogilvy and made a director after I left. Then, he left and started his own agency, and sold it for a lot of money.

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Michael: You could have gone along for the ride.

Drayton: He and other people expected me to take all these people.

Michael: Yes, and start your own agency.

Drayton: Yes, he thought I was the bees' knees, an opportunity which I turned down, and the second big mistake was I started my own little business, which was doing very, very well, but I wasn't really doing a tremendous amount of work. I thought, "Well, I'll give the majority of the business away to other people, and let them run it."

I did this, and the name of the agency at that point was the Drayton Bird Partnership. These people did some research, and they discovered that the thing was that businesses totally associated with

Drayton Bird. So, they came to the rather bizarre conclusion that it was as smart thing to do, to take away the name Drayton Bird. That business collapsed, and that is one of the main reasons why I still work at (inaudible).

The other reason is I enjoy. So, I suppose I've come full circle because I started out in this business thinking, "Wow, this is a business where nobody learns. I should learn and do well." I'm still learning. I still enjoy it. It was things like, "What's going on with the internet?" I'm constantly studying it and trying to learn more.

What you're doing when you started interviewing, "That's really interesting. I can learn something from this."

Michael: What's Churchill's advice?

Drayton: I was very inspired by this. He said, "Courage is the ability to go from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm."

Michael: What could you tell the students listening to this interview? What would you like them to find out about you and what you have to offer at your website? Can you give your website address and let them know what they can expect to find there in your blog?

Drayton: I have about five blasted addresses. The one that's most entertaining is the thing that of course is called Drayton Bird-droppings, which is just Drayton-Bird-Droppings. It's really my blog. It's just something I write probably three or four days a week. Some of it is about things that have nothing to do with business.

For instance, today, I wrote about an opera singer, a ballet dancer, but also about bad design because after I watched the man who is supposed to be the world's best ballet dancer right now, I commented that you couldn't read the program because it was set in a type which is impossible to read. I went on the fact that most designers seem to be uninterested in communicating.

So, I wrote that. I write about all sorts of things there. I have another site which is called [www.DraytonBirdCommonSense.com](http://www.DraytonBirdCommonSense.com), and that site is where you can go and get free ideas, which is the one thing that I would recommend people get because what I do is I send out every three days a helpful marketing idea. There's 101 of them.

So, what the people sign up for that, they get 101 helpful marketing ideas, and they can also download a copy of the best book ever written on marketing and the shortest, which of course, is Claude Hopkins' *Scientific Advertising*.

The thing that is preoccupying me at the moment, to be absolutely honest is the thing that I run every year. Every year, I run a little business school, sometimes in London. I've run it in Brussels, and it's three days where I spend most of the time with them. I have the people that I respect come along and speak.

For instance, I've got the Vice Chairman of the Ogilvy group here in the UK going to be the opening speaker. He's very interesting. He's a very interesting guy, but I've got a wide range of speakers. I've got a man who makes god knows how many millions a year through affiliate marketing, and I think he's got a total staff of three. He's an American.

Then, I've got one of my old clients, American Express who has been around the world who talks about understanding customers, which is the one weak point that many people have.

The man that I mentioned, the man who said, "Are you going to start your own business?" His name is Steve Harrison. He comes along and talks, apart from being extremely clever, he's absolutely hilarious. I don't know what he's going to say this year, but last year, he started by picking up a picture of the weather forecast from the newspaper, and he said, "You know. This creative business is very, very long. The first thing you've got to realize is that the weather forecast is far more interesting than anything that you're going to think of."

Michael: That's funny.

Drayton: It's people who talk about practical ways in which you can succeed. For a whole year, I do monthly webinars almost entirely myself. The idea is to give people not just one of these quick things that say, "Hey, just sign up for this and you'll be rich in three weeks." It's one of these things that says, "Look, you want to get rich slowly, well this is the way to do it because this covers every aspect of marketing. So, you really know what you're doing rather than hoping you're going to get a lucky hit."

That's really what I'm all about teaching people the basics without all the bullshit and the wild claims. Just saying, "This is what it's like. It's

good fun. If you go about it the right way, you can make a lot of money. You'd certainly never be bored."

Michael: Would you agree the basis all comes back to the tried and true direct marketing principles that you teach about in your book and that you learn?

Drayton: The reason I rang you a little late today was I was talking to a journalist who was asking me about a wine club. I happen to know the founder, and she got this theory about, "Is it all to do with social marketing?" I said, "It's nothing to do with that. It has to do with, this man understands that the important thing is to make an emotional connection with his customers. He understands the numbers. He understands that if he can keep a customer for a little bit longer, you make more money than your capacity. He understands if he can get a little bit more money out of each transaction, you can make a little bit more money."

It's a very basic thing. I've been thinking about marketing for fifty odd years now. Every year, it seems simplest to me, and I think that aim of marketing is to help people to choose and to help people to choose you, if you want to make a living. In the end, all you're actually doing is you're bringing two things together. You're bringing that person out there who will benefit from what you offer together with what you offer. You're bringing them together.

Generally, it's always done the same way. You offer something to people that appeals to them, but generally you're either going to give them some information or some knowledge or a benefit which appeals to them, something free that they're going to pick up, and in that way, you make a connection with them. By making a connection with them, you then have an opportunity to help them and to build a relationship with them, and turn them from being a prospects into customers, and from customers into friends, and then being such friends that they'll recommend their friends also to come along.

Viral marketing, they call it now. There's nothing new about it. Imagine if you're somebody in a canoe paddling down the middle of a river, and you're standing on the bank and you want to attract them and get them to come by and stop by you. That's what you're trying to do. All these people are paddling their little canoes, living their lives, doing what they want to do. You've got to attract their attention with something sufficient to make them change direction and come to you, and do what you want them to do. That's what it's all about.

That's what's fun about it is when you do get people to do what you want them to do.

Michael: Drayton, I really appreciate it.

Drayton: Great pleasure. Thank you very much.

Michael: Have a wonderful evening.

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