SICULAR: [00:00:00] Well, he was nice, too.

STICKLER: He still looks pretty good, but not great. I mean compared to what he was. Remember Eddie Rosenblatt? He did the door at a lot of big parties in those, and he was a friend of Clovis [Ruffins?] and he literally had an alter in his apartment with Jeff. With candles lit and --

SICULAR: You know, everyone (inaudible) friends with her, she was a very famous model in the ’60s and ’70s and she did a lot of Revlon. First model to ever have a cosmetic contract, and there was a man named [Harrison?] who loved her and he paid like Penn and Avedon and Warhol and all these people, paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to take pictures of her, and it's the same thing with the alter. I mean it's --

STICKLER: It's a little icky, but in [Leonetti’s?] case, you know, it was total worship, it was a little --

SICULAR: Icky.

STICKLER: It was a little icky, but I mean, but he was like so pure of spirit that it wasn’t icky. So when he and Clovis came out and [00:01:00] stayed with Nina and I knew that Eddie had the alter, Jeff was coming to town for a shoot, so I had him staying at Nina’s house and Clovis and Eddie
were staying in the Eileen Ford room, which overlooked the pool on the front (laughter) and of course, the first thing Eddie saw when he got up in the morning was Jeff [Aquilar?] doing laps in his pool. And it was like, you know, I couldn’t have given him a better gift.

SICULAR: Is that rolling now? Can I tell you something? When I recruit Ford Men, I remember him coming in, it was February, everyone was like green in color and he was wearing just jeans and a plain white man-tailored shirt and he had a little bit of a tan, like (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) and he bent over to look at his chart and I thought, “Oh my God, this is the most handsome man I’ve ever seen in my life,” and he’s always respectful and just really very nice. Tell us when you're ready.

M: I’m ready.

SICULAR: OK.

STICKLER: I used to have to pick him up at the airport, at LAX and he’d always bring a surfboard. [00:02:00]

SICULAR: From New York?

STICKLER: From New York. Or wherever he was. Maybe he was coming from Mexico.

SICULAR: Hi, Sara, this is Ken Stickler. This is our last interview of the day and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)
new directions and other people on the west coast, he’s our 1973.

CANNELL: How nice.

STICKLER: Some of the jobs I think I’ve forgotten, blessedly.

SICULAR: That’s OK. Ready?

CANNELL: And don’t make me laugh.

STICKLER: Well, they can edit me, then.

SICULAR: My name is Patty Sicular and along with Professor Karen Trivette Cannell from New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology, we’re so happy to welcome you all back to our series of conversations. Today’s date is Thursday, June 23rd, 2011. We’re at the beautiful Vault Gallery in Culver City, California and we’re so happy to be interviewing Ken Stickler who I worked with. He was based in Los Angeles while I was based in New York and his era starts 1973?

STICKLER: Correct.

SICULAR: OK. [00:03:00] So I’m going to sit down on the other side of them and (inaudible) can take over.

STICKLER: Oh, oh. Thank you, Patty, I appreciate it. Now, are you shooting questions at me or am I just going to start --

Q: We’ll do both, you’ll see. Ready?

STICKLER: Got it.

Q: So where did you grow up? Where are you from?
STICKLER: I was born outside of Pittsburgh in Rochester, which is along the Ohio River and grew up --

Q: Rochester, New York?

STICKLER: No, Rochester, Pennsylvania, sort of a steel town. And lived mostly in the Pittsburgh area and a little bit in Michigan, growing up. So Midwestern, Midwestern values.

Q: And how did you become interested in the fashion business?

STICKLER: Well, my first, I would say my first exposure to the fashion business or fashion, I was working as an assistant buyer at the Higbee Company department store in Cleveland and they were very excited, I was in the domestics department, they were very excited [00:04:00] that Yves Saint Laurent had done a line of sheets and towels, of all things, and he was the first major designer ever to do anything like that. And the woman who came into sort of P.R. and introduce the line was Nan Kempner, whom I didn’t realize at the time, but was a fashion icon, I would say and at the time she was a contributing editor to Vogue Magazine and I was given the job of like taking her around the store and making sure she got to events and things like that. So that was like my first exposure and then time passes, time passes and I move to Miami and finally I wind up in New York City and --

Q: What year is this?
STICKLER: That would be, I got to New York in 1973. Through a friend I got a job at a design showroom called Albrizzi, which was Baron Alessandro Albrizzi and Tony [Cloughly?] and C.Z. Guest was involved in it as well, as I think a partner. And so she was sort of my second fashion icon that I met. At the same time I was meeting people in the modeling business, models and people associated with it and through luck and connections and maybe ability, I wound up getting a job as assistant to the fashion director at the Men’s Fashion Association. And that organization was a P.R. organization made up of members which would, which included designers and retailers and allied fields like that. They paid a membership fee and we covered the trends in the fashion business and put on two major fashion events every year for all the fashion editors throughout the US and some [00:06:00] foreign as well. So we provided a lot of the little blurbs you’d see and things like that. That’s how I got most directly involved in the modeling business because on that side I was the client, so I was hiring models and that’s, that was my first contact with Ford and remember Dan Deeley at Wilhelmina and --

Q: Such a nice man.

STICKLER: And [Vicky?] at Zoli. So --

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --agency also?
STICKLER: Yeah. Well, shortly, right about that, oh, and then also at the same time I was helping Max Evans, who was then the fashion director of GQ and he would produce fashion shows and things like that, which I helped out with the production. Let me think. From there, I made a short trip to, I decided to move to Boston, I have no idea why I did that and it didn’t last long. The first year I was in Boston, they had the largest snowstorm [00:07:00] that they’d had in like 100 years and people were stranded and the city was shut down for a week and I said, “I've made a big mistake,” and I had friends in Southern California and one of my friends said like, “Well, my agent Nina Blanchard is looking for a new booker,” and I thought, “Well, you know, I’ve booked models from the other side, so how difficult can it be?” I flew to California, I interviewed with Nina and it was my first exposure to her and she, she gave me that tough broad kind of exterior.

Q: I think we have a picture.

STICKLER: There is a, yeah, there’s a great picture of her with Shari Harper, it's here.

Q: (inaudible)

STICKLER: It's right here. Can you see that? Do I need to tilt it for you?

Q: She was a wonderful agent.
STICKLER: Wonderful lady. But anyway, but she gave me the old, and Patty knows how she is, “Well, Honey, I don’t know, we’ve never had a man as a booker before and you know, they want to talk about their boyfriend problems and their periods and things like that, so I just don’t know if we can have a man,” so I [00:08:00] thought, “Oh, I might be stuck in Boston for a while again,” and I went back and meanwhile she checked me out and she called Joey Hunter and Dan Deeley and other people that I had worked and I got, I guess, very great recommendations from them and she called me and she said, “Well, Honey, the job’s yours if you want it,” and I was on the next plane back.

Q: What year was this?

STICKLER: That would have been 1978, I think.

Q: OK.

STICKLER: I was never so glad to get out of Boston. So --

Q: And did they have a men’s department then? Or was it just women?

STICKLER: Yes. Nominally I was the director of the men’s division. It wasn’t, our west coast agency at that time was not like a New York agency. Really, the center of the business had always been New York, so LA was probably the next best market. But you know, the men’s division might have been like 30 men, something like that. So when it
came to decisions, I got to make the decisions about it and that was the title on my card, but as bookers [00:09:00], we only had two bookers, so you picked up the phone and you dealt with whomever called. And I soon found out it wasn’t as easy, from the agent’s side, as it was from the client’s side, because from the client’s side you would just call and say, “Hey, I need so and so on this date, are they available? This is what we’re paying,” la-la-la-la-la-la, yes, no or “I’ve got other suggestions,” but suddenly when you’re on the other side it all changes because --

Q: Because I was a client and I liked it better on the agent’s side, I thought that was easier.

STICKLER: Really, I enjoyed the agent’s side because we had so much more involvement. But on the other hand, you would be juggling and you’d go from call to call and you, you know the pace, very rapid and one minute it would be a client calling, you know, “This is our requirement, we’re looking for a model for such and such on this date,”, “Who do you suggest?” etc. And then the next call you’d pick up would be, “God damn it, [00:10:00] we’ve been waiting for this model now for an hour and a half. We’re charging you back for everybody’s time. Where the hell is she?” blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah and you’re like, “OK, you know, call you right back.”
Q: And then into (inaudible) they had to track down the models.

STICKLER: Well, and it was, all we had was a telephone, I mean, there weren’t even answering machines and you’d finally get to them and you wanted, you remember this, you wanted to say, “Listen, where the hell, what’s going on?” and you’re like, “Hi, Honey, how are you? You know, you’re a little late for your booking,” and go into, “Just get there. Just hop in the shower and I’ll tell them that you had car trouble, OK, you had car trouble,” and the model would show up, they would be very nice to the model, because they needed to get the shot. And then you’d call her in after the booking and say, “Now you’ve really got to be more careful,” and she would say, “But they loved me and I got there and they gave me coffee,” (laughter) so there was a frustration level because you got hit with a lot of stuff and you had nowhere to put it. No outlet.

Except you know, I could be talking in a very sweet voice and just throwing things against the wall. That was a, that was my stress reliever. Anyway. So I was at Nina’s for three or four years, maybe five years. Probably my favorite time in the business, because I truly adored her.

Q: And did Nina book? You said (inaudible) --
STICKLER: Hardly ever. She would often talk to the clients and maybe make the deal and then pass it over for details. She was not detail-oriented in that way. She didn’t want to write down all the stuff we used to have to write down.

Q: And she was also great on the Merv Griffin Show for so many years, she had those specials with models.

STICKLER: Well, I think, I can’t remember, I want to say it was about 30 Merv Griffin Shows that she did.

Q: How many times a year?

STICKLER: They were usually four times a year in the sweeps period, because Merv Griffin was a syndicated show, not a network show, but every time Merv Griffin did, excuse me, aired a model show, they won the sweeps period. It won over ABC, NBC, CBS because everyone was fascinated about models and the modeling business.

Q: And what year? Around 1973?

STICKLER: That started in ’79, ’78, ’79, ’80, around that time. And I think that those shows were probably the single most important factor in getting the general public interested in the modeling business and interested in knowing about models. I think that, there were so many other factors and there were, you know, great agents like Eileen Ford and like Wilhelmina and people like that, who had strong influence.
Q: And Zoli.

STICKLER: And Zoli, of course. But I think putting it on the Merv Griffin Show and at that level [00:13:00] and that was --

Q: Regular people see people (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

STICKLER: You know, they’re regular people. And Merv always asked the kind of questions that people wanted to know. They were kind of like silly questions in a way, but they were the answers people wanted to know. You know, like, “Why is your hair so long like that?” I mean --

Q: I remember one time and I’m not supposed to say the model’s name but she said something like, “What, don’t you like it?” and she said, “Uch, I hate when Vogue Magazine makes me do something,” whatever it was, like sit around or whatever, something innocuous and, and I thought, “Well, that’s the last time that girl’s going to work for Vogue Magazine.”

STICKLER: Yeah, bye-bye.

Q: Did you ever accompany the models and Nina to Merv’s show?

STICKLER: I always did, yeah. It was really like a go-see thing. Merv would call and he would say, “Well, we've got another show coming up,” and Nina and I would get together
and we would select portfolios to take over and then we’d schlep over to his office.

Q: So you got to choose the models selected.

STICKLER: Yeah, definitely. And we got to know his taste so [00:14:00] as you and I used to do when we were booking models, you would slant things toward what you thought was ideal for them.

Q: Right. Because a good agent kind of has a second sense whether it's for their models or for their clients, what they want and what they needed.

STICKLER: Exactly. You try to make the best fit you can. And to me, that was the real, that was really the ultimate reward in the job, to know that you can figure it out.

Q: What was your favorite part of booking?

STICKLER: (laughs) Six o’clock when we closed the agency. No.

Q: Because for me, I used to like when I would get a call for a product, set up the go-see, suggest people and then bring it on home, so to speak, sign those papers, get that model booked and --

STICKLER: Yeah, absolutely. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

But didn’t you find that a really fulfilling part was when you’d be getting a submission ready and you would kind of --
F:  I’ve got to come around (inaudible) fit this, we’re in the same business [00:15:00] -- I’d love to -- if I missed, OK.

STICKLER: Great.

F:  Because we were both agents, OK.

STICKLER: So you know, in your mind you would say like, “This is who they’re going to pick, this is my frontrunner,” and all that. And you’d fill it in and maybe they’d want to see 20 people or something and then they’d see like five for callbacks.

F:  But the other thing, and I’m sure as an agent, because you’re a great agent, a lot of times what they said they wanted wasn’t what they wanted.

STICKLER: No, god.

F:  So you’d listen and what they would say, it wasn’t, you knew what they really wanted and you would usually nail it and get it right.

STICKLER: Well, a great example of that and it wasn’t, unfortunately, my example, but it was Nina’s example, it was -- in the late ’70s, about the time we were doing the Merv Griffin Shows and they were doing Virginia Slims.

F:  And that was the most prestigious cigarette campaign at the time. Every model wanted to do that. Who shot that? Mel Young? Or Demarchelier.
STICKLER: It went to different photographers (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

F: But every, that was, and models would be held back from doing, they held back from doing other cigarette campaigns [00:16:00] because that was the one campaign that all the models wanted to do in the ’70s and ’80s.

STICKLER: And a lot of the other ones were very cheap. Like I think it was Kool cigarettes that always did a group shot and everybody was playing volleyball or whatever. But Virginia Slims was elegant and fashiony.

F: Right. And one the models (inaudible) right, beautiful.

STICKLER: And I think they went for like a year. So we were doing Virginia Slims. And they called us with their requirement and they said, “Oh, we want all-American,” blah-blah-blah, so you know, you had a sense of pretty much what they wanted and started sending models and in those days they would cast something like that over several days. So Nina said, “Send Shari Belafonte,” and I said, “Nina, they want all-American and she’s African American, I mean, you know,” and she said, “Send Shari Belafonte,” I’m like, “Nina, they, I don’t, you know,” “Just send her,” [00:17:00] so, “OK, I’ll send her,” well, she booked. She got the job. And you know, all-American blondes were like, “What just happened here?” but that she just had a sense
that they would fall in love with her and sure enough they did.

Q: Yeah. I know Mr. Avedon loved Shari Belafonte, also.

STICKLER: Well, there’s a thing here, let me see if I can, if this is it or, no. It's one of these -- well, you’ll be doing some editing on this.

Q: That’s OK --

STICKLER: It's a folder, it's white, it's probably one of these things. Yeah, here it is. OK. So P.S., Shari Belafonte, is that angle good for you?

Q: Wow, this is great.

STICKLER: This is just her covers. And actually, she was not model height.

Q: Right, she was about 5’6” or so. [00:18:00]

STICKLER: Maybe, 5’6” if lucky. And you know, it just shows you that Nina had the eye and I believe when she came in, she didn’t identify herself as Shari Belafonte. She was married then to a man called Harper and she came in as Shari Harper. But she had that face.

Q: I know. Was she a favorite of yours?

STICKLER: Yeah, because, because she had, she had that sense of humor, that -- I don’t want to say “snarky” but a little bit sarcastic and really quick and bright. Very bright woman, so yeah, I enjoyed that a lot.
Q: Are you still in touch with her?

STICKLER: I saw her, the last time I think, was she at the [Mowry?] Inn?

Q: Yes.

STICKLER: But aside from that I saw her at Nina’s memorial and that was nice.

Q: That was nice.

STICKLER: And we went out drinking after, it was great.

Q: Good, good.

STICKLER: She lives in a castle, it actually looks like a castle, way out north of Los Angeles.

Q: Really?

STICKLER: Yeah.

Q: You’ll see here today at the Annenberg.

STICKLER: Oh, good. [00:19:00] And her husband is very nice, too.

Q: Yeah. Did you want to look at any of the other pictures? Are you in touch with Shelley Smith?

STICKLER: Yes, I remember Shelley.

Q: She was so beautiful. You can show it, do you want me to show the picture? Let me see it. So beautiful.

M: Hold it up like this.

Q: OK.

STICKLER: Yeah. She was great.
Q: So beautiful. She’s from Tennessee. And her father was
president of Bonwit Teller.

STICKLER: I never knew that.

Q: He never gave her a job as a model because she said she was
tall and gawky with glasses and braces, but I just don’t see --

STICKLER: Or people might have thought, you know, conflict of
interest. One of my favorites for the look was Lisa
Taylor, who you had in New York (inaudible) and this is a
very famous image, it was for Dior and it was shot by Chris
von Wangenheim and it’s, you know, I don’t know if you can
see it clearly but there’s a Doberman biting her wrist. It
was, you know, at the time, that was at the time of --
[00:20:00] she’d done the movie with Faye Dunaway, The Eyes
of Laura Mars and so she was very hot. I think she’s a
classic lady. A beautiful woman. That’s the type of
beauty I always appreciated the most.

Q: And did you work with men also?

STICKLER: Yeah, well, absolutely.

Q: I met you when I worked with Ford Men in the 1980s.

STICKLER: Well, it's funny, in the modeling business, modeling
is one of the few businesses where woman always make more
money than men. And you know, I was like, yeah. The men
that seemed to work out the best and the men that got it
the most quickly were the athletic guys, like Jeff [Aguilar?].

Q: He was the number one when I worked at Ford Men.

STICKLER: Yeah. I’m sure he was your top male.


STICKLER: Bruce kind [00:21:00] of was the, was the first photographer that really understood that using athletes he could get the shots much more quickly because they had a natural feeling about their bodies and a natural grace.

Q: And then an opposite almost, but who’s also is a great model --

STICKLER: Tony Stefano.

Q: Right.

STICKLER: He was Zoli, wasn’t he?

Q: Yes. That was a great agency. Zoli was known for exotic models and men’s division.

STICKLER: Yes. Absolutely the best.

Q: He was a real gentleman in the business, everyone adored him.

STICKLER: Yeah. Zoli was absolutely a gentleman.

Q: Did you prefer working with men or women or?

STICKLER: You know, I had both that I liked a lot.

Q: Michael Taylor.

STICKLER: Hm?
Q: Michael Taylor.

STICKLER: Michael Taylor, great guy. He, (laughs) he came in and he said, “A friend of mine needs some models —”

Q: Wait, can you stop that one? I just want to let these people in that want to come in. [00:22:00] [steps away] Why is this locked?

F: I think so people don’t come in and disturb the —

Q: They’re the customers they have to come in. (inaudible)

F: It’s OK.

Q: No, it's not OK. Here, they’re opening the door. This is a customer. Hi, come on in -- (conversation with customers) [00:23:00]

STICKLER: This is going to be interesting.

M: Tell me about it.

STICKER: A nice portrait so I can put it online and do online dating. Something good, even if it's candid.

Q: (conversation with customers continues)

STICKLER: I like her like that.

Q: (conversation with customers continues)

STICKLER: How did you wind up getting involved in all of this? Well, before you started [00:24:00] picking up a camera or video or (inaudible)?

M: I used to be a drug dealer.

STICKLER: Oh. Wise choice, financially.
M: I know. (inaudible) Cocaine.

STICKLER: You know, I tried all of those things and it just never, there’s something lacking. My serotonin or whatever, never kick in. It's just like working out. I never got that, you know, the rush, the endorphins you're supposed to get.

M: What is your poison?

STICKLER: My poison is reading.

M: Reading?

STICKLER: I know. There’s an answer you've never heard. I learned to read when I was like three years old and I haven’t stopped. In fact, if I don’t have a stack of books, you know, if I get down to like one or two books I get very nervous. It focuses my mind. Because otherwise, you know, [00:25:00] I’m like badoom-badoom-badoom-badoom.

M: What I mean by poison (inaudible).

STICKLER: Yeah, I know.

M: Like (inaudible).

STICKLER: Porn.

M: Porn?

STICKLER: Definitely. (inaudible) That’s like an excavation, you don’t have to look your best.

M: (inaudible) You can’t really go to a bar.

STICKLER: No.
M: Well, some bars later.

STICKLER: Probably, probably, but that’s really (inaudible).

The only thing though with porn, it’s very isolating, which
my therapist has said that’s not good.

M: And porn can desensitize you.

STICKLER: Well, yes. But on the other hand, I’m a firm believer
in that -- I’m getting old, I lose a thought now and then.
Oh, my doctor said something about, “If you masturbate
enough you probably won’t get prostate cancer,” so keep
that in mind. [00:26:00]

M: No, but I think it’s (inaudible).

STICKLER: So I’m for it.

M: Yeah, but that’s like, you know, every couple of days, you
know. I mean, if you go for months without, you know,
choking the chicken --

STICKLER: You’d overflow, presumably. Although I can’t remember
ever having a wet dream in my life.

M: In your whole life?

STICKLER: Yeah. I mean, I must have, I would think, but --

M: Hm. Which online dating site (inaudible)?

STICKLER: I’ll plead the Fifth.

M: You’ll plead the Fifth?

STICKLER: I’ll plead the Fifth on that.

M: All right.
STICKLER: You think there’s only one? I’m on like five of them.

M: Five of them.

STICKLER: Yeah.

M: Why online? Why not out and about?

STICKLER: You know what I think, it’s got to do with technology and all of that. But --

M: You get to sample the goods (inaudible) --

STICKLER: You know, it’s like you can put out a profile [00:27:00] and you can say, you know, whatever, I’m into cactus or, or something. And it, it cuts through a lot of the stuff. Like you know, in the olden days dating was like, you know, you’d call and, you know, “Will you go out? Oh, no? Should I call you again?” blah-blah-blah. And you go out, you have a drink, whatever and you chat, “Oh, where did you grow up and what did you do?” and yak-yak-yak-yak. And finally you go through three or four dates and you're ready to close the deal and you're shot down totally. So if now you put a profile up and they’re like, “Oh, he’s hairy, I don’t want --” whatever it is. So.

M: Well, you have to learn about “last minute resistance” and bypass that. You know about last minute resistance, right?

STICKLER: Yeah. But then there’s a fine line between, I suppose between last minute resistance and rape.
M: Well, last minute resistance is when usually, you know, some woman, she doesn’t want to feel used or something. She’s like, “No, no,” so resist, a token resistance.

STICKLER: Do you should ever use the “L” word, even when you don’t mean it?

M: Love?


M: Use the word “love” when you don’t mean it.

STICKLER: Yeah.

M: That’s too powerful. That can damage (inaudible) too far. (inaudible) too far.

STICKLER: So you believe in love.

M: Something like it, yeah, I do.

STICKLER: Good.

M: I think that’s, that’s rare. (inaudible)

STICKLER: Oh, you’re so good. Now honestly, did you model at one time, or did you think about modeling? Your face is great.

M: Up in the Valley, in the Valley, I do a lot of body stuff. (laughs)

Q: (inaudible) model here? What do you think?

M: (laughs) Oh, she’s smiling, she got the joke --
STICKLER: You know, because I’ve been out of it for five years I have no idea. And now everybody submits via email.

[00:29:00] But now --

Q: I can take some pictures -- (inaudible) doesn’t want to that, they want us to ask.

STICKLER: Yeah, but you know what? Even now, in so many cases the exposure you get as a model leads to acting. I think, I don’t know if I have his card here, Ted McGinley.

Q: I remember Ted McGinley.

STICKLER: Ted’s card is here somewhere.

Q: He was so handsome. I worked with him. He was one of my models.

STICKLER: Well, it's funny, I didn’t bring it.

Q: Ted is here.

M: Ted was great on Married With Children.

STICKLER: Yeah, but before that, when Ron Howard --

Q: He was so handsome, this is around the time I handled him.

STICKLER: Yeah. Well, we sent him to you. Yeah.

Q: He was never, he never really liked New York. He never felt comfortable.

STICKLER: No, he was definitely a Southern California guy. He was a water polo player from S.C. and somebody said, “You should go and see Nina Blanchard,” now I have the Polaroid I took on him, because we used to take Polaroids.
Q: You should be filming this. Can you film this, as he's talking about this?

M: It is filming.

STICKLER: Oh, you are? There are certain, probably not put in the FIT one, like (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

[00:30:00]--

M: Send this to you.

Q: Put this on -- so you're talking about Ted McGinley now and Ted McGinley, I must say, we both handled. I worked with him in, at Ford in New York in the 1980s and you handled him for Nina Blanchard. You discovered him.

STICKLER: I started him.

Q: Right. I mean, he never really liked New York, he was always a California boy.

STICKLER: Ted McGinley came to us, water polo player from S.C. and I have the Polaroid I took the day he came in, he was wearing a pink Lacoste shirt, a gold flat choker chain and he had a unibrow. (machine noise in background) But there was something, you know, there was a sparkle.

Q: So handsome.

STICKLER: That indefinable quality that we always look for but can never tell anyone what it is. And we were all like, "Yeah, he's got it," so we sent him out, got some pictures, (laughs) got his eyebrow waxed. And he had not, I would
say, he never, in modeling he never became a star, [00:31:00] but he was one of those people who worked steadily.

Q: Because he didn’t want it.

STICKLER: Yeah.

Q: He didn’t want to be in New York or, I’m sure he didn’t want to be in New York, he wanted to be in California.

STICKLER: Yeah. But basically, almost every client we sent him to, they responded and booked him because he was just, he was the all-American guy. Sporty guy. So as happened a lot in the late ’70s, all of the, all of the movie people and all of the television people started coming to model agencies and looking at models for television and film roles. And we would tell them at the time and we would say, “You know, they’re not trained. It’s a look and they don’t, you know, sure, we’re glad for you to see them, but we can’t say that they’ll be fine actors because they’ve had no training,” but in many cases they chose --

Q: A lot of models became actresses.

STICKLER: Absolutely. [00:32:00]

Q: Sharon Stone, Rene Russo.

STICKLER: Exactly.

Q: Brooke Shields.
STICKLER: Exactly. Well, Ted McGinley. So Ted, they called us from Paramount and they said, “Richie Cunningham is leaving the show, Ron Howard is leaving the show and we need kind of a wholesome, all-American guy that we want to fill his slot with,” so they tested Ted, no acting background. I think maybe he was studying then, because we’d encouraged them all to study for commercials so they’d have some kind of a presence. And they called him in, they filmed and they called back. He got a contract and he was on Happy Days for the remaining years. From Happy Days he, Garry Marshall had produced Happy Days was doing films and he cast Ted in Young Doctors in Love, with I think Crystal Bernard, who was another client. And then he did, well, another classic film, Revenge of the Nerds, followed by Revenge of the Nerds II, [00:33:00] then he became a regular on The Love Boat, where he was the photographer on the ship and he also did a couple of seasons on Dynasty where he was Sammy Jo’s boyfriend. And then he got Married With Children, which went for quite a few years. And then he did Hope and Faith with Faith Ford and he still does a lot of TV movies, Lifetime movies and things like that. So here’s someone who, by current definition you wouldn’t say he’s a star, but certainly he’s had a continuous and long career, since about 1980.
Q: A 30-year run, that’s great.

STICKLER: Yeah, that’s damn good, I think.

Q: Who were some of your favorite models that you got to work with over the years?

STICKLER: Oh God, I have some stories, I don’t know if I could tell you.

Q: Tell us.

STICKLER: My favorite, my favorites were first, the ones who were professional, the ones who returned my calls. The ones who had a sense of humor and the ones who weren’t impressed with themselves. Whenever we were interviewing people and there were people that we thought had a good shot at it, I always had a question I would ask and I would say, “Why do you want to be a model?” and if they said, “Because I want to see myself on billboards and I want to be famous,” and all of that. Neh. And one of the best answers I got was from Jeff [Stevens?], I think you also handled him, had a very nice career [hammering/construction in background], not spectacular, but he worked a lot and he said, “I want the opportunity to travel, I want to learn languages, I’d like to learn about photography and I want to take off certain times of every year to surf.
[00:35:00] And it worked out well for him. He had a long,
comfortable career. And he had no illusions about the business and he didn’t get a swelled head about it.

Q: Was there a pecking order in the LA agency about models that came from New York? Did they think they were better than the LA-based models?

STICKLER: I didn’t encounter much of that at all. I mean, you know, there were people who would come for the first time and have expectations and the LA market was never like the New York market. I mean, if you could make $100,000 in New York, you might make $20,000 in LA. So the models who maximized their earnings were the ones who traveled, and you know, they were in New York for the right time and in LA for the right time and went to Europe to get, you know, new pictures every year or two and you know, that was the way that they maximized their careers.

Q: You worked during pretty crazy times with Studio 54 and drugs and drinking and so on and so forth.

STICKLER: Really? (laughs)

Q: Like how did you handle that [00:36:00] with the models?

STICKLER: (laughs) I’ll tell you a story about a very famous model, I can’t tell you who it was, maybe you’ll figure it out. One of our biggest clients was Robinson’s Department Store and Robinson’s was very big on using stars, women that were recognized as stars for models. I was horrified
at the rates we asked, because LA rates were generally lower than New York rates. And they called and they had to have this model, they had to have her. So we made the deal. By the way, she wasn’t with Ford.

Q: Elite?

STICKLER: Which you’ll find out is a good thing.

Q: Was she with Elite?

STICKLER: Maybe. So we got the arrangements made, fly her out, got her hotel, the whole thing, she got her details. I made a courtesy call to the set, just to say, “Hi. How do you like her?” [00:37:00] etc., etc. and I said, “Oh, how -- ” and they said, “She’s not here yet,” and it was like, she was like an hour late. I was very surprised that they hadn’t called me yelling, but, “Oh, she’s not here yet,” I’m like, “Oh, maybe she got lost. I’ll try to find out what’s going on,” so I called her agent in New York and they said, “Well, she left. We don’t know,” whatever. The phone rang and it was, I was almost saying her name, it was the model. And I, of course, wanted to say, “Goddamn it, you bitch, where are you?” but instead I said, “Honey, hi. How was your flight?” “Fine,” “What happened? You’re late,” she said, “Well, I met this man on the plane and he offered me a ride and we decided to go to --” in those days it was the Roxbury, “We decided to go to Roxbury and he had
good coke and so we partied,” [00:38:00] and I said, “OK, where are you?” she said, “I’m at a house in the hills somewhere, I don’t know where I am.” “Well, is anyone there?” “No, no one’s here,” and you had to think on your feet in those days. And I said, “Honey, look around for some mail or look around for a magazine and tell me what the address is,” so she found something and she said, “I’m at --” blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah and I said, “OK, honey, you hop in the shower and I’ll send a car there for you and you’ll get to the studio,” so she did, she was two hours late. They didn’t say a thing because she was a star. There was another also star model there who said, “Oh, honey, you look like you’ve had a rough night. Let me call my dealer and he’ll bring us something to get us through this,” which apparently happened. Those were the interesting days in the business. But somehow, as agents we dealt with all of these crises [00:39:00] and we got them through it.

Q: Yeah, I have a similar story. There was a famous model, I won’t say who it was, but I put her on a plane. She was going for a booking, I think, for Glamour Magazine and I spoke to her, I said, “Where are your sessions?” “I’m going to the airport now, I’m going to the airport and I’m going to do the booking for Glamour Magazine,” I said, “That’s
great, have fun in Florida," wherever. I get a call the next day, “Where’s so and so?” I said, “What do you mean, where’s so and so? I spoke to her and she was going to the airport to go to the booking.”

STICKLER: She’s getting on the plane. Right.

Q: I call this model at home in New York and I said, “What are you doing at home? I just spoke to you yesterday, you were on the way to the airport to do your booking for Glamour Magazine,” and she said to me, “You know, I was on the way to the airport and I just wasn’t in the mood to go so I came home,” and she never called so I could tell the client. You know, we all assumed that she was --

STICKLER: I’m wondering if it's the same model I had the experience with.

Q: We’ll discuss that after. Blonde.

STICKLER: Yes. Which, yes it was, I bet it was.

Q: Runway model.

STICKLER: Yes. [00:40:00] And it was one of the first letters of the alphabet?

Q: Yes.

STICKLER: Yes. I had that, too. Which booker, was it Rusty or Marion that had the dirty mouth? It was Rusty, wasn’t it?

Q: No, it was Marion.
STICKLER: Was it Marion? OK, it was Marion. We had booked I think the same model you’re speaking of, I think also with Robinson’s, you know, big deal, star model. And she didn’t show up. So I called Marion and I said, “Marion, where is so and so?”

Q: So and so. Beginning of the alphabet letter.

STICKLER: Mm-hmm. And she said, in her usual way, “Where the fuck do you think she is? She’s in LA because you got her booked, for Christ’s sake,” I said, “Well, Marion, she hasn’t shown up,” I said, “Can you do me a favor? Can you just call her at home and see if she’s all right?” OK, so she called her and she had her call me. She was at home in New York, and I said, you know, nicely, “Honey, what happened? Where are you?” [00:41:00] and I can’t do the accent, but I’ll kind of fake it.

Q: Right, because she wasn’t American.

STICKLER: Because she was not American.

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

STICKLER: Then she says, “Well, you know, I had a booking and after the booking I went out and it was raining and I couldn’t get the taxi and I just thought like, oh, I just can’t do this,” same one, right?

Q: From Scandinavia.
STICKLER: Yeah. Second initial kind of in the middle of the alphabet?

Q: Yes.

STICKLER: Yeah.

Q: Wow.

STICKLER: Mm-hmm.

Q: So she was an equal opportunity model agency --

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

STICKLER: Mm-hmm. (laughs)

Q: But this is a very typical story then, from that era.

STICKLER: Oh, and we had to think on our feet, so I’m like frantic like who’s in town, who’s in town? And actually I think I called Elite because they had some star in town and I said, “I’ll give you the booking if you can get --”

Q: Right. And the bookers mostly got along with all the agencies.

STICKLER: Yeah, we had communication, it was --

Q: It was the owners that didn’t like each other, but the bookers basically got along.

STICKLER: Well, we all [00:42:00] talked to one another because we wanted to get the job done.

Q: Right.

STICKLER: So you know, it was --

Q: What was the best part of booking in your era?
STICKLER: For me, the best part was when in my mind I would decide who they wanted and send people and they would choose my favorite. And I never, one of the things that maybe held me back in the business was the fact that I didn’t play favorites. I mean, I tried to please the client. Even if I really cared, especially about the model, if they weren’t right for the job I didn’t push them, or the ones who said like, “Oh, I’ve got a mortgage payment,” or “I’ve got my balloon payment coming up, get me any jobs,” and if they weren’t right I wouldn’t submit them. And that, that gave me credibility (ringing) in the business, because then when the chips were down, like when Max Factor was shooting something and a model got sick and they had to, you know, a set waiting and hair and makeup and all this stuff going on and the models [00:43:00] (ringing) couldn’t perform, they’d say, “We’re doing mascara, send me somebody, it’s got to be a great face,” whatever, and I would just say, you know, “This is who you need,” and they wouldn’t say like, “Oh, send a book over,” and they’d say like, “Send.”

Q: Because they trusted them.

STICKLER: And they, and I was, to my recollection, I was never wrong. It happened another time. They were casting for Ghostbusters and they, again, it was a small role but a
pivotal role in the movie, and they were going to model agencies because basically there was one line to it. And this was for, did you see *Ghostbusters*?

Q: Yes.

STICKLER: Well, there’s a scene on the roof where this strange woman like in a cat suit and red eyes, she’s like a monster, is fighting with the guys and they said, “She needs to be exotic, she needs to be blah-blah-blah,” whatever, [00:44:00] and we've seen models from New York and all over the place (ringing) and I, and they sent me the description in the breakdowns and I had one woman that I thought was perfect. I don’t know if she’s still around, she was called Slavitza and she was from, she was never a big model, she was more of a runway model here. And she was Eastern European and older, but she had that look like, like late 30’s, early 40’s Parisian women have, very slender with a natural elegance, but not pretty, striking. And I said, “Well, if what you're telling me is correct, I’ve got the perfect model,” “Well, we need to see more pic-” I said, “Really. I’ll send you this one woman and if she’s not right I’ll send you anyone you want,” so they saw her and they were like, “Yeah, that’s pretty good, that’s pretty good, but who else have you got?” so I did send them more people. Well, time passes. [00:45:00] They called
her back. They called her back again. And they did book her. I was right. So I nailed them to the wall because in those days scale I think was about $400 a day on the film and I said, and they were in the film business, what did they know? I said, “You know, she’s an international model and she makes,” in those days $1500 was a great day rate, I said, “And she’s $1500 a day,” and I said, “I can’t lose her, the earnings she would make from this picture.” “Well, we’re paying scale,” I said, “Well, I’m sorry, I need $1500 a day and I need plus 20% under that,” and they booked her for like eight days.

Q: Wow, that’s great. I hope she thanked you.

STICKLER: And she called me, (laughs) she called me and she said, with her Eastern European accent, “Darling, I don’t know what to do. They’re strapping me into a harness and they have red contacts in my eye and they’re going to swing me across a thing,” and I said, “Honey, just think of the money.” (laughs) [00:46:00]

Q: So like every time you see scene?

STICKLER: I do, I do. I went, she took me to the cast party of the film and when I picked her up she was already drinking vodka and she took a flask with her. She was wearing black leather pants, a totally sheer blouse with no bra on and we got there and we went out to dance and she proceeded to do
like the dirty boogie and it was outrageous, it was great fun. (laughs)

Q: I’m going to ask you a few more questions. When you booked in California were you every envious of the types of bookings that New York bookers got to take?

STICKLER: Absolutely. Because you guys had, you had the cosmetic contracts. You had all the great stuff. I mean, we had [Maura McGeggie?] because she lived --

Q: She did our Clinique for 16 years.

STICKLER: Clinique, yes. And she was very smart because she got with Joey and she, who, and she got with Lauren Hutton and talked about contracts and so forth. [00:47:00] But she --

Q: But actually it was (inaudible) the first cosmetic contract ever and that was for Revlon in the '60s.

STICKLER: Yeah. But Maura, you know, was living in Southern California and she loved that, but a very nice Canadian woman, very unassuming. So I appreciated her.

Q: And when people look at your interview in say 50 years or 100 years from now, how do you think your era of working will be remembered?

STICKLER: You know, I don’t know. If there’s more of a body of information of my era, yours and my era, actually, I think they’ll get a good, accurate picture of it. One of the things I wanted to talk about was when you and I started in
the business there wasn’t this kind of technology. I remember thinking that a telex was technology.

Q: And it was.

STICKLER: And a telex, for people who may be seeing this who don’t even know what it is, you would type in a message, and it would punch out a tape, like a ticker tape.

Q: With holes, and the holes would --

STICKLER: With holes. And then send the message. Because we used it to contact Europe because of the time difference. And then you would thread this onto a machine and hit “send” and it would go, you know, tic-tic-tic-tic-tic-tic and it would read the tape and send it I guess by telex, not even by, was it, it must have been connected to the phone in some way. And that was technology. And when we started there were no cell phones. There weren’t answering machines.

Q: Right. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --the model who didn’t have an answering machine called the florist downstairs.

STICKLER: I had, I had that once.

Q: Knock on someone’s door.

STICKLER: You would use whatever you could. You know, you’d get a last minute booking that they’d call in right before
6:00, right before you closed, everyone had checked in. Because in those days, since you couldn’t reach them, everybody called in at the end of the day, and usually in the morning, too. Which was really irritating, “Hi, anything today?” “No,” and the ones who checked in the most regularly are the ones who didn’t work much. [00:49:00] But anyway, so I got a last minute booking and I kept calling and calling and of course, all you get is the phone rings, the phone rings, hang up. Try them again, the phone rings, the phone rings. And I thought, OK, I know where she lives. There’s a florist. What is the name of that florist? So I called, I figured out what the florist was by the address in the phone book. Called the florist and I said, “Hi, how are you? One of our models lives upstairs from you and I would really, really appreciate it if she’s got her phone off the hook or something and we can’t reach her and it’s really urgent. Can you, can you go and have her call us?” and they did, which was very nice.

Another time we had a junior model, I don’t think you had her in New York, her name was Robin and she was very like by the book and she listened well, I loved Robin. So I said, “OK, you’ve got a booking on --” I think it was like Teen Magazine, on location, I think they paid like $50 a
day, something, horrible editorial rate. And I said,
[00:50:00] “Now Robin,” and she took all the directions and
everything down, I said, “If you are running late at all, I
need you to call me because I need to alert them,” well,
she took me very seriously and the receptionist said, “I
have the Highway Patrol on the line for you,” and I’m like,
“Oh my God,” and this, the highway, I picked up the phone
thinking like, oh my God, what can this be? “Hello, this is
Officer So and So from the Highway Patrol. Do you know a
girl named Robin Whatever?” and I said, “Yes. Is she all
right?” she said, “She insisted that I call you to tell you
that she’s going to be 10 minutes late for her booking.”
She’d gone to one of those phones on the freeway and picked
it up and said, (laughs) “I have an emergency.” (laughs)

Q: That’s so sweet, though.

STICKLER: I loved her for that.

Q: That’s a great story. God bless her.

STICKLER: Oh, God.

Q: I know, but there are a million stories like this.

STICKLER: There were some other things I wanted to tell you
[00:51:00] about.

Q: Sure. What?

STICKLER: Oh, let’s see. Oh. Well, you know, in the small
world division, there was a photographer who was up the
street from our office, had this tiny little studio and he was so skinny and everybody felt sorry for him and they were always like making him meals and things like that and I think he actually lived in the studio because he had no money. But he was really talented and his black and white was incredible, he was on our test list. And Bullock’s, in those days, Bullock’s was a very first class department store which no longer exists. They were doing a black and white lingerie catalogue. I think maybe because they had been influenced by that [Ebonen?] catalogue that’s done for Bloomingdale’s. And I thought he was absolutely perfect for it, so I put him together with the art director who was shooting the catalogue and they clicked and he did an exquisite [00:52:00] catalogue and while I certainly can’t say that started his career, I think that kind of started his career, as far as catalogue and that kind of work, Matthew Rolston.

Q: Did he remember you?

STICKLER: Matthew, yes. And I’ll tell you more in a little bit. So Matthew Rolston was on our test list. There was another guy on our test list who liked to shoot athletic guys and he was really good and I, at the time I thought he was very derivative of Bruce Weber, who Bruce was the premiere men’s photographer in those days. And he, we gave him models all
the time because he did great stuff. And in fact, it was Herb Ritts. So Herb was on our test list. And actually I had booked one of his most iconic images.

Q: What people don’t understand, he was a booker who would also take people under our wings to help them with their hair or makeup or styles, always pushing and pushing.

STICKLER: Well, here’s a very famous image.

Q: Right, I remember it.

STICKLER: Fred with tires. [00:53:00] And you know, I put Fred together with Herb Ritts. Now, what distresses me a lot is Herb never signed one of these pictures and gave it to me, and I just saw one sold for $10,000. Oh, and I’m sure you’ve got stories, too, things that --

Q: This is your interview, not mine.

STICKLER: Yes. But you understand the kind of thing. Another, one of my favorite stories, I was kind of like the nice guy at the agency, which --

Q: You were. We always loved you.

STICKLER: Which worked against me, I mean in favor, I’m glad I was the nice guy. It worked well for me. So everybody hated dealing with brand new photographers and --

Q: And models.

STICKLER: And models. But especially photographers, because they didn’t know what was what. So the receptionist said,
“There’s a test photographer on the line. Can you take it?” I’m like, “Sure,” and I got on the phone and this man said, “You know, I’ve been a photographer but I’ve been out of the business for quite a while and I’d like to get back into it. Is it possible I could get on your test list?” and I gave him the usual line which was, we were looking to protect the models and we were looking to see that the photography was good enough so that we weren’t wasting anyone’s time. So I said, “Well, you know, we’re always looking for new photographers. I’d love it if you could come in and show us your work, even your older work, so that we get an idea and we can match the models better to you,” and we wanted to find out that they weren’t a perv and that they had talent. So I said, “Absolutely, can you come in on Tuesday at 1:00?” or whatever it was and he said, “Certainly,” and I said, “Oh, great. Now can I take your name, I’ll put it in my appointment book,” “George Hurrell.”

Q: (gasp) Oh my goodness.

STICKLER: I don’t know, some of you younger people will have no idea who George Hurrell was. George Hurrell was the most famous movie glamour photographer, he worked in the 1930s, 1940s. All the iconic black and white --

Q: (inaudible)
STICKLER: -- images [00:55:00] that you saw of any major star, whether it was Joan Crawford --

Q: Gary Cooper.

STICKLER: Gary Cooper, Clark Gable.

Q: Ava Gardner, Lana Turner.

STICKLER: Ava Gard-- everyone. They were those exquisite, the ultimate of glamour photography. And George came in, very humble man, very nice man and I gave him anyone he wanted. Are you kidding? And then his career had a resurgence and he wound up shooting for Vogue and --

Q: That’s because of your kindness and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

STICKLER: I would like to think I had some, those are the things that made it, those are the things that gave me, you know, a passion for what I was doing and when, at the end of the day, sometimes when you were beat up and you were like, “I can’t do this anymore, there’s no reward in it,” something like that for me was the reward. And --

Q: Did he give you any pictures?

STICKLER: No. [00:56:00] (laughs)

Q: Again?

STICKLER: And I never, and I never, I really never asked. At the time, you know --

Q: Maybe you don’t know.
STICKLER: Another one was Patrick Nagel. Actually he was married to one of our models, Jennifer Dumont and Patrick had started out illustrating for Playboy, for the Letters Department and he did those little tiny faces, women faces that were kind of art decoish and they had a black outline, the faces were very white and he wanted to shoot so I gave him models, Lisa [Crossette?] I think maybe represented for a while. Was his favorite model. But he, you know, started shooting that. So I got exposed to a lot of talented people and had something to do with it along the way.

Q: It's nice that your legacy goes on.

STICKLER: I think one year our agency had more Bruce Weber GQ covers than anyone else.

Q: Wow, that's saying something.

STICKLER: Well, I mean, Southern California, we had all the athletes and stuff and the good weather.

Q: Do you have any last thoughts? [00:57:00] Before we --

STICKLER: You know, we don’t even like to think of last thoughts. Even thought I’m out of --

Q: Favorite, how would you like to be remembered in the business? How would you like to be remembered?

STICKLER: Ideally? (laughs) I would like to be remembered for my honesty and my integrity and with respect and affection.
Q: Did you love it?

STICKLER: Of course.

SICULAR: Hi. My name is Patty Sicular and together with Professor Karen Trivette Cannell from New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology, we want to welcome you to the continuation of the conversations we’re having with models, photographers, editors and other people in the fashion and beauty business. Today’s date is June 24th, 2011. We’re in the beautiful Vault, which is located in Culver City, California. You can see beautiful photographs and we’re so happy that we are going to be interviewing Andrea Dernjinsky, (machine noise) who is the daughter of the photographer [Gunter?] Dernjinsky, who professionally was known as (inaudible) “Dernjinsky”, model Ruth Newman and the stepdaughter of Wallace (inaudible) Dernjinsky. So welcome to the series. I’m sorry about the noise, but they’re building next door and (inaudible) just a little bit. OK, ready? So welcome. So you know, it's been, [00:59:00] this is a little different, this interview, because we’re interviewing you, you're the daughter of [Gleb?] and Ruth and Gleb and his wife, Wallace, passed away about two weeks ago in a car crash in Durango, Colorado. Gleb was one of the most important and
influential photographers, fashion/beauty photographers and other type of photographer, 1950s throughout the 1960s and your mom, Ruth Newman was a Ford fashion model between approximately 1957 and 1963. So do you want to start speaking about your dad or your mom?

DERNJINSKY: Wow. I think that both their careers, I mean my father probably started, obviously before her. Each of them definitely had their own ideas about what they were going to do and somehow managed to come together, through fashion and their desires.

SICULAR: Where did your dad, he was born approximately 1929?

DERNJINSKY: Nineteen-twenty-five, [01:00:00] and my mother was born in 1929.

SICULAR: OK. And how did your dad get started?

DERNJINSKY: He built his first camera at six.

SICULAR: Pretty amazing.

DERNJINSKY: I heard it was nine, but I’ve read that it was six, but I mean, from being at home, he built his first camera at nine and he worked with other people to help him build a darkroom and kind of interesting upbringing, simply because his father was a famous sculptor and was a renowned artist.

SICULAR: In Russia, under the czar --
DERNJINSKY: Well, actually, he, his father, because of the family dynamics, OK, they were an aristocratic people and so the first thing he tried to do was learn law. So after law, he then went to Paris and learned art and won numerous awards and was very prestigious and then once they, the World War or whatever, it came about, 1917.

SICULAR: The revolution.

DERNJINSKY: The revolution, then my grandfather left from Paris and came to the United States, he had an aunt in New York, and he actually [01:01:00] came into Ellis Island twice and then, and then left and then came back.

SICULAR: And your grandfather worked under, but when the last czar was still alive, Nicholas, he worked under, in that realm.

DERNJINSKY: Yeah. I don’t think he went back to Russia with his work. I think he stayed in Paris and then he came to the United States and he came into New York and he started working here. And he ended up in museums and so forth. So as my father was growing up, there were, it was very, very important culture and his first language was French, his second language was Russian and I don’t think he learned English till he was five. His sister was a concert pianist. And amazing background. And my grandfather did not think that photography was an art. It was very far
from an art, so growing up with that thought in mind, of being, wanting to be an artist in the field of photography, was really going against the grain in the family. It was not art. Music was art. Theatre was art, but --

SICULAR: But he right, your father, he knew, you know, there’s a model Carmen and I know your dad photographed [01:02:00] her a lot and she was good friends with your mom, Carmen once said, “The world can tell you you’re wrong, but if you know you’re right, then you're right,” (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

DERNJINSKY: Oh, nothing was going to stop him, from whatever it is he wanted to do. He did, I guess really, his real first photography was World War II, during the Holocaust. And he was at some concentration camp that I don’t remember and took some pretty graphic photographs and then come back and then after the war he got a loan and he started his studio and he hooked up with all sorts of, you know --

SICULAR: I know he worked with [John Rawlins?] he told me was one of his mentors.

DERNJINSKY: I heard that.

SICULAR: Photographer.

DERNJINSKY: He was a very open man about who he hired. He didn’t care where you, what your background was, or your age. All he cared about was whether you could do the job
or not. And I imagine working with him was fantastic in a lot of ways, but being a perfectionist as everyone that’s in this field that was really, really great is a perfectionist, I’m sure it wasn’t that easy to work with him. (laughs) But he did start then shooting, [01:03:00] I guess the fashion, I don’t know how the fashion actually started. But there it was, he was in that field and I have no idea how he really got started in that. Or how, when he met my mother, obviously.

SICULAR: Do you know who some of his favorite photographers were?

DERNJINSKY: I don’t think he ever --

SICULAR: Did he ever talk about, did he talk about his work at home?

DERNJINSKY: (construction noise) Yeah. My father was notorious for talking a lot about himself. I mean, that was, you know, I mean, my father spoke, you listened. Because he had something interesting to say. And he might repeat stories. It was well worth listening to the repeated stories.

SICULAR: And did you have a lot of his friends (inaudible)?

DERNJINSKY: Right now I have --

SICULAR: (inaudible) (construction continues)
DERNJINSKY: No, no. But I mean, as we were growing up and we were traveling, he’d be going on these different shoots after the fashion world and we would sit down and it would be slide night, new, you know, series of photographs and he’d put them in the [01:04:00] projector and we would sit there and we would all be expected to, you know, ooh and ahh, but only on those that we really felt were ooh and ahhh. It was really a true evaluation. He knew what was really great simply by when we went (gasp), “Oh!” and I didn’t really realize that in that particular moment up until just recently.

SICULAR: And when did he meet your mom? And how did they meet?

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

DERNJINSKY: I think she was just a model on the scene and he was the photographer, you know.

SICULAR: (inaudible) picture?

DERNJINSKY: And there they met and started doing their thing and they hit it off, I think, right from the very beginning.

SICULAR: Your father was so good looking and she was just so beautiful.

DERNJINSKY: And the two of them were really quite a pair. And then my father pretty much had like three models or so that he used to take on trips and it usually was Carmen, my
mother, Ruth and then I don’t know who the third one was.
And they went on all sorts of adventures.

SICULAR: (inaudible) third one? [Nana Von Trufe?] [01:05:00]
DERNJINSKY: Oh, that’s right.
SICULAR: That’s what (inaudible) used to say.
DERNJINSKY: Nana. Amazing. I forgot all about that. They
were really the foursome and so they did a lot of these.
And then I think the first really big gig that dad got was,
he got four pages for Paris.

SICULAR: For Harper’s Bazaar?

DERNJINSKY: For Harper’s Bazaar.

SICULAR: And that would have been under [Carmel Palin Snow?]
the editor-in-chief then.

DERNJINSKY: That sounds very familiar. And so off he went,
he did his four pages for Paris and I’m sure there were
other shoots all in between that. The following year, and
Mel was telling me something about them going back and
forth, one would get spring, one would get fall, dadadada,
Mel Sokolsky.

SICULAR: OK, who else had photographed for Harper’s Bazaar in
the 1960s and ’70s?

DERNJINSKY: Yes. So my dad was like 10 years his senior, so
I think Mel learned a lot, really, really good, off of
other photographers, as well as being wise enough to hold
onto a lot of the things. There was no sense of, I don’t think my father or my mother, particularly, [01:06:00] had any sense of value in what they were doing. Or that, I mean, I think he knew he was doing art, that was what he was about. He was doing art. And that he could make a living doing this art was great. And he had a sense of value to it, I don’t think he had any --

SICULAR: A lot of photographers then, a lot of negatives were thrown out, a lot of prints. People didn’t realize the value of their work back then.

DERNJINSKY: No, no concept whatsoever. The second year that they were going to go to Paris, they called them into the office and said, “Well, Gleb, you're going back to Paris,” and they said, “But you're going to have to work really on something big because you've got 25 pages,” and he had to think about what he was going to do with 25 pages. Not only that, but he had four pages the year before and how was he going to outdo himself? And so when he got there, his experience from the war, reconnaissance, he went on reconnaissance through Paris and he tried to get a feeling for Paris in a totally different way and he went into meet jobs and checked out lamps and histories of lamps and anything that he could do any kind of research [01:07:00] on, and that was the series that he ended up doing that
really was a really big deal for that particular Paris collection, that 25 pages and he involved these girls with all of, let’s see if we can even find one of these great pictures, involved in the feeling of being a part of Paris in these amazing dresses that just didn’t fit.

SICULAR: Weren’t they photographed at night?

DERNJINSKY: What’s that?

SICULAR: Were they photographed at night? Was that the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

DERNJINSKY: Some of them were at night, and some of them were great in the streets, you know, with the meat man.

SICULAR: I was going to say by the pig guy, pig (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

DERNJINSKY: My mother dancing with the meat guy, it was just fantastic.

SICULAR: With the aprons on, yes.

DERNJINSKY: Yep. Mm-hmm. And there’s a whole series of pictures that I had, yes, here. I mean, this is the one that they published.

SICULAR: That’s the selling pig’s feet.

DERNJINSKY: Right. And, and how involved they got. There’s a whole incredible series of [01:08:00] restaurants and just --

SICULAR: Maxim’s, the Bridges.
DERNJINSKY:  Beautiful.

SICULAR:  Notre Dame.  Carmen.

DERNJINSKY:  Yes.  Oh, that was incredible picture.  And this is Notre Dame.  It would be nice if my mom was here because she would really be able to tell you so much, that as you grow up you don’t really realize even the sense of value.

SICULAR:  That’s your mom.

DERNJINSKY:  Yeah.

SICULAR:  That’s beautiful.

DERNJINSKY:  And there’s something written on the back.  I don’t know what it is.  Number 130, oh, I don’t know, but in any event.  I mean, the ability to, I mean I heard lectures on lighting and -- This is no Photoshop.  You know, you either get it or you don’t.  And he knew what he was doing with the lighting.  He saw everything.  Carmen said that he was one of the greatest photographers to work with.

SICULAR:  That’s why Nana keeps working with the best.

DERNJINSKY:  Yeah.  And each one that, I don’t think actually got published.  I love this one.

SICULAR:  That’s great.

DERNJINSKY:  And so you see these things and there’s so many things [01:09:00] that were the outtakes.  That’s the
outtakes. Can you imagine how difficult it was to pick out the ins?

SICULAR: Did he edit his own film?

DERNJINSKY: I imagine he had to turn them in.

SICULAR: And he brought them five choices? Down to five or ten choices.

DERNJINSKY: Probably. I mean, in the end it's the magazine’s decision as to what they’re going to put in. He just provides the work. But there are sheets like this where you can see the rejections.

SICULAR: That’s a contact sheet.

DERNJINSKY: Yeah.

SICULAR: So when he went on a shoot, for instance, he had to come up with the concept of his photographs?

DERNJINSKY: Yes. I mean, I think a lot of thought went into all of his things. He knew what he was doing before he got to Paris. That was a long flight.

SICULAR: Did he get to pick the models? On his (inaudible)?

DERNJINSKY: I’d imagine. I really don’t know. I just know that he often worked with these three girls.

SICULAR: And once your parents were married, did he choose mostly your mom? To work with Ruth?

DERNJINSKY: My mom still worked with plenty of other people.

SICULAR: Who else did she work with?
DERNJINSKY: Anybody and everybody. [01:10:00] Because she was on all sorts of covers. She did, she didn’t care as long as she was working, so she did Vogue Pattern. She did Redbook, she did, she was on something with Life. She --

SICULAR: And we see Harper’s Bazaar and --

DERNJINSKY: And Harper’s Bazaar, of course, was like, I mean, her main thing. But nothing stopped her from working. I mean, here’s a perfect example. She didn’t care whether it was this funny ad or it was high fashion on the cover of the magazine. She enjoyed what she did and that was it.

SICULAR: And it's also very strange, not strange but you know, most people, they worked either for Vogue or Harper’s Bazaar and here’s your mom doing both.

DERNJINSKY: Yep. Is it so for all cover girls? I don’t know.

SICULAR: Back then, back then, yeah.

DERNJINSKY: Really? Well, she got them all. She got, I mean numerous magazines. I have more than I can tell you. And I’m sure there are many more that I don’t have or wouldn’t even remember or know. My grandmother, my mother’s mother, Augusta, saved some things [01:11:00] from my mother. She was a saver. So then she passed it onto my mother and then my mother started actually putting a collection together when I think that the, the light bulb went off, “Oh my
gosh," you know I mean, I think she knew in the moment that
she was having this really beautiful, amazing, glamorous
life, but it was about being models, it was about
traveling, it was about, and then I think my father was
very sophisticated and she learned food and you know, all
the things that go with that and beautiful clothes and
beautiful things.

SICULAR: Do you think your dad could have been as successful a
photographer in any era of photographing?

DERNJINSKY: No question about it.

SICULAR: And how would you describe his era? Because his era
was the 1950s and the 1960s for Harper’s Bazaar. Plus he
photographed for Look Magazine, Glamour Magazine, Esquire
Magazine, I mean, he did so much.

DERNJINSKY: How would I describe his career?

SICULAR: Would you describe his style a certain way? Or his
era of --

DERNJINSKY: I think that he really was involved [01:12:00]
with the emotions of the people. I know that the
connection that he had with my mother a lot of times was
so, so dynamic, simply because I think that they were
absolutely madly in love. So, and they could read each
other. Now that’s how my mother described it.

Interestingly enough, when I spoke to Carmen last week, she
described the same thing, as far as having a connection. That there was something natural in it, you know. She knew what he was looking for, they knew how to put their leg, they knew how to move their hands. They knew everything that they were reading. It was, it was magic. Not like models today. (laughs) You know, these girls were amazing. They were concerned about what they did. Someone told my mother she couldn’t use her hands and that it was horrible. It didn’t take her but a matter of weeks to start studying how to use your hands, to change how she did it. If you look at her photographs you don’t even have to see her face, you look at her hands, you know it was her. Just the same way as you can look at dad’s [01:13:00] photographs and know, “That’s Gleb, that’s Gleb.” There’s no question about it. I mean, there’s no mixing any of them up. I know he admired other photographers and other people’s work.

SICULAR: (inaudible) I know John Rawlins because I remember him saying that.

DERNJINSKY: I imagine you could probably go way, way back. I mean, I believe Penn was before dad. But then also, two people, [Stinich?], I can’t remember who they are.

SICULAR: Steichen?
DERNJINSKY: Yeah. And I saw that in writing and it was interesting because somebody else --

SICULAR: Stieglitz, maybe?

DERNJINSKY: Mm-hmm. And so it's, it's like almost one of those things where you would like to go back and study and see where they got their ideas.

SICULAR: Did you ever get to go on any of the sets with your parents?

DERNJINSKY: Well, I was born in '61.

SICULAR: Right.

DERNJINSKY: And my mom's last modeling job was '63.

SICULAR: Did you ever model with her? Did you ever do anything?

DERNJINSKY: Oh, yes. I was in one magazine, so I ended up with [01:17:00] you know, unusual, today we get our Social Se-- you're born, you get a Social Security card. In those days you still had to apply and I think I had a Social Security card as young as like four years old.

SICULAR: Wow.

DERNJINSKY: And so I was in some magazines and different shoots and dad would take us along. Later when dad stopped shooting for Harper's, he went into making commercials and I could remember very clearly being on sets there and him directing and director of photography and those kind of
things and his ideas. I think the most cool one was, he had a donut commercial and they wanted to make it in outer space. And so they made some kind of a box and they put holes in the box and the light shined through like the stars and they donuts were hanging on little thin thread so that you couldn’t see them and they were going to soar through the donuts in outer space. And I went home, I made that box immediately. (laughs) I thought it was great. But that’s art. And learning art really hands-on, I had a really great experience in understanding art because of it.

SICULAR: When your mom finished her modeling career, I know she had you and your sister, also, children. Did she miss it? And did she comment on models after her era ever, looking through fashion magazines?

DERNJINSKY: She started in advertising and, and at that point, I’m trying to think how old I was. Maybe like seven, ’61, ’68, 1968 then, I think my folks got divorced. Really mad love. Really madness also, OK, and maybe that had a lot to do with the beginnings, the beginnings of an end of something and the beginnings of something new. And always when one door is closing and you're really not familiar with it, you're not quite sure if the next one’s going to better or not.
SICULAR: Right.

DERNJINSKY: And she did start into advertising and then she was diagnosed with cancer. Of, I’m going to take a wild stab at this, the cervix. They, she had surgery. We went out. We had moved from country in Pound Ridge to the city, my father was on the East Side, she was on the West Side. And when she, [01:16:00] she went to the West Indies to recover from the surgery for a couple of weeks with some friend that she had kept in touch with and when she came back she said to two little girls, “How would you like to move to the West Indies for six months?” of course, we thought that would be fabulous, as she was handing us cute little bracelets with shells on them. And so off we went for six months and stayed three years. And my mother became a completely different person. Only till now have I gotten some idea of why that is. I mean, in those days there wasn’t chemo and there wasn’t any promise that you would be OK. Just because we took this out doesn’t give you any -- so I imagine that the doctor sat down and said to her, “You know, you might be OK for a while, but we can’t promise you anything. So we expect you to go out there and continue to live your life to the fullest,” and I think she really did. She went to [Backway?] and she decided to do whatever she wanted to do, in any way, shape
or form and she enjoyed her life and she enjoyed food and friends and anything and everything. She went sailing, she did many different things.

SICULAR: Was she proud of her career? Was she happy? I mean, she had a fabulous career. [01:17:00]

DERNJINSKY: I think the cancer probably knocked her for a loop. And she forgot about that. I don’t think, and, I mean you’re really a beautiful woman like this, I mean, your first surgery like that I’m sure was traumatic.

SICULAR: Traumatic for any woman.

DERNJINSKY: Absolutely. And so --

SICULAR: Anyone.

DERNJINSKY: For anyone. I mean, it's kind of like losing your womanhood. So I imagine that here you are, this beautiful woman, I mean, it certainly didn’t mar her body. I mean, she had a great body and she looked amazing, (laughs) she was like 38, 39 years old. And she was beautiful, but I don’t think she spent a lot of time, in that sense of vanity, until much later on. (laughs) Then she got very vain. (laughs) She was involved and she appreciated. She started to realize and appreciate what she had contributed to the world of fashion.

SICULAR: Yes she did, right.
DERNJINSKY: And she was known as one fantastic model. Most people don’t realize that, that modeling is really an art. And in those days these girls did not get credit for it. The photographer’s name went on the magazine cover or [01:18:00] on the inside of the magazine or whatever things were being shot. And their name, who’s that? You know, you're a model. You're a mannequin. A living mannequin. But they weren’t. They really, really understood a lot about themselves, their bodies, the clothes, their hands. And what the photographer was reaching for. I mean, my dad saw this suit and put her with a black and white background and in fact, he used this background for several different things.

SICULAR: I know.

DERNJINSKY: A couple of swimsuits and --

SICULAR: When was that? Do you know what that back then was?

DERNJINSKY: I have no idea but it looks like some kind of a map place. I don’t know but I’ve always wanted to know and it's a fantastic, somebody will find out and tell me, one day. January, 1958. You know. I never saw all these things.

SICULAR: And not only you have this stuff from being a good model, what people don’t realize is back then when the
models did these bookings, they had to show every single seam, button, pocket, hem, everything had to show.

DERNJINSKY: And while she was making sure that that was all happening, she also knew that her arm was on that line.

SICULAR: [01:19:00] Wow.

DERNJINSKY: That’s not an accident. That is not an accident. They both knew where it was going. Partially from direction and innate. And I think that that’s why my father loved shooting her, he loved shooting Carmen. They so knew where their arms and legs were going in respect to what was going on behind them.

SICULAR: Great.

DERNJINSKY: They knew it. It's amazing, what they knew.

SICULAR: How would you like your mom’s career to be remembered? What do you want the world to know about your mom? When people look at this interview 50 years or 100 years from now, you can hold up a picture. Do you have a favorite picture?

DERNJINSKY: I would really, really love it. This is like picking a favorite color. How could you? All of them are beautiful. It depends on the mood. All of them are beautiful. I love cars, so I’ll pick that one. But my dad loved cars and she was into it.

SICULAR: That’s like a Jaguar or something.
DERNJINSKY: But [01:20:00] she so understood what it meant to be elegant and beautiful and portray that. And she managed to look different in all those photographs. I would love it if the girls of today would have the opportunity to study these kind of photographs and understand what an art it was, because I think that there are more mannequins today to get credit for what they do, opposed to what these women did. Which were really artful. With great photographers, they could really be a team, it was a team effort then. Neither one of them could have gotten this picture without each other.

SICULAR: And how would you like your dad’s work to be remembered?

DERNJINSKY: Really, so stupendous an artist that I would love him to be studied, I’d love him to be remembered, I would be saddened if it turned out that he was just another name in Wikipedia.

SICULAR: Always remembered around the world.

DERNJINSKY: I would love to spend the rest of my [01:21:00] life meeting anybody and everybody, whoever knew him or ever wanted to know him.

SICULAR: So do you want to put your email address or website? People can reach you?

DERNJINSKY: You can email me at upyourear@hotmail.com.
SICULAR: Any last thoughts?

DERNJINSKY: I hope that everybody can enjoy this for eternity. I hope a thousand, 2000 years from now we all manage to not destroy the earth, that we can look back on these things and know how important they were and how beautiful, amazing people they were. [01:21:39]

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