Lewin

MORAND: I just took a picture of my shoe. That’s good.

LEWIN: Go for it.

MORAND: So, I should say something?

SICULAR: Yeah.

MORAND: Hello, I’m Linda Morand, a former Ford model, and now, I’m an archivist. I have the pleasure of interviewing Gideon Lewin, a very famous photographer, and we will find out, everything he has to say. Hello Gideon. What is your professional name?

LEWIN: My name is Gideon Lewin, and I’ve been photographing for many, many years. [01:00].

MORAND: What years did you photograph, Gideon?

LEWIN: I came to this country in 1961, went to -- came to school, right out of the army, went to Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, and came to New York to get my practical training, before I could go back to Israel, and bring something into the country. My third interview in New York was with Richard Avedon, and I was hired, right there. That’s actually interesting, because I was confronted with a first model, a serious model. As I came out of the elevator, Wilhelmina was coming out of the studio, and I looked up. She was gorgeous. Black hair,
eyelashes, and I [02:00] looked up and said, wow, and I walked in was interviewed by Earl Steinbicker, who was a studio manager at the time, and I guess we hit it off, and started on. Mr. Avedon was actually leaving for Spain the next day, and he said, “You’re going to start with Hiro, tomorrow.” I said, “I need some time to get an apartment.” He said, “Whatever you need, you start with Hiro, and then when I come back, you’ll start working with me.” So, that’s how it began.

MORAND: Wow, that’s starting at the top, I would say. OK. So, how did it come that you worked with Eileen and Jerry Ford’s models?

LEWIN: Well, as an assistant, working in the studio, I was actually seeing a lot of models, and there were only, what, four agencies at the time, I would say: [03:00] Ford’s, Zoe, and Wilhelmina and Stewart, and Ford’s was the big model agency, so we saw models all the time, and then later on, I was actually booking the girls, seeing girls every day -- all the new girls, and making accommodations, you know, discussing with Richard Avedon -- looking for beautiful girls.

MORAND: Well who -- what were some of your favorite campaigns that you booked with the Ford models?

LEWIN: That’s tricky. I would say, at the time -- the early
time-- and I worked with Richard Avedon, we had Clairol, we had Dupont, we had a lot of editorial work for Harper’s Bazaar and Vogue. [04:00] Later on for myself, I mean, I did a lot of work for department stores for work for Bill Blass -- we did a campaign for Bill Blass for many years. I worked with all the Seventh Avenue designers from Pauline Trigère to -- worked with models like Dianne deWitt for Pauline Trigère, Bill Blass -- one of their favorite models. Did a lot of Clairol work -- still do. So, it’s very hard to say which was the most interesting campaign. I think editorial work was definitely the more creative work.

MORAND: Well, what are some of your favorite memories associated with the Ford model agency -- Ford Models, and Eileen and Jerry, do you have any special memories? [05:00]

LEWIN: What impressed me about Eileen and Jerry was that they really took care of their models. Models came from all over the world, but they were invited to their home, and she took care of them. She made sure that they are all on time, that they are presentable, that -- she really guided them, and the other agencies did not do that.

MORAND: That’s true.

LEWIN: Later on, even now -- I mean, now, it’s a disaster. These young girls come from out of town, they’re lost in
the city. Nobody’s taking them around. They walk into studios that don’t even know where they’re going. That’s scary.

MORAND: It is. I remember myself as a Ford model how protective and how safe I felt. So, how do you think a [06:00] Ford model’s different from -- or the Ford model’s themselves difference from the models at other agencies?

LEWIN: I don’t know if they’re different. I know -- if I looked for blondes, I would call Ford right away, because Ford’s had the best blondes, the most beautiful ones, but if I wanted exotic girl I would go to Zoe, so yeah.

MORAND: So, who were some of the beautiful blondes that you might remember?

LEWIN: Oh, lots of them. Jean Shrimpton, was she a Ford girl?

MORAND: Oh, yeah.

LEWIN: Well, there you go. Starting with Jean Shrimpton. Jean Shrimpton, you had Evelyn Kuhn, who did a lot of Revlon work with Evelyn Kuhn, [07:00] she was -- actually, she had such beautiful skin that she became the standard for me from the studio, so I controlled the quality -- she was a quality control for skin color --

MORAND: And there were the Germans --

LEWIN: -- then you had (inaudible) -- I mean you had so many
girls over the years.

MORAND: Brigitte Bauer, remember her?

LEWIN: Sure.

MORAND: She was fabulous.

LEWIN: Absolutely, yeah. All the girls, till this day, I mean, they all keep working with Ford girls.

MORAND: OK. So --

LEWIN: As a matter of fact, the girl I photographed, because I did the Saks Fifth Avenue campaign at night, and I worked with Jean Shrimpton, and Alberta Tiburzi, and I had first one was Kecia, [08:00] she was Scandinavian. She was so beautiful, and that sort of -- that was the first shot I did for Saks Fifth Avenue. It was really a breakthrough, because I then campaigned for (inaudible) all year -- doing it at night.

MORAND: Kecia is from Finland, actually. She’s still around. She’s still absolutely gorgeous.

LEWIN: I would think so. Yeah. She was amazing.

MORAND: So, what were some of your most memorable photographic experiences, besides the one we just spoke about with Kecia, like any special location, trips you went on, or something unusual?

LEWIN: I think I have been very blessed, because I’ve seen the world, when I was with Richard Avedon and later, and
there were some incredible trips. I mean were the Paris collections, which were absolutely amazing. [09:00] A phenomenal trip was Veruschka to Japan, and Anjelica Huston to Ireland, Raquel Welch and Lauren Hutton to Baja, California. There has been many, many wonderful places, and all the experiences are different, and they’ve been very rich. Paris since -- I fell in love with Paris. It was so amazing. In the early days, when we did the collections, we were there for three weeks. Nobody was allowed to photograph or publish any of the designs before the magazines came out, which was like a month later, so we would photograph only at night, and all the dresses came from the designer at like [10:00] Glen Steinway, that were carried in covers, and the girls would come, and we would have the dresses for an hour maybe, because they had to go from magazine to magazine, so -- so, we worked all night. We would start at seven o’clock in the evening, setting up, and we worked until early hours. Film was processed right then and there, contacts were delivered to Mr. Avedon in the morning, he would mark them, we make rough prints, we would make finished prints. In the ’50s, I think they even did the retouching there, but in the ’60s we sent the prints to a retoucher, Bob Bishop, with markings and so on, and by the time we came back to New York, all the layouts
were done by the magazine. We did layouts, actually, in Paris for *Harper’s Bazaar*. [11:00] We’d send the layouts and the photograph to New York, but I would come back, it was all ready to go to press. Nobody, saw it with the press. Nobody, saw -- they saw illustrations, maybe, but never photographs of the actual designs.

MORAND: That’s right.

LEWIN: It was such a secret.

MORAND: I remember that. I was there then, too.

LEWIN: The difference now is in 10 seconds it’s in China, and they’re already copying. That’s how fast time has moved.

MORAND: We didn’t have digital then. Now, it’s just instant from your phone over to China.

LEWIN: Or at the runway, you take a photograph, and you beam it to your contact in China, and they copy it.

MORAND: Amazing. Well, now, getting on to your photography. Could you share any of your photographic techniques?

LEWIN: Photography [12:00] is really about light, more than techniques. You have to know how a camera work -- you have to know your instruments, but it is really in the lighting that is the most important thing, so for me I put the emphasis on light, and it was really my most exciting course in school. I had that teacher -- a very chiseled face, the most -- very soft spoken -- the first lighting
class, it all came -- about 15 guys in the class, and he motioned to turn off the lights, and the next thing we knew, [13:00] he had a big spotlight over his head -- click, and you see his chiseled face, (inaudible) and he’s like there’s only one source of light, click, and that was it, and that has stayed in my mind, because that’s how nature is -- the sun and the moon, and everything else is a reflective, so my technique is about this one source of light.

MORAND: And then do you --

LEWIN: And then everything goes with it. Yeah.

MORAND: -- I see that’s interesting. When you cast your models, was there anything special that you looked for, or did you have a favorite look in general?

LEWIN: When I look at models, [14:00] I look for personality. I look at what they can bring into the photograph. It’s not the special model, but it’s really if -- it’s a collaboration between the photographer and the model. It will vary according to assignments. So, if I needed the blonde for a Clairol, then it would be a blonde -- we’re looking for blondes, but if I were doing editorial work, it really is a collaboration that I’m looking for, so in general, everything is a teamwork. It’s all teamwork, but the model and the photographer it is such a bond. It has
to be so synchronized when you work, [15:00] and if you want to get something amazing, it has to be just the right model.

MORAND: So, when you booked the models was it your choice, or the client’s choice?

LEWIN: Again, that would depend on the assignment. There are clients who wanted specific models -- I want this model -- I want that model -- because they have seen them in pages, or they had interviewed them. Most of the time, they’ll ask for recommendations and you’ll give them a bunch of cards and Polaroids and so on, and say, I like this one, I like that one, and sometimes, I like this model, I think you should work with that girl, you know. So, there’s no rule to it.

MORAND: When you were saying before about there’s something special between the models [16:00] -- I remember myself as a model it was a telepathy almost that would go on where you could kind of guess, or know what the photographer wanted. Did you ever feel that --

LEWIN: Oh, absolutely. That’s when it’s at its best, because that’s where the chemistry comes in. You can have a discussion prior to the shoot, so you can explain what you’re after, and so on, but then it really is as you say a telepathy, because it has to be synchronized to have --
it’s interesting, when I worked with Richard Avedon, I was
doing the lighting, and I actually held the umbrella light
and moved with the model, OK, and I would be synchronizing
the light with the movement of the model, so the light is
always in the right place, and I would click [17:00] in my
mind, the shutter, hearing Mr. Avedon click, so it was such
a synchronization between the three of us, and that was a
set, you know.

MORAND: Magical. So, when did you first decide to become a
photographer?

LEWIN: I was in my teens. I was painting, and I inherited a
camera, and I realized that I could do better with a
camera, and I started photographing my friends, and so on,
and then I was in the army, and I flunked -- I was going to
be a pilot, and I flunked the course, and I ended up doing
area photography, and stuff like that, and so one day I was
in the base, and they needed somebody to do [18:00] some
dark work, and there was nobody around, and I volunteered,
and said, I can do it. I built my own enlarger as a kid.
I did the whole in myself, and there I was in this
phenomenal lab having such a good time with an endless
amount of paper and all the chemicals... I had a great
time. I used to take photographs, and then go at night to
the lab, and enlarge my photographs and do all of that.
And then I was always into the arts, so -- and my mother lived in California, and she sent me a catalogueue from Art Center College of Design, and that’s so many possibilities -- I was going to be an architecture, I was -- I didn’t know for sure what I was going to do, but when I looked at the catalogueue, I said, I think that’s it, [19:00] and I got to school a week after I was discharged, and it was great. I mean, I excelled, and you know, as a student, I worked with other photographers. I did lab work. I really trained completely, so by the time I came to New York, I was really ready, you know.

MORAND: That’s right. You’ve got to get the basis.

LEWIN: You need to have the education, that’s just -- it helps. It’s really a jumping port towards the next -- I never want to think about technical things. I have to do it automatically, because it hinders you rather than let the flow go through.

MORAND: That’s excellent advice for these young photographers coming out.

LEWIN: It doesn’t happen these days. There are a lot of people just have these automatic cameras, and no photographers [20:00], rely on other people to do the technical stuff -- they send it to the labs, you don’t know how to process film, they don’t know how to print, they
don’t have none of the magic that is the other half of photography, really, you know.

MORAND: Well, we went over you coming to New York, and your first job was at Avedon, the question is what was your first big break for you, yourself as a photographer -- first big job, or big client, or whatever?

LEWIN: The big break was getting the -- actually, the Saks Fifth Avenue campaign in the late ’60s, but I think the first break I got was doing shopping bazaar for Harper’s Bazaar. That was I think [21:00] bags full of little items to photograph was in back of the magazine they had little pictures to get 15 bucks for each picture, and that’s supplemented my little income that I got.

MORAND: Right. The bazaar was where --

LEWIN: The bazaar, it was a good start for me. Yes, absolutely. I never minded doing little things -- that’s was--

MORAND: Who was the editor of the Bazaar then?

LEWIN: Nancy White. And Ruth Ansel from the New York Times, at the time she was at Harper’s Bazaar, and Bea Feitler, Marvin Israel just left, so there were -- it was interesting -- interesting times. It was a lot of experimental stuff, and now, it’s all done by computer, you know.
MORAND: And Photoshop, and all that. So, do you have any [22:00] advice to give to young people starting out?

LEWIN: Have the passion for what you want to do -- that is the key, really. Know your technique, and get a good education, that’s very important. Education, passion, and follow your heart. Life is not only about money, but you have to have satisfaction, so if you don’t love what you do, do something else. Find your passion.

MORAND: Now, getting back to photography, do you prefer studio shoots, which are controlled or location shoots?

LEWIN: Studio shoots -- you have total control. I can do anything I want, and it’s controlled. When you work on location, [23:00] you sort of -- nature comes first. You have to collaborate with nature, so it sets the base of what else you will do, and then you enhance nature, and make it your own, but basically, if a studio was given circumstances, so if the lighting’s whatever it is, we work with that light, and you add to it, and you make it your light, and your set. There’s nothing like beautiful natural light, and if you are sensitive to lighting, you find it wherever you are, and you know the difference between ugly light and beautiful light, and that’s [24:00] really very critical.

MORAND: So, how would you describe the perfect work day?
LEWIN: For me, the work perfect day is when I create something beautiful. That’s really what I’m about. It’s when I learn something and create something that makes a beautiful day.

MORAND: So, now, where did you grow up?

LEWIN: I grew up in Jerusalem, Israel, and I finished school over there, went to the army there, and came up to the states to bring something new to the country, and went to Art Center College and Design in LA. Now, they’re in Pasadena. It’s a huge school, now. [25:00]

MORAND: Where do you get your inspiration from?

LEWIN: My inspiration comes from everywhere. Where I go to museums, or look at the architecture, when I look at buildings, I look at nature, and I look at books, I look at magazines -- I’m always interested in see things, and talking to people is very inspiring, and -- you know, if I learn something every day, I’m really great.

MORAND: Now, there are different kind of photography, editorial, catalogueue, advertising, campaign, and TV commercials, which -- what do you prefer of those four?

LEWIN: My preference would be doing editorial work, because you have freedom of [26:00] creating almost anything. With advertising, you really solve the client’s problems. It’s problem-solving, I would say, and it’s creative. I mean,
you have to be creative, but it is about solving a problem, selling a product, and finding a creative way -- creative solution to doing so. I did some commercials, but they’re too many people involved. It’s just -- you don’t have the same control as you have, when you work the stills. I love doing even still lifes, because I love making things look beautiful.

MORAND: And what about catalogueue -- do you like to do catalogueue?

LEWIN: I’ve done many catalogueues, many catalogueues, and you become very efficient at it, actually, after a while, [27:00] but again, you solve a problem. You have to sell product, and you try to find the best way to do it.

MORAND: Now, do you prefer to work in color or black and white?

LEWIN: My preference has always been black and white, and there has to be a reason for color, but black and white leaves a lot to the imagination, because it’s more graphic. It’s -- when I work in color I go for graphics. Unless I go into nature, then I work with nature. It’s a whole other thing.

MORAND: How would you describe your favorite models?

LEWIN: Favorite model is someone who is [28:00] a big personality, whether it’s from the inside or the outside --
a model that doesn’t have inhibitions, one who collaborates -- it’s always a collaboration, as I said before -- and ones that understands the medium of photographer. It is -- you’re already on stage as a model, and you sort of reinvent yourself all the time. There are models that are very limited in what they can give you. It can either be a certain kind or it can be -- understand sculpture, and they understand the body, but there are those who just second guess you -- they know how to [29:00] create with you, so it is a collaboration. When you have a model like this, you keep her for a long time, and a lot of these girls I’ve worked with have done -- year after year -- we actually worked together very well.

MORAND: Can you tell us a couple of those?

LEWIN: I’m trying to think. None of them were really Ford girls -- yeah, actually, Terri May was one of them who was limitless. I’ve worked with Lauren Hutton, Carol Alt a lot. I’ve worked with Susan Hess. I did some Bill Blass campaign. Joan [Saint Laurent?], [30:00] I mean there were Karen [Beonsen?] for instance was beautiful, and she was very much a laid back kind of personality, but when she came on set, all of a sudden, another person came out, she was always very delicate, very beautiful. Dianne deWitt really understood fashion. She knew -- you put a dress on
her, and it always looked amazing. She just held herself. She wasn’t very tall, but she was five eight -- in those days, I mean, nowaday, I don’t look at girls who are not five ten, you know, but in those days, it’s -- I think Lauren Hutton was only five eight, Jean Shrimpton was a little taller, you know, Jacki Adams, and -- one of the first girl I experimented with [31:00] was Pam Barkentin actually one of the Ford girls, and there were these wonderful girls like Penelope Tree, Alberta Tiburzi, who is now a photographer, was absolutely phenomenal as a model -- Tilly Tizzani -- these girls were absolutely -- really understood, you know -- Samantha Jones -- we did a lot of -- actually kind of funny -- we did a lot of Revlon with her, and some Vogue editorial. She always had that long look, and one day I look on the set, and she was -- she said, see, I can’t see anything. I can’t see the camera. I can’t see my feet. I’m so blind [32:00], and she wouldn’t wear lenses, and she always had that squint looking in the distance. She couldn’t quite see.

MORAND: Most of these ladies are still around and still gorgeous.

LEWIN: Absolutely. There was Sunny Griffin, or you know, but all of the beautiful girls at the time, and they were from Jean Shrimpton on, you know -- it’s interesting Jean
Shrimpton sort of set the standards for beauty after the girls in the ’50s. Suzy Parker was absolutely amazing. I personally didn’t work with her, but I like now have a couple of shoots with her with Avedon, and [33:00] what was amazing, she was a total personality, she was really versatile, and then came Jean Shrimpton, and was very shy, actually, but she was great on set. She could move. She had elongations and stuff like that, and then came Lauren Hutton, and Lauren Hutton was five eight, and she did not have the perfect face, and I had to find a way of lighting her where it would be not her face, and she got so much better after a while, but when she started was such a difference between Jean Shrimpton personality than Lauren Hutton, who was really down to earth, and raw, almost.

MORAND: And Veronica Hamel -- [34:00]

LEWIN: And then we have -- Donyale Luna, who was the first black model in Harper’s Bazaar -- was -- had proportions -- she was legs, legs, legs forever. She was six foot tall, and was absolutely incredible. And then you had Beverly Johnson -- there were a lot of incredible girls, you know, Renee Russo and Tara Shannon. Tara Shannon came into the studio in Texas. It was a book that looked terrible, but she had that bright red hair, and secure personality, and she would work with her hair, and you look at the books,
and eek, and -- but that red hair, and that personality
that she had, and she had a great body, and I tried to
figure out what the client [35:00] that can use her is, you
know, and it was on a trip, and I brought her in when he
came back, but somehow she never was his kind of woman, but
I followed her after a month after that. I did lot of Bob
Mackie with her, with Terry May, and I did a lot of Bob
Mackie campaigns, and then the book was for Bob Mackie.
And you had, you know, girls like [Linda Kind?], and [Chris
Sawyer?] and Karen Graham, I did a lot of -- before she
became the Estee Lauder girl, she did a lot of fashion
through advertising department, Vogue, and Harper’s Bazaar.
So, I did a lot of Seventh Avenue campaigns that they could
not afford [36:00] the agencies, but they used to work with
great models. They were all wonderful. You know, you’ve
got Anna Andersson. You had -- I’m trying to remember all
the girls that are a list of probably 200 of them I
photographed and probably still in my archives still.

MORAND: Right. It’s hard to --

LEWIN: I never throw anything out.

MORAND: Good. Off the top of your head -- it’s hard to
remember them all, but it was -- you worked with Veronika
Hamel --

LEWIN: Oh, yeah. A lot. She was beautiful -- beautiful
green eyes, dark hair.

MORAND: And Apollonia --

LEWIN: And Apollonia was fabulous.

MORAND: And what about Janice Dickenson? Did you ever work with her?

LEWIN: Absolutely. Janice was incredible. She was wild, and you never knew what to expect from her. She took a lot of chances, and that was great, because there was surprises. It’s nice [37:00] to have those surprises, and she was not afraid to do anything anybody else wouldn’t do, you know. That became exciting, because you could create photographs that you wouldn’t be able to do with other girls.

MORAND: Do you think that most of these models that you’re mentioning were very intelligent? Do you think that it takes intelligence to be a great model?

LEWIN: I think most of them were intelligent. I think all of the great models were intelligent. Yeah. Absolutely. You have to have some brain there. There were girls that didn’t last, really, you know, but some of them had went into higher education, then back to college, then, you know, took business classes, managed their own money. I mean, there was a lot of that. [38:00] Some very smart girls.

MORAND: That’s what I think, because it takes a little bit of
brains to be able to handle a career like that -- travel and be on time, and do it all right.

LEWIN: Yeah, you know, we had a very young girl at the time, but she was probably the youngest of all the models -- the youngest model was probably Brooke Shields -- when we first worked with her, she was nine years old -- but -- and every smart. She had adult conversations at the time -- was incredible. But there was Jane Hitchcock, who was blonde, and I remember doing Clairol job with her, she must have been 15 or something, and actually over-bleached her hair, it was falling off, but she was very young and very naïve, but she ended up being a really serious model [39:00]. Didn’t expect it, because she didn’t look very bright at the time, you know -- very innocent and so on. She was good. She was great.

MORAND: As a young person, before you entered the business, who were some of your idols beauty-wise that you thought -- and including men and women?

LEWIN: I would go to the movies, I think, because in Israel, we didn’t have models, so it would be Sophia Loren. It would be Audrey Hepburn. It would be Elizabeth Taylor. That’s when I was in school in the early ’60s, Suzy Parker was the big thing, and from then, we’ve talked about all the girls that came out, you know, which was really
incredible. [40:00] You can tell from my selection that I like women for their big personalities, which is really great.

MORAND: So, would you like to add anything else as we wind up? Something else we didn’t cover maybe?

LEWIN: Well, all I can say that I was very blessed to be in the creative world. It’s sometimes challenging, but it is wonderful to create, and I’ve met so many amazing, amazing people between the models and a lot of personalities working for Richard Avedon and meeting all these incredible people. It opened the world for me in a way that there would never have imagined growing up, and to this day [41:00] I’m still photographing a lot of very important people, and it has been a great journey, and I don’t think -- when I look back, I don’t think of many people have that kind of an experience I’ve experienced. It’s very fulfilling. Yeah.

MORAND: Well, thank you so much, Mr. Lewin. I really enjoyed interviewing you.

LEWIN: Any time. My pleasure.

END OF AUDIO FILE
SICULAR: Hi, my name is Patti Sicular. I’m with the Ford model agency. Today is May 5th 2010. We’re in Gideon Lewin’s studio, and we’re conducting the Ford Model FIT archive interviews, along with Professor Karen Cannell, who cannot be with us, today. Our guest interviewer is Joy Bell, one of our models. Please turn around and say hello.

JOY BELL: Hello.

SICULAR: And today, we’re interviewing the wonderful photographer Gideon Lewin, who started working in the United States in 1964, and I will let Gideon tell his own story. Thank you.

LEWIN: Here we are. OK.

SICULAR: So, tell us about your arrival in 1964 -- from where?

LEWIN: Actually, I arrived in 1961 from Israel, and I came here to study and bring something new to the country, and I found later on that the country was not ready for me. So, I came to Art Center College of Design in LA, and then came to New York to get practical training, and my third interview was with Richard Avedon, and I stayed with him for 16 years. So, ’60s and ’70s was my very, very important time of growing up in this business.
SICULAR: And you worked with Hiro also, right -- at that time?

LEWIN: Hiro and Avedon were associated at the time, and when -- in 1966 -- when Avedon moved to Vogue, there was a conflict between Harper’s Bazaar and Vogue. You couldn’t have it in the same roof, so we parted ways. Hiro moved into his own studio on 4th Street, later on, and actually, I’m at the new studio of Avedon in 1974 and on East 75th Street, and so, that’s when the big separation was there, [03:00] but originally, I started it was Hiro first, two weeks, and as a matter of fact, when I was interviewed, was very cute, I came out of the elevator, and out of the studio came this gorgeous woman, and I looked up, and I said, wow. Well, it turned out to be Wilhelmina she was all made up, long eyelashes, and red lips and all that, and I was interviewed by the studio manager, and then introduced to Richard Avedon, and he liked my book, and he said, “Well, I’m leaving tomorrow for Spain, so you’re going to start working with Hiro,” and so that’s how it all began.

BELL: And what do you think you brought to the table as a young man? Why did think Richard Avedon hire you, now, [04:00] in retrospect?

LEWIN: Richard Avedon always liked a young team -- an international team. He said this right from the beginning,
I like an international team. He liked the variety of the personalities of the people, and it just made it more interesting for him.

SICULAR: And how many people were on his team at that time -- full time in the studio?

LEWIN: Well, he had the studio manager, then he had his own personal assistant, then he had an assistant for Hiro, and there was a secretary, you know --

BELL: What was actually required of you as an assistant? What would be a typical day for you?

LEWIN: Here’s the typical day. It’s like when I work, now. I start with a white wall -- a white canvas, [05:00], and then everything happens, and by the end of the day, you know what the day was about. We started at 8:30 in the morning and we finished -- in those days, we could work until two, three o’clock in the morning. No overtime. No anything. We just kept working. If Richard Avedon decided to reshoot something at six o’clock, everybody stayed -- models, hair and makeup people. We will reshoot until we are happy, and we have the layouts. My first experience, really, was talking to Hiro, and he would tell me what the setup would be, and --

BELL: What exactly does that mean -- the setup? What do you mean by that?
LEWIN: Setup? Well, you had an idea for a photograph. This was an editorial job he was doing for Harper’s Bazaar, and his idea was that he was going to shoot [06:00] down on the models, move under -- OK -- we had nine-by-ten camera up on a platform, and that was his perspective, which was beautiful, very unusual. But there was nobody to show me around the studio. There was just one assistant who was in charge of the color machine. And the way it was worked out there were two wooden stepladders like 14 foot tall, high, and with a platform in between, and a camera was attached to it. Well, the stepladders were in Avedon’s studio, and after moving to Hiro’s someone asked the assistant to help me, and he said, “Oh, no, he said, here you have to do it all by yourself -- on your own.” I said, “No shit.” [07:00] (laughter) I said, OK. So, I had to figure out how to use this very heavy stepladder about twice my height -- or three times my height -- to the other studio, and I learned about balance, you know. I learned how to move bigger things by myself, then I built a platform top with clamps and so on, and brought the paper down. I don’t know how I did it, but that day, I learned a lot -- how to do things myself. Of course, the assistant was not on my good-list list, let’s put it that way, because I do like to work in teams. I think everybody’s part of a team, and
there’s no star in that creative team during the day. I mean, I’m the photographer, OK, and I like to make decisions. I like to actually click the shutter at the vision, but everybody who is involved is part of the team, and contributes to the day, and to the photograph, and that’s how I am. So, for me to hear somebody say, oh, you’re on your own. You have to do it. I say, OK. I’ll figure out how, but -- that’s how I work.

SICULAR: And were you taking pictures then at this time?

LEWIN: I was always taking pictures. I mean, I started taking pictures when I was 16. I inherited a camera from my mother, and I realized -- and at the time I was painting and drawing and stuff like that, and I realized I can do it better with a camera, so from then on I used the camera. So, I was always photographing, and I was interested in people and beautiful things and women, and going to school -- my mother introduced to that school, actually. She lived in LA, and sent me the catalogue for the Art Center College of Design, and I had an amazing photography department as well as other design departments like art designs and advertising and so on, and I realized since I’m very much interested in the arts that that would be a perfect place for me.

BELL: What was it -- what were the main disciplines at that
point of time, when you were studying?

LEWIN: Disciplines as far as?

BELL: In terms of you know lighting and training.

LEWIN: The school was geared towards professionals. I mean, we had in a class people who were in there ’50s. [10:00] We had people who were 18, just out of high school. I was in between. I came from -- I served in the army in Israel, so I was 21 plus, and then foreign students as well, so it was really a variety of personalities and people who were in the classes. Discipline was very vigorous. I mean, we had a lot of assignments, a lot of classes, as well as -- we had to take economics and all that stuff --

BELL: And how do you feel that served you, you know, moving on to work with someone like Richard Avedon, for example, or Hiro?

LEWIN: I came over very well prepared. I had my technique. I knew pretty much everything about photography by the time I graduated. [11:00] From a technical point of view, I have not necessarily been exposed to everything but that’s why I said, the next phase of my life was being in training.

SICULAR: And working with Mr. Avedon and with Hiro, I’m sure you’ve gained some of their techniques. Do you think that they gained any of your techniques, since you worked with him for so long?
LEWIN: Avedon and Hiro were very different. Hiro was very specific about his technique and his lighting. He was very much in control to [intense?] all this stuff. He knew exactly where he wanted the light, and it was there guiding you, moving the lights to his specifications. Avedon wanted beautiful light, and working first and second assistant, watching where -- lighting what he liked about lighting, and I came up [12:00] with the different system of lighting, actually. When I became studio manager and his first assistant, at that point, I was handholding the light, and it was a synchronization between the model, the light, and the photographer, Richard Avedon, and I would be right next to them, holding the umbrella light, moving with the subject -- the model or the personnel -- always creating the perfect light, so if you turn and face this way or that way, the light was always in the right place.

BELL: Was this a revolutionary, or --

LEWIN: It was revolutionary, because nobody has done it. OK. And, eventually, I used [13:00] not just one hand, two hands. I used to with one hand, and have a reflector with second hand to kick some light into the eye, and stuff like that, and -- to a point where I could actually, click the shutter with him in my mind. I was so specific --

SICULAR: How guarded are the secrets of lighting with
photographers? How closely do they guard those secrets? Or did they?

LEWIN: There are people who guard everything in life. I mean, everybody guards there (inaudible) in some way. This is not something you can really replicate, because I mean, umbrella light was all over the place, but it was never used that way. Photographers didn’t have a human balloon that moved with -- at will -- as they were thinking.

[14:00] This was such a synchronized, unspoken kind of way of working. It was amazing.

BELL: You were also involved with the printing process as well?

LEWIN: Very much so. I was a good printer, and I printed most of his exhibitions. I printed editions. I supervised other lab people to print. I okayed printing. Eventually, I even marked for retouching, for Bob Bishop who was our retoucher, at the time, and I think worked with the retouches, and okayed the retouching and stuff like that. This was all working closely with Rich Avedon, and he relied on me. He relied on me [15:00] to a point where he would call my name, all the time. So --

BELL: How much were you involved in the process of choosing the talent for the shoots, and how was that for you as a young man dealing with all these beautiful women?
LEWIN: Two very different questions. Working in a studio as an assistant, I used to see girls come in and out, all the time. When I became studio manager, my responsibilities were greater and his time was more valuable, and some girls would come into the studio, and if I liked a girl, I would say, "Would you wait a minute, let me show your book to Mr. Avedon," and if he really liked her, he would come out, look at her, and make a mental note, and [16:00], very possible, she would be booked the next day, or even the same day. We’d send her up to Vogue or Harper’s Bazaar, it depends.

SICULAR: And were you the one on the phones booking the models with the bookers back then?

LEWIN: Most of the time. Most of the time, after I became his studio manager.

SICULAR: And so were you close to the Ford agency then and all the other agencies?

LEWIN: I was close with, I mean, let’s face it, there were only like four agencies, at the time, and Ford’s was the most important agency. They had the most beautiful girls. If we needed a beautiful blonde star, I would call Ford’s.

SICULAR: How would you describe the difference between Ford, Wili, Zoe and Elite models? Because it was a distinctive fleet.
LEWIN: I think -- if I needed a blonde, it would be Ford’s, automatically. If I needed an exotic girl, I would go Zoe.

[17:00] If I needed a calendar girl, I would go to Wilhelmina. I mean it was just very, you know, but that would see girls all the time, and I still do. Any new girl that comes to town, comes to the studio, and I gladly see her --

SICULAR: Do you remember the first --

LEWIN: -- because I discover girls.

SICULAR: Who have you discovered? Who are some of the girls that you’ve discovered?

LEWIN: The first girl I think I discovered was Vicki Hilbert. She came to the studio, and Dick looked at her, and he d’dn’t like her, and he just brushed her off, and I looked at her book, and said, she’s beautiful. So, I went back. She left already, and I went back and said, “She was a beautiful.” He said, “Oh, really? Call her back.” So, she came back, and the next day, she was working and we did Revlon campaign with her [18:00] and so on, and she was very popular at the time, you know. Evelyn Kuhn, when she came. I mean, she was absolutely beautiful.

SICULAR: You mentioned once that you matched other people’s skin tones against hers for perfection against hers.

LEWIN: Evelyn Kuhn had such beautiful skin -- skin color --
the coloring, was absolutely amazing that she became like a standard for me, because I was supervising all the technical stuff as well. She was the standard for color. So when I would do a color test of -- I would choose like -- buy a batch of film, OK, and after I zeroed down to one emulsion that I liked, I would do a test on Evelyn Kuhn, because she was [19:00] the perfect color, and I would say, “This is a good emulsion,” and I would buy a lot of film, based on that.

SICULAR: So, you had to test your film every time you got a batch.

LEWIN: I would test the film every week, actually. I would test -- I would do a test, before every shoot. I would be so specific, and I exposed film to the tenths of a stop.

SICULAR: I want to ask you another question about Eileen and Jerry Ford. Did you have a personal relationship with them? Did you socialize with them?

LEWIN: I actually never socialized -- neither with the models, or bookers, or you know. I talked to Eileen many times on the phone, and Jerry. What was interesting about Eileen and Jerry -- they really cared about the models. They were [20:00] really taking care of them. Models used to come into town, that they had no idea -- Eileen would take them in, make sure they had enough sleep, that they
looked right with the right haircut, you know. They did everything right, and be responsible. Other agencies were not that responsible. Girls would come to town and would be wondering all over by themselves, and so on, and nobody really cared very much. Eileen was like a mother. She was a den mother. She was very strict with them.

BELL: Were these mainly girls from America, like the Midwest? Where were these girls from?

LEWIN: All over. They were Europeans. They were mid-America, wherever they found them, you know.

BELL: A lot of Scandinavians.

LEWIN: Yeah. At the time, there were a lot of Germans, Scandinavians -- the first model that I photographed for an ad, actually, for -- because I did work at night -- I used to do my own work as well. I don’t know how, but I managed everything. I started with doing shopping bazaar for Harper’s Bazaar with little pictures at the back of the book, when they had little items and I would take a shopping bag home, and photograph in my little living room, and I would have a setup and photograph, and deliver the next day. I had a darkroom at home in the closet, and since my salary was close to nothing -- like $65 a week for anywhere from 9 to 15 hours a day, so -- you know, I had to supplement my income, and then later on, I
started doing a campaign [22:00] for Saks Fifth Avenue, and
the first girl I used was Kecia. I don’t know if I
remember her last name.

SICULAR: Kecia Nyman.

LEWIN: Nyman? She was absolutely gorgeous, and that was my
first ad for Saks Fifth Avenue, and then I used Benedetta
Barzini and Alberta Tiburzi, and Tilly Tizzani, and Jean
Shrimpton, and I had access to all these wonderful models.
That was my bonus for working with Richard Avedon, I guess.

SICULAR: Did you have an agent then booking these for you?

LEWIN: I didn’t have an agent. I didn’t have an agent. I
did everything myself. The editor I worked with -- was an
director at Harper’s Bazaar, and so for a year, I would do --
at night, I would do these ads for Saks Fifth Avenue, and
so I would have Ara Guilan [23:00] do the hair and makeup,
and that was, you know, was great, and that’s I had kind of
a relationship with Richard Avedon who allowed me to do
that, and later on, when I built a new studio on 75th
Street, I did a lot of work for -- through Vogue and
Harper’s Bazaar, through their advertising departments.
Photographing for all the designers on Seventh Avenue who
could not afford agencies. I used to run ads like David
Morton, I mean, I used Karen Graham a lot. I used to
[24:00] all the big models for all these ads.
BELL: Would you say, you know, your journey, as an assistant was all pretty standard apprenticeship that, you know, most photographers who became top photographers themselves -- was that a very typical rite of passage do you think, your experience?

LEWIN: It’s something that I recommend who comes out of school to have practical training, because you have to learn the business -- how the business operates. It’s different these days, but it is a business. It’s -- some people think photography’s not a business. It is a business, and can be a very big business, and it has its rules. It has its way of functioning, and --

BELL: What do you think some of those --

LEWIN: -- and you have to be exposed -- how you manage clients (break in audio) -- bookings -- how you manage any kind of [25:00] production. I mean, we did -- I was responsible for designing sets, building sets, doing all the lighting for some very complicated (break in audio) complicated. There’s a lot that goes on, and relationships and resources, do you have any resources, if you need anything. In New York, luckily, you have so many resources that you can get almost anything, but they could throw at me -- I need a reindeer for a --

BELL: There was something about a shoot in Paris that was
fascinating. There was a fairly extraordinary request (break in audio)

LEWIN: Oh, the tree. [26:00] Yes. On our way to Paris, we discussed how we’re going to photograph the spring collection, and we talked about it, and we said, how about a tree (break in audio). How about a small tree that had green leaves, and the girls could be holding hands, and so on. Well, it’s feasible. We can do that. That would be great, and so on. By the time we got to Paris, it became a very large tree, and we found out that trees cannot be cut in Paris, OK. You can’t cut trees in Paris. These are the laws. So, luckily, the previous year I had an apprentice from Paris Match [27:00]. A photographer from Paris Match, and --

SICULAR: How many tons was that tree?

LEWIN: The tree was about 36 feet tall and 6 feet wide, and weighed about six tons.

BELL: Six tons?

LEWIN: Anyhow --

SICULAR: And you had to find a tree to bring it there?

LEWIN: -- well, we tried first through the Vogue office, and they had no idea how to do that, and luckily, the Beatrice was friendly with the mayor of Paris, and a search went out, and there was a tree outside of Paris that was
threatening some plant or something, and they agreed to cut the tree, as long as we destroyed it at the end of the shoot, and plant another tree, instead.

BELL: And how many assistants did you have on this time around? [28:00]

LEWIN: It’s not so much how many assistants -- first of all, the tree had to be cut in half the long way, put in two trucks, transferred to Paris at night. They had to raise all the phone lines, because of the height of the trees, and installed at the Grand Palais where they have usually boat shows -- needed a very large studio. They also rented all of the lighting I could get, because we wanted a white background. This was before computers, so we couldn’t do the kind of slicing and retouching, the way we can do now, so most of it has to be right on film. You know, you can always on paper bleaching, and so on, and airbrushing, but it’s much easier to do now and use Photoshop. [29:00] In those days, we couldn’t, so everything was seamed very carefully, all the papers was hung from -- the background paper was hung from the balconies, and the tree was installed -- wired to various points. It was an artist that came, and they -- a scenic artist that painted where the seams were -- where it was put together. I mean, it was perfect.
BELL: It sounds like a huge budget that you had. I mean, were there --
LEWIN: In those days we had in the ’60s, early ’70s, there were big budgets.
BELL: And who were the models that you worked with -- you know, during that time, and also later on that you were like muses for you or were collaborators in some of the creative ideas?
LEWIN: Yeah. I mean, all of the good models were collaborators.
BELL: Does any come to mind?
LEWIN: You know and it started with I think the relationship between a photographer [30:00] and a model like Richard Avedon and Suzy Parker for instance.
SICULAR: But how about for you?
LEWIN: For me? Yes. Absolutely. Was Terry May, who I photographed a lot. [Ali Dunn?], Dianne Dewitt --
BELL: What would they bring to the shoot? What made them different?
LEWIN: What is different between a great model, and a model is really the collaboration -- the instinctive understanding of where the photographers going, being flexible, and flexible enough to reinvent herself --
BELL: [31:00] And would they do that?
LEWIN: Well, listen there people are very closed in the box, and can do only so much, then those of your free spirited and have no limits in there thinking and the way they expose themselves, and are able to bring a lot into a photograph, if you have no limitations, if you just let yourself go, and then you understand what the photographer is after, and sometimes, you make it happen as a model, because you do something that is totally unexpected and they say, wow, you can do that? Great. Let’s go from there, and you go further. The thing that I learned is [32:00] life is a stage, you’ve got to make your pictures bigger than life. Every page counts, and has to be really very important. Whatever you do has to look great, and noticeable.

SICULAR: When you were younger living in Israel, who were some of the beauty icons that you looked towards for beauty that you were thought were so amazing? Actresses or models.

LEWIN: Mostly actors. I didn’t know models in those days. Actresses like Sophia Loren, and Bridgette Bordeaux and, you know --

SICULAR: And did you get to work with these women?

LEWIN: -- later on. Not Brigitte Bardot, but Sophia Loren. She was absolutely amazing. She’s probably the most wonderful woman collaborator, from an actress point of
view.

SICULAR: And before someone walks on your set, do you tell them --

LEWIN: I felt very generous in -- [33:00] as a personality. I’ve worked with others who were not generous from within -- always looked great, but never really generous towards people -- towards the camera.

BELL: Sounds like you’re describing a real trust that has to be built between the talent and the photographer.

LEWIN: Absolutely. Absolutely. You have to trust the photographer, and that takes a relationship, you know. Veruschka was an amazing collaborator. She gave beyond anybody.

SICULAR: And would you tell her or other models before the they walked on the set what you wanted, or did they kind of look at the clothing, and kind of get it?

LEWIN: Some did, and some you had to sort of explain what you really want. Some were just playful enough to take over, and [34:00] have fun and that is part of fashion, I guess. A lot of fun.

SICULAR: Do you have any preference shooting beauty or fashion?

LEWIN: I like to make things look beautiful, so if I photograph a diamond I have -- I like the challenge of making that diamond as beautiful as possible. I like
working with people -- women, and it gives me a lot of satisfaction. Fashion is part of portrait [sharing?] -- it’s all a part of portrait [sharing?] I mean I look at fashion not just as a garment -- it’s really the woman behind the garment. The woman that makes the garment what it is. So, it is the personality. It is a portrait. Whether it’s a made up personality, or a real personality. Doesn’t matter. It’s -- the end result [35:00] that’s really is a creation.

BELL: How important for you were the hair and makeup artists that you worked with?

LEWIN: Hair and makeup is really essential.

BELL: And how would you fit --

LEWIN: It completes. It completes and adds to the image. It is, again, about proportions. It’s about drama. It is theater, therefore, we exaggerate. Otherwise, it’s lost.

BELL: Were there any particular artists that you worked with over the years that stood out, that you loved working with?

LEWIN: As far as hair and makeup?

BELL: Yeah. On projects.

SICULAR: And did you prefer working with the same team of stylists -- hair and makeup?

LEWIN: That’s what happens. You do lock into teams [36:00] for a certain amount of time, until they either become so
famous they don’t want to work with you, and they’re working with more famous people, and have no time, or they’re too expensive, and you can’t afford it for whatever clients you have, and so on. If you work editorially, it’s really up to the magazine who they push as a talent, but you had people like Ara Gallant, and [Souga?], and Way Bandy, and Harry King, and a lot of great, great artists that it would’ve been hard to do what we do without them. You know, and we have to be sort of patient as creative people beginning in the day, waiting for this to be done, created for us to take over [37:00] and create our own photograph.

SICULAR: And a lot of people that aren’t in fashion don’t understand the time, prices involved. So, say a model shows up at 9:00 a.m., what time does she basically walk on the set between hair and makeup and styling? How long does that take?

LEWIN: If we’re lucky by 11:00. By quarter of 11:00, I get a little impatient, but I learned to be pa-- (break in audio) still be beautiful, but it really varies. I mean, if you do beauty, it does take a long time doing hair -- it does take a long time. I mean, to perfect something, takes time, and you’ve got to be patient and work with it. I love doing hair, for instance, beauty shots of hair,
because of the ten million ways you can do hair. It’s like water. It just flows differently every time. It’s never exactly the same, which is great.

BELL: Is there any particular project that they you worked on that [38:00] you absolutely love -- that you’ll always remember?

LEWIN: There’s so many of them. There’s so many.

BELL: Do any of them stand out?

LEWIN: I worked with the best of the best -- with the greatest models, with the greatest personalities. I started with the -- probably the most famous photographer in the world. Life for me is a growing process. I learn something every day, and you know --

BELL: If someone was to say, you know, they’re going to hire you. I mean, what was your signature? What are you really known for?

LEWIN: For making a woman really beautiful, because I care. I care, and I care, and the fact is I also I love doing editorial work, because you have the freedom even though your [38:00] -- as Richard Avedon told me in the beginning, you always still have to remember, that you’re selling something. No matter how crazy you go, there’s a focus that your selling something.

BELL: Even with editorial.
LEWIN: Even with editorial. There’s some point in that photograph you’re selling -- it is that dress, it’s an accessory, it’s that shoe, or whatever. There is a reason for it, you know. You can be as artistic as you want -- you know you used to go to museums and research certain paintings and eras and so on, and sort of create his thoughts for the next editorial, or whatever, but it was always a point of the photograph.

BELL: What did you use for your sources of inspiration, creatively?

LEWIN: Everything can be an inspiration. [40:00] Anything and everything. I can walk down the street, and see something and say you know that’s a great thing. That’s a great idea.

BELL: Did you have a process? Did you make notes of things, and --

LEWIN: It’s a mental note. It’s a -- I’m a visual person, and I rely on my visual eye very, very heavily.

SICULAR: And by the time we would see one of your photographs in a magazine, did you just shoot it, or were there a series of test shots? A lot of people out there don’t realize that a lot of times, people would hire models for lighting tests, or some other sort of test, before the picture would --
LEWIN: Occasionally, I would do a test to test an idea. For instance when I did my nudes in motion, I would -- I had a test first, and -- to see where I was going with all of that, because I had an idea about moving sculptures almost [41:00]. Very abstract, and so on, and it came out of a shoot I did for Playtex, and I presented to Playtex, and it was two other guard for that -- because a girl was in motion, and it was not every stitch showing, although it did show enough, and from there to Alex Liebermann gave me editorial in Vogue, because he liked the idea of motion, and I did some editorial pages with Terry May was one of the girls, and Janice Dickinson was one of the girls, and then I had some dogs in the studio, and we had all that stuff, and it was not fully developed at that time, [42:00] but it was something that nobody else was doing.

SICULAR: So, we know that you’ve been in Vogue, but what was your first picture that you got to see in a magazine that you took?

LEWIN: I was still a student. I did an ad for Tweezers -- they fix your eyebrows or something like that --

SICULAR: And was it like just the eye.

LEWIN: (overlapping dialogue) for years. I got like $150 that company ran it for like 10 years or something until they stopped.
SICULAR: Were you really thrilled seeing it? It had to make you feel --

LEWIN: The first time? Yeah. Something that was published, you know. And then I worked -- I started with a magazine called Girl Talk. It was a free magazine given to hair salons and stuff like that, and actually I photographed my first personality -- it was Clint Eastwood --

SICULAR: Wow. [43:00]

LEWIN: -- for the cover, and it was --

BELL: Was he famous at the time, or?

LEWIN: Of course he was famous. But I only had 10 minutes, and that was scary, you know. It was in a hotel room, and he was there -- he was very gentlemen, so soft-spoken, so nice. He was being interviewed at the same time, and I did a great photograph of him, and at the end of 10, 15 minutes, he said, you know, I’m pretty very tired. I said, that’s OK, I have the photograph.

SICULAR: When do you know that you have a picture? I mean, I’m sure you must sense it.

LEWIN: I usually know, when I have the photograph, when I stop. I don’t like to torture people, so I photograph till I know I have it. I take a few more, so there’s you know safety, [44:00] basically, but I don’t prolong a sitting.

SICULAR: Do you do a safe picture, where you show all the
seams, pockets and buttons and then you might do something a little more avant-garde, but you always cover yourself with the safe photograph?

LEWIN: It depends. It depends. Sometimes, you do -- and the client has something in mind -- a layout that they have -- want and stuck with in their mind, and you say, OK, I’m going to do that, and then I’m going to give them more, and I always get more, and sometimes I win, because they see the difference. They see the possibilities, and sometimes they’re just stuck and they go with their layout, but my responsibility is if I can do better for them that I have to do that. OK, and I would go to meetings -- I used to do a lot of Clairol work, and I would go to a meeting, and I love being in a meeting, where everybody is there, the product managers, the art director, the creative director, the technical people, and I would listen to everything everybody has to say about the product, and I would look at the product, and then when we are in the studio, and there are 15 people to 25 people behind me, at that point, I listen to everybody’s opinion, and I zero in and have to deliver that something that people will all relate to, you know, that I have really taken everything into consideration, but I have to go beyond that, [46:00] and that’s where the creative team, because that -- not
necessarily creative people, except the art director or the creative director, and the photographer, and the case of hair, the hairdresser, we go beyond that, and create the something even bigger, and most of the time, they’ll go with what we recommend as creative people, because they have not seen it. They could not visualize it. Even when they’re on set, they cannot quite visualize it, that’s why a lot of people do a lot of Polaroids. I never did any Polaroids. I did one Polaroid, before we start, and say, this is our starting point. Don’t look at it. From here, it’s just going to grow, it’s going to grow and get bigger, and more beautiful, and a lot of hair work is really done on set. You start with the basics, and then you start moving around [47:00]. You can create the shapes. You go bigger. You go smaller. You’ve got the wind machine on. You give it the whole new life, and then when you see it as a still, then you really see the image, and then it’s cropped in just the right way, if you have a good art director. It becomes exciting.

BELL: That also sounds like the most perfect diplomat, and also it sounds like something that would really make you stand out from your contemporaries.

LEWIN: I guess I am very -- I’m diplomatic, but I learned to listen. I learned to listen. A lot of people don’t
listen. I have my own ideas in mind, but I keep them back until I know what the people really need, and how can I do it in the best possible way for them. My responsibility as a photographer is I work with an advertiser is to make them look good, make the art director look good. I want the client to be successful, so it has to be a successful ad. There’s no more satisfaction then seeing success coming out of what you do. You know, for the people.

SICULAR: When you were in school, who were some of the favorite photographers that you really admired? People before you, and then going forward -- people when you worked, and certain people now, who are some of the great photographers, professionally in beauty.

LEWIN: I mean, at the time I was in school, Ansel Adams, Moulin and then you had Avedon -- I didn’t really know much about Hiro at the time --

SICULAR: And how about generations before even, if there’s anyone?

LEWIN: Oh, yeah. [Beucache?] -- you had a lot of --

SICULAR: That you liked.

LEWIN: I wasn’t that familiar -- interestingly, enough, [49:00] and then -- although, we had art history and history of photography, we weren’t that really much
introduced to photographers. It all came later, as I started researching, and then looking at the world. I was just too busy being a student, and delivering assignments.

SICULAR: Does it surprise you that a lot of photographs out there are considered art, and people are collecting them, because years ago people just threw them away.

LEWIN: The fact is, working with Richard Avedon, we sort of created the standard for photography as art, because when he reprinted the first portfolio of limited editions, it was a great discussion, thoughts going on as how to insure that we’re serious about it and that our [50:00] limited editions -- that there not going to be other editions after that from the same negative, and so on, and he created the stamp that gave certain guarantees, although for a while we thought that we would destroy the negatives after printing. We sort of borrowed from the art world, you know, in a way, but even then, at the time, I didn’t think that any of that was going to be so valuable to the extent that we see now at auctions. I think it’s ridiculous.

BELL: Is it also going to archival prints, and archival --

LEWIN: A lot of thought went into making sure the process archival that everything would be properly processed, and washed, and dried, and so on [51:00]. You know, [Pat?] went into platinum prints which are definitely archival
will last for a thousand years -- he was never into platinum prints. I had done platinum prints on my nudes, because I felt it was the right medium and they look like charcoal drawings. They’re really very different. That was appealing to me. I don’t know if I want to do my portraits necessarily in platinum printing, but I’m experimenting, and now that you have digital printing, there’s a whole new kind of as far as the art world is concerned, it’s not quite as accepted yet, because it hasn’t really been tested, but supposedly, they are guaranteed for a hundred years, or whatever, you know. I don’t know. [52:00] I’m completely sold on the electronic world yet. Although, I do work electronically, sometimes. I work on the computer a lot in Photoshop -- perfecting things, basically. I haven’t really done any digital print -- printing myself.

SICULAR: We’re running out of time, so I want to know if you have any last thoughts, we have about one minute left, and we want to thank you also.

LEWIN: OK. My thoughts. Well, I’m grateful that I have -- being part of the creative world, and have met some wonderful, wonderful people, and they’re interesting personalities through my working with Richard Avedon and myself [53:00] -- lots of personalities myself, and the
fact is we’re all people, and we see the world differently, and we have to accept it, and I think that’s really what we’re all about -- people.

SICULAR: Thank you.

BELL: Thank you very much.

LEWIN: You’re welcome.

END OF AUDIO FILE