



Dreamland, Jeff Gillette

## Once Upon a Time in Hollywood

*I don't care if Americans think we're running Hollywood and Wall Street. I just care that we get to keep running them!*

Joel Stein, L.A. Times, 2008

### **N**ATION: **HOLLYWOOD**

FOUNDED: 1912 (Universal Studios)

GDP: \$36.8 billion (revenues, 2021)

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### **Canter's Deli, Los Angeles, Friday a.m.:**

TIM ROTHMAN (**Sony**): Well, whaddya know?...It looks like the whole Big Five mishpocheh is here. *Bad Boys for Life!*

BRIAN ROBBINS (**Paramount**): Nope. Bergman said he'll be late...By the way, you guys all know I'm Jewish, right?

PETER CRAMER (**Universal**): *Like a Boss*. But who cares? Like Alan King said, "They tried to kill us, we won, let's eat!" ...By the way, what happened to our putz waiter? *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

ALAN BERGMAN (**Disney**): Shalom, everyone! I hope none of you mind me inviting Kevin here to join us for brunch.

KEVIN FEIGE (**Marvel**): Ahalan, all! ...You guys all know I'm Jewish, right?

MICHAEL DE LUCA (**Warner Bros.**): Who cares? You're the *Goat!* The highest grossing producer of all time!...Anyway, most people don't know I'm Jewish, either.

FEIGE: De Luca sounds Italian to me.

DE LUCA: You should talk, schmuck! I heard a rumor you deleted all the Jewish references from your Wikipedia profile.

BERGMAN: Chill out, guys, we're here to schmooze, not kvetch! Speaking of chill, isn't that the *Ice Princess* from the Screen Actors Guild coming over to our table?

FRAN DRESCHER (**S.A.G.**): Well, if it isn't *The Suicide Squad!*...I see you *Inglorious Basterds* decided to *Cry Macho* before our strike completely *Screwed* you.

CRAMER: You *Abominable* bitch! Your stupid four-month writers' strike *Flushed* Away billions from our industry!... A *Black Widow* like you should be in a *Safe House*!

[gets up out of his chair]

DRESCHER: *Bring It On*, you little *Frankenweenie*! You're a *Big Fat Liar*, *Rocketman*!... Look, *Dumbo*, I know there are *Those Who Wish Me Dead*, but with A.I. coming, it doesn't take *Superintelligence* to see that our strike saved you *Little Fockers* from the *Annihilation* of the film industry!

[stomps off]

CRAMER: Oy vey, *Despicable Me*! What a *Puss in Boots*... [shouting] *Anyone But You*, bitch!... Go woke, go broke!!!

DE LUCA: You're *Playing with Fire*, *Packy*, unless you like *Mortal Kombat*.

BERGMAN: Yup, *She's Out of My League*. By the way, Brian, you made such a big deal out of being Jewish, so why'd you change your name? I mean, *Whisky Tango Foxtrot*.

FEIGE: *Mama Mia*, *Here We Go Again*.

ROBBINS: *Get Out*!... So I changed my name from Levine, so what? You guys know my predecessor, Brad Grey, was Jewish, too?

BERGMAN: Yeah, what a schmuck Sumner Redstone was when he *Flipped* poor Grey in that management *Purge* while Grey was in the hospital. *Without Remorse*, even though the poor guy was about to be *Spirited Away*!... What *Intolerable Cruelty*!

ROBBINS: Yeah, no *Atonement* at all, but *It's Complicated*, a *Clash of the Titans*. Don't forget Grey ran a series of flops that cost Paramount \$450 million. Redstone was a *Dinosaur*, but he was *Nobody's Fool*.

BERGMAN: Which reminds me, wasn't Redstone born Sumner Murray Rothstein? He had his father change it to Redstone when he was 17, so he's a big *Cop Out*, too.

ROBBINS: Who cares? *Let Them All Talk*.

You know, guys, I long for the good old days of the studio system, like we had *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. We controlled everything, but we got more *Love Actually* back then, before that *Jackass Forever* Weinstein had to go and *Screw the Pooch*.

ROTHMAN: Yeah, *Captain Underpants*!

ROBBINS: Everybody hates Hollywood now. And since the world got *Locked Down* and the *Inception* of streaming, I'm telling you, it's seems like the *Dawn of the Dead*!

DE LUCA: Yeah, except for *Wonder Boys* like Alan and Kevin here. *No Hard Feelings*, guys, but you might be *The Last of Us*.

FEIGE: Maybe, but don't forget, it was *Mob City* in the old days. And you guys still make the occasional *Moonshot* like *Barbie*.

ROBBINS: Yeah, but still, *Transformers* like Disney are taking over the movie world. **Marvel, Pixar, Lucas, 20th Century Fox**. What's next? Paramount?... Speaking of which, do you realize Paramount is the last major studio actually located *in* Hollywood?

DE LUCA: Well, maybe this deal between Warner and Paramount will save our tuchis.

ROBBINS: As my bubba used to say, "Hope for a miracle but don't rely on it."

FEIGE: Don't be so *Disenchanted*, guys! I know it looks like *Mission Impossible* right now, but there's always gonna be *Dumb Money* from some *Joker* like Bezos who'll bankroll even *An Extremely Goofy Movie*.

CRAMER: Ha ha. *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

ROBBINS: RIP **Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer**. But you know, streamers like **Netflix, Apple,** and **Amazon** are both *Beauty & the Beast*.

BERGMAN: It's a *Strange World*, isn't it?

FEIGE: So guys, What's *The Game Plan*?

[waiter finally appears]

BERGMAN: Lox and bagels all around!

CRAMER: Yeah, and make it *Fast & Furious*, would ya, pal? I'm *Ravenous*! ■