



**Once in a Lifetime**

**GLOSSARY**

**Compiled by Laurence Maslon**

**The West Forties, New York City:** In 1904, with the introduction to the IRT subway system through 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Broadway, the area north of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street on Manhattan's west side became the center of the theater business. Named after the "New York Times," Times Square drew not only an increasing number of legitimate and vaudeville theaters, but various restaurants, hotels, booking offices, managers, agents, and publishers. In other words, by 1928, it would be the logical place for May, Jerry, and George to live.

**VARIETY:** Called "the Bible of Show Business," the magazine was born in 1905 as the official organ of the vaudeville (or variety) act. News about the theater ("Legit"), radio, film, etc. were late additions to its coverage. It is an American icon for its colorful, self-generated jargon; i.e., "d.j." for disk jockey, "ankled" for a show that closed, "boffo" for a smash hit, "stix" for the hinterlands, etc. Its most famous headline, about the lack of box office for rural films in hinterlands was "Stix Nix Hick Pix."

**Old vaudeville act:** Vaudeville was the dominant form of American entertainment from about 1890 to 1925. Every city in America had at least one vaudeville theater by 1900. Acts ranged from comics to singers to acrobats to dramatic readings to trained animals. An organization of ten acts was called a "bill" and a bill was performed continuously three to four times a day for a week's duration; then the bill went to another town, or was hastily rearranged if it--or an act in it--flopped. There were several "circuits" or chains of theaters that acts could play in--the most famous were the Keith-Albee and the Orpheum. Contracts were exclusive between an act and a circuit. It was every performer's dream to stop travelling around and go to New York or Chicago, one might have a less itinerant existence. With the gradual popularity of Broadway revues, radio, and film in the 1920s, an act could break out of vaudeville and into more lucrative and permanent careers. The list of performers who did is mammoth: Al Jolson, the Marx Brothers, Mae West, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, the Nicholas Brothers, etc, etc.

**Automat:** Probably the first fast food in America, the Automat was operated by Horn and Hardart and made its NYC debut in 1912. Its flagship restaurant was at Broadway and 45<sup>th</sup>. A self-service establishment, the Automat allowed customers to put a nickel into a slot where pie, or sandwiches, would emerge through a little glass door. Coffee was especially good and, as there was no wait service, one could linger all day and night.

**Connellsville, PA:** The Midwest provided New York City entertainment with many practitioners. Among them were George S. Kaufman, who came from Pittsburgh, and his colleague Marc Connelly, who came from McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin seem to be the "back home" destinations of choice for films and plays of the 1920s and 30s.

**Pre-Roxy:** The Roxy Theater was built in 1927 at 50<sup>th</sup> and Broadway as the "Cathedral of the Motion Picture." Like its rival, Radio City Music Hall, it was ornate and elaborate and



had battalions of ushers, dressed in semi-military uniforms. "Roxy" was Samuel Rothafel, its entrepreneur.

**Dead-pan feeder:** A comic who sets up or "feeds" lines or gags to his/her partner. Could be a straight-man, like Bud Abbott, or, more likely, someone like Gracie Allen who responds to or creates jokes without irony or self-consciousness.

**The big time:** The aspiration of every vaudevillian. This specifically meant either playing the best theaters in major cities (Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, etc.) or having the best spot in the bill (second-to-closing) or playing a major theater in New York City that only ran the bill twice a day. Although the term has entered common parlance (like Dick Cheney's remark), it is a specific vaudeville reference.

**Play the Palace:** The "Valhalla of Vaudeville". Built in 1913, at 47<sup>th</sup> and Broadway, it became the showplace for the Keith Circuit. Names went up in lights in 1928, and major acts included the Marx Brothers, Eddie Cantor, George Jessel, and Sarah Bernhardt. In 1932, it was turned into a movie theater, signalling the official death of vaudeville.

**Al Jolson:** One of America's most popular and influential performers. Born as Asa Joleson in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1886. An outsized singer and comedian, he toured vaudeville and adopted blackface singing routines as early as 1909. By 1912, he was hired by the Shubert Brothers to star in a series of loosely plotted musicals at the Winter Garden, usually as a jolly servant named Gus. He was famous for putting a song over with extraordinary vocal power and emotive force; he often abandoned the show he was performing, sent the supporting cast home, and sang his own repertoire in front of an intoxicated audience for hours. When George Jessel turned down the leading role of Jake Rabinowitz in *The Jazz Singer* (a character much like Jolson), Jolson decided to make his first feature film. He became a cultural icon for his portrayal. Ironically, Jolson's over-the-top performance style became quickly obsolete as talking pictures became more subtle.

**The Jazz Singer:** Released on October 10, 1927 by Warner Brothers, this is the film that revolutionized Hollywood. Based on a story by Samson Raphaelson, it's about a Jewish performer who turns his back on his faith to become a vaudeville sensation (and his faith calls him back). It was not the first all-talking picture; rather, it has about 20 minutes of talking and songs--however, those moments were the most powerful in a feature-length film ever. "You ain't heard nothin' yet!" was Jolson's first line and it became a battlecry for sound film. It was an immense success, the Number #2 film of 1927, despite being in general release for only several weeks.

**Vitaphone:** A patented process for synchronizing sound with images. Developed in 1925 by Western Electric, it was dubbed "Vitaphone" after the Vitagraph Studio recently bought by Warner Brothers. It was one of two sound-synchronization systems being developed; one was sound on film, but Vitaphone was a series of phonograph recordings that required great discipline in the projection booth to keep in synch with the projected film. Initially, Vitaphone was expected to play orchestral accompaniments to silent films, and it did in 1926. It also accompanied several short subjects, like recorded vaudeville acts. However, other technologies, like "Movietone", a better system used only for newsreels, forced Warner Brothers hand. They decided to put considerable resources into a Vitaphone



feature--*The Jazz Singer*. Other studios waited for Warners to fail and "sat out" sound technology. By the end of 1928, however, it was inescapable and, ironically, it was sound-on-film that became dominant to this day.

**De Mille:** Cecil B. De Mille was a pioneering film director, who began his career as a stage manager and a playwright. In 1913, he bought the rights to a Broadway success called *The Squaw Man* for producer

**Jesse L. Lasky's** Feature Play Company, a film company Lasky founded with Samuel Goldwyn. De Mille decided to film his property on location in Arizona, a revolutionary idea. But Arizona was too primitive, so he went further west to Los Angeles, where the climate was good for film-making. Lasky and Goldwyn followed, making them the true Hollywood pioneers, as they were also eager to produce feature-length films, in marked contrast to their competitors.

**Gold-rush; '49ers:** On Jan 23, 1848, James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill, a saw mill at Coloma, California on the America River. News of the discovery traveled about as fast as molasses in January, at least until Sam Brannan had made the trip to the hills and back from San Francisco (Yerba Buena). Brannan was an industrious Mormon in his late twenties that had come to California for adventure. He found it. Gathering his loot and returning to San Francisco as quickly as he could, Brannan rushed into the town streets yelling, "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!" Sam had been the first to tell San Francisco of the discovery on May 12, 1848 Gold seekers soon arrived from San Francisco, San Jose, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego to the gold fields and by end of the summer of 1848 many were present with prior gold mining experience, from as far away as Chile and the Deep South.

**Elocution and voice culture:** Although public speaking (what used to be called "rhetoric") was written about and taught as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the late Victorian era brought a new social skill (and hierarchy) into speaking and elocution. As any one who ever saw *Pygmalion* knows, proper speech was a social passport to another world. Voice Culture would have dealt with posture, breathing, tone, pitch, rhythm, and force, as well as articulation. Public speaking was important social skill in America after the the Great War, and declamation, poetry, famous speeches, proclamations, and debates would have been taught to students, along with their exercises.

**"California, Here I Come!"** Written by Buddy de Sylva, Joseph Meyer, and Al Jolson for the 1924 show *Big Boy*, it became a Jolson standard for his entire career.

**Ladies' smoker:** Luxury trains had small smoking rooms or parlors outside the rest rooms. On a transcontinental trip, there were numerous public rooms--observatories, dining cars, etc.--where people met and chatted.

**Gloria Swanson:** One of the more glamorous actresses in films, she made over 50 silent features in the 1920s. Exotic and sexual, she played the harlot *Sadie Thompson* in 1927 and made a successful transition to talkies in 1928, with her sexy contralto.



**Ritzed:** snubbed. Derived from someone "putting on the Ritz", or displaying snobbishness to another person.

**"Hollywood Happenings":** Hollywood gossip permeated the country. Despite the alliterative name of Helen Hobart (and her column), the model for the gossip columnist was Louella Parsons, who began her career in the 1910s, written movie titles. Let go as a writer, she turned to journalism, reviewing films for various newspapers. She put in a few tid-bits and interviews in her column, and a phenomenon was born. By 1925, she was hired by W. Randolph Hearst to be the motion picture editor for his *Los Angeles Examiner*. (Louella had been particularly complimentary about Hearst's mistress, actress Marion Davies.) She became the most influential gossip columnist of her time, revealing--which studios were reluctant have shared--the marital status of Hollywood stars. As the 1930s went on, she became more feared, more powerful, and, shall we say, more creative with her items. She responded to the numerous objections with a "oh, well!" sort of attitude. When former actress Hedda Hopper turned to journalism in 1936, Louella finally had a rival.

**Cary Cooper:** Cooper had been in silents since the early 1920s, usually as a background extra or bit players in Westerns. He gained notice in small part in *Wings* (1927) and had a huge success in a romantic melodrama *Lilac Time* with Colleen Moore in 1928. It was always said "The camera like him" and when sound came in, his baritone voice helped. But it was his strong manly taciturnity--"When you say that, smile"--that made him one of Hollywood's most enduring stars.

**Rex the Wonder Horse:** Yes, Virginia, there was a Rex the Wonder Horse, the star of several Pathe serials in the 1920s, where the "untrained" stunt horse would save the day. His rider was cowboy star and stunt man extraordinaire, Yakima Canutt. The late 1920s were a ruthless time in Hollywood. Since the advent of film, there had been many small studios producing films and a larger group of commercial concerns exhibiting and distributing them. During the 1920s, with audiences growing, and patrons demanded better films and greater creature comforts, there was a flurry of financing, incorporations, mergers, and takeovers. Usually, an exhibition chain, based in New York, would buy out studios in the West. By the mid-1920s, there were the Big Five (although each tried to be pieces of the other at various times).

**Paramount, Warner, Metro-Goldwyn, Fox,** and Universal. Paramount, founded by Adolph Zukor had a glamorous, romantic quality. Warners, founded by the four Warner Brothers, had a grittier, urban profile. Metro-Goldwyn-(Mayer) was just finding its identity after merging in 1925, but it would go on to become the most esteemed and glamorous of the Golden Age studios. William Fox was the perhaps the sharpest businessman of all; he almost swallowed M-G-M in 1930, but a near-fatal car accident (and the Depression) foiled his plans. It was not until after the Depression that these studios developed the huge integration of style and production that would make their respective films so uniquely recognizable.

**Lady Tree:** Some creative thinking on May's part: Iris Tree was an English actress and fashion figure who was good friends with Lady Cunard.



**The Armenian who writes all those wonderful plays and things--**Michael Arlen was a fashionable novelist and playwright of the 1920s; his real name was Dikran Kuyumjian.

**Noel Coward:** The least Armenian person in the world. Also a playwright, actor, director, songwriter, etc.

**Book of the Month:** In 1926, Harry Scherman started the Book-of-the-Month Club. Scherman had the idea to include a leather bound literary classic, such as Dante's *Inferno*, in a box of Whitman's chocolates and started The Little Leather Library mail order company. The operation was a great success; the list expanded to one hundred titles and forty million books were sold. When Harry Scherman ran out of classics to publish, he decided to sell new books by mail. The Book-of-the-Month Club was created based on Scherman's faith that there were serious American readers out there who wanted to read good books. In 1928, the selections included *Bambi* by Feliz Salten and *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* by Bernard Shaw. Which do you think Susan Walker was reading?

**Hotel Stilton:** Hotels had a pride of place in Hollywood--Los Angeles was so spread out, it needed several posh places for the elite to meet, drink, dance, and have award ceremonies and such. The Biltmore Hotel, built in 1923, sounds like "Stilton" and it was host to a number of white-tie dinner dances hosted by the likes of Mary Pickford and Tom Mix. The Alexandria Hotel, downtown, had a marble lobby and crystal chandeliers, as well as a famous "million dollar rug," so-called, because so many picture deals were made on it. Other famous hotels from this period the Beverly Hills Hotel, with its still-famous Polo Lounge; the Garden of Allah, famous for its East Coast clientele; and the Roosevelt, site of the first Academy Award banquet in 1928.

**"Sonny Boy":** A 1928 song from Jolson's follow-up talkie, *The Singing Fool*. A sentimental favorite, with Jolson singing to his ill son.

**Greta Garbo:** The gorgeous and enigmatic Swedish star made her American debut in 1925 for M-G-M. Her icy good looks were magic for the camera and she became a major, if not the major, romantic film star of the late 1920s. She was often paired with matinee idol John Gilbert, whom she almost married. Such films with him as *Flesh and the Devil* and *A Woman of Affairs* were immense hits. M-G-M was worried that her smoky Swedish accent would travel badly to sound, and so she was the last big star, other than Chaplin to make a sound movie. They needn't have worried--her 1930 sound debut in O'Neill's *Anna Christie* made her an even bigger star. But, by 1928, she was still in silents.

**Universal:** Founded in 1912 by Carl Laemmle, it was one of the "Big Five." Although it lost some of its prestige when sound came in (although it made all those great horror films of the 1930s), in the 1920s, Universal had Valentino, Lon Chaney, and Erich Von Stroheim among its stars.

**College picture--French Revolution:** Not an entirely silly notion. College pictures were popular in the 1920s, as they could provide young actors with roles in fairly jolly stories (campus hi-jinks were all the rage in that decade). Harold Lloyd spoofed them best in his



1925 comedy hit, *The Freshman*. The French Revolution was probably best depicted in the silent era by D.W. Griffiths' epic *Orphans of the Storm* (1922).

**John Gilbert:** The most dashing idol of his day, and Greta Garbo's co-star in five films for M-G-M. Famously, his career came to a crashing halt when he uttered the lines "I love you, I love you, I love you" in a high-pitched reedy voice in 1929's *His Glorious Night*. Critics nationwide mocked him mercilessly and he became a bitter shell of a man, a drunk, and died in 1936.

**First National, Pathe, United Artists:** These were comparatively minor studios. Founded in 1917 by a national organization of distributors, First National made news by offering Chaplin a \$1 million salary. By 1926, stock maneuvers by Adolph Zukor at Paramount crippled the studio, and it limped along until the mid-1930s. Pathe was known mostly for its serials in the 1920s with Pearl White (*The Perils of Pauline*) and its newsreels. United Artists was founded in 1919 by Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith. It tried to buy up Metro-Goldwyn in the late 1920s, unsuccessfully.

**Buddy Rogers:** "America's Boyfriend," he became a huge success as one of the pilots in 1927's *Wings*, but was not able to sustain a career into the 1930s. He was married to Janet Gaynor.

**Strange Interlude Eugene O'Neill:** This 1928 appears to be the perennial whipping boy for George S. Kaufman, who satirized its long-winded pretentiousness in *Animal Crackers*, among other shows. It was a nine-act, nearly six-hour psychological portrait of a woman and her three lovers, in which their thoughts were spoken aloud. It was the most important serious play of its time--despite Kaufman's objections--and it won the Pulitzer Prize.

**Little Jewish fellow:** This appears to be GSK's (and later Hart's) friend and collaborator Irving Berlin.

"Boots" Poem by Rudyard Kipling. See enclosed.

"It Takes a Heap of Loving": "Home" by Edgar A. Guest. See enclosed.

"Ring Out Wild Bells" "In Memoriam" by Alfred Lord Tennyson. See enclosed.

*Aida*. Opera by Verdi.

**The Schlepkin Brothers:** One assumes this is a satire on the Warner Brothers. The four brothers began filmmaking by renting out a movie projector in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1909, but after World War I, moved fully into production. Harry and Albert stayed in New York, while younger brothers Jack and Sam moved to Hollywood. Sam was instrumental in perfecting sound for Warners; he died the night before the premiere of *The Jazz Singer*. The Warners had few, if any, Hollywood pretensions: they remained scrappy, insular, independent, and Jewish--like many of their films. Sound enabled them to become a major studio by 1928.

"The Old Testament": A series of poems about the Bible by Thomas Russell.



**"Pale Hands I Love":** From "Four Indian Love Lyrics" by British composer Amy Woodforde-Finden, written in 1902. (see enclosed)

**let's go out to my house:** Hollywood ostentation in architecture was a national preoccupation. Douglas Fairbanks started the craze by commissioning an estate and a hunting lodge for his wife, and soon huge, often garish, mansions sprouted all over the Los Angeles area. Of course, Los Angeles did not have much architecture to speak of, so the various blendings of different periods and styles, which so offended East Coast critics, didn't matter much. Swimming pools were a comparatively new addition for private use. Private screening rooms were standard issue for producers and directors. The avatar of the conspicuous consumption was Hearst Castle in San Simeon.

**Lou Jackson--sings these mummies:** Glogauer refers to Al Jolson, of course, who sang his trademark number "Mammy" at the climax of *The Jazz Singer*.

**Nickleodeons, pennylodeons:** In 1906, a man named Harry Davis had the idea of exhibiting 10 to 15 minutes worth of short silent movies in an empty storefront. He charged a nickel. Previously, movies were projected in penny arcades or as audiences left vaudeville houses. Many movie moguls, like the Warners and Louis B. Mayer started by owning nickleodeons, and gradually owning them all over the country, then creating product to project. There were, however, never any "pennylodeons"--this is a Glogauerism.

**I don't ask miracles:** The malapropism of Hollywood moguls has become legendary. Some of this is based on truth, some of it may be based on a basic lack of command of the English language from Eastern European Jewish immigrants. This kind of humor had been replete on the New York Stage since the 1880s--the famous comic duo of Weber and Fields, for example, or Chico Marx. Samuel Goldwyn, the independent producer, was Hollywood's fondest--if not entirely accurate--source of missayings. They include: "In two words--im possible," "Let's bring the picture up-to-date with some snappy nineteenth century dialogue," and the famous "Include me out!" Jack Warner had a similar problem: when hosting a dinner for Chinese nationals honoring Madame Chaing Kai-Shek, he blurted out, "Holy cow--I forgot to pick up my laundry!"

**Dorothy Dodd:** Mae Marsh, Marilyn Miller, and Mae Murray were all famous actresses during this period who came to Hollywood. The character is probably not based on anyone in particular, except, perhaps Lillian Lorraine, a Ziegfeld *Follies* star, who had many lovers, drank, set herself on fire, married and divorced the same man twice, and inspired one ex-lover to shoot and kill another.

**I wouldn't merge:** This is neither an idle threat nor an idle speculation. Mergers were constant and consistent threats to the independent producer. In the mid-1920s, several companies were on the verge of failing, mostly because of the commercial convergence of distributors, exhibitors, and producers. Some company heads, like Marcus Loew, tried to consolidate his chain of theaters with studios who had product. He acquired Metro in 1920, a small studio with some stars. He then set about finding a studio head, and acquired Louis B. Mayer, head of his own small studio. When Goldwyn Pictures was failing in 1924 (named after Sam Goldwyn, but run without his involvement--much to his frustration), it was



gobbled up by Loew, becoming Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. M-G-M became the major studio of the 1930s, Goldwyn became an independent producer, and many smaller players fell by the wayside. Glogauer could easily have been put out of business for good, or relegated to a humiliating position somewhere.

**Elinor Glyn:** Mrs. Glyn, as she was called, was a novelist and screenwriter who wrote about the sophisticated world of sex and romantic manners. She came to Hollywood to adapt several of her works in the 1920s. She coined the phrase the "It Girl" for Clara Bow, suggesting Miss Bow had "it"--sex appeal--and was romantic adviser to several stars, including Valentino. She was an early glamour maven, sort of like Diana Vreeland.

**Lawrence Vail:** Vail represents the legions of put-upon Hollywood writers, a persecuted group throughout film history. Writers existed in Hollywood before talkies, of course, as someone had to write the plots, or scenarios, as they were called. Some writers like Frances Marion and New York playwright Herman J. Mankiewicz were highly paid during the silent era for their skill at title writing. It was Mankiewicz who cabled to his friend in New York, playwright Ben Hecht: WILL YOU ACCEPT 300 PER WEEK TO WORK FOR PARAMOUNT PICTURES? ALL EXPENSES PAID. THE 300 IS PEANUTS. MILLIONS ARE TO BE GRABBED OUT HERE AND YOUR ONLY COMPETITION IS IDIOTS. DON'T LET THIS GET AROUND.

The talkies brought playwrights from New York, so stunned were studio executives by the need to create coherent dialogue for their movies. Among the playwrights and writers who went were Hecht and Charles MacArthur, Dorothy Parker, Robert E. Sherwood, Donald Ogden Stewart, Maxwell Anderson, Nunnally Johnson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Lillian Hellman, Sidney Kingsley, Clifford Odets and many, many others.

Of course, writers were put under contract and had little, if any, control over their work which was often written and re-written by studio hacks. Writers were given offices, where they often worked in cubicles; studio supervisor Darryl Zanuck was peeved when he walked by an office and didn't hear the typewriters clacking away. "Schmucks with Underwoods," he called them. Interestingly, neither Eugene O'Neill nor Philip Barry ever went to Hollywood; like Kaufman, who despised Hollywood, they didn't mind selling their material to the movies, but never touched the actual adaptations. Moss Hart, however, became a successful screenwriter, winning an Oscar for *Gentleman's Agreement*.

**Option department:** One of the major businesses of Hollywood is to spend money on properties or personnel, allowing a studio to have exclusive control of that property or artist. When it comes time to produce the film, say, more money enters into the bargain. Obviously, studios continue to option properties to this day, frequently selling their options to their competitors, if the property languishes.

**Retakes:** Retakes, which are simply that, re-filming certain scenes that don't work particularly and inserting them into the unfinished film, was not a standard practice in Hollywood, until Irving Thalberg's reign as studio supervisor at Universal Pictures in the 1920s. He often recut and reshot pictures without his directors' involvement, relying on his own opinion and taste, or sneak previews before live audiences.





**Legitimate stage:** The universal term for what we would now call "Broadway." Before the Theater District sprung up in the early part of the century, "straight drama" was usually played on the road, as was vaudeville. To make the distinction, *Variety* coined the term "Legit" to distinguish serious drama from variety shows. By 1928, Broadway was the center of the legitimate theater.

**Shuberts:** The Shubert Brothers, Lee and J.J., were the leading producers on Broadway in the 1920s. They owned over 100 theaters nationwide. Between 1910 and 1928, they built more than a dozen theaters in the Times Square area alone; hence, their "real estate" connection.

**John Barrymore:** The greatest American stage actor of the early 1920s, as well as the Crown Prince of the Barrymore acting dynasty. By 1928, Barrymore was a major film star as well, signing a contract with Warner Brothers in 1924 and starring as *Don Juan* in 1926, the first Vitaphone feature release. His looks were already unbearably handsome and with his fine stage background and glorious speaking voice, he made out better in talkies than almost any other actor.

**Elsie Barrymore:** The ladies, of course, refer to "Ethel" Barrymore, John's older sister, a major stage actress of the 1910s and 1920s. Ethel disdained pictures, making a few silents in the 1910s; Florabel was right about one thing--she didn't come to Hollywood to make a sound movie until 1932. The girls may be confusing her with Elsie Janis, a major musical comedienne and vaudeville star (who had an affair with John Barrymore).

**Civil War:** This refers, of course, to D.W. Griffith's 1915 epic *The Birth of a Nation*, a history of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

**D.W. Griffith:** The major director of the silent era, Griffith either invented or refined the basic techniques of film narrative we use today. From about 1914 to 1920, he directed an unbroken string of epic film successes, including *Intolerance*, *Way Down East*, and *Broken Blossoms*.

**Jack Young:** To my knowledge, there was no one in Hollywood of any importance with this name.

**Those tests:** Screen tests, of actors, of costumes, of make-up, of everything are instrumental in film making. When sound came in, actors on contract were marched sequentially into sound studios to be tested by studio technicians. They gave the thumbs up (or down) to the producers.

**"Yes, I'm a tramp..." unknown!!**

In 1894, the leading writer of post-Risorgimento Italy was **Gabriele D'Annunzio**. A refined voluptuary, D'Annunzio had begun a long liaison with the actress **Eleonora Duse** and had turned to writing plays for her, notably the tragedies *La Gioconda* (performed 1899) and *Francesca da Rimini* (performed 1901). He eventually broke off the relationship and exposed their intimacy in the erotic novel *Il fuoco* (1900; *The Flame of Life*).



**Laurel wreath:** The traditional way in Roman culture to honor poets, heroes, military victors, or others with a crowning accomplishment.

**Technicolor:** Technicolor was invented as early as 1922, a two-color film process (red and green--like 3-D) projected at the same time. There were several Technicolor films in the 1920s, but they were too expensive to produce until 1932, when even then they were rare events.

**Red Cross:** Created by the Geneva Convention of 1864 (hence its Swiss cross), an international service organization devoted to caring for the sick, injured, or wounded during both wartime and peacetime.

**Coolidge:** Calvin Coolidge, the 30<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, governed from 1923, following the death of Warren G. Harding, through 1929. Not known for his personal charisma, his pro-business leanings made the country extremely prosperous.

**Kammerling:** Kammerling follows in the military-booted-footsteps of such important expatriate directors as Erich Von Stroheim and Josef Von Sternberg. But Von Stroheim, who began as an actor, and Von Sternberg, who began as a lighting director, were not brought over to America (from their native Austria) for their directing talents--they had to work their way up (and added the "von" to impress people). More likely for Kammerling's background were F.W. Murnau, the great German silent film director (*Nosferatu*) brought to the U.S. by Fox and Ernst Lubitsch, who couldn't wait to get to Hollywood (he had even worked with Reinhardt), and worked with Mary Pickford as early as 1923. All of the directors, however, were famous for their autocratic behavior, although, again, as in the case of Von Stroheim and Von Sternberg, it was a self-dramatizing act, created to intimidate people (the military clothes, the moustache, monocle, etc.)

**Number Eight:** Studios has different places to shoot on the lot, what would later be called "Sound Stages." These were huge enclosed sheds which allowed sets to be built, lights to hung, etc. After 1928, stages were torn down and rebuilt with sound insulation--even with painted signs on the roof for airplanes not to fly over the stage. "Number Eight" sounds good--there were probably a dozen on each lot. Universal had the biggest lot in this period.

**Exploitation people:** This sounds funnier than it means to be: during this period, publicity and public relations were often grouped under this title in the studio organization.

**Reinhardt:** Max Reinhardt was the greatest theatrical genius between the First and Second World War. Born in Austria, he did most of his work in Germany, until Hitler came to power, and Reinhardt fled to America.. He was known for his elaborate theatrical spectacles, including *Faust* and *Everyman*, where he used casts of hundreds, often in outdoor epic productions. He also ran a highly influential theater school.

**Schauspielhaus:** The Grosses Schauspielhaus was a state-of-the-art theater built for Reinhardt in Berlin in 1907.



**Ufa:** Literally, the Universum Film Aktien Gesellschaft. Berlin's major commercial film studio. It had numerous deals with American's studios and produced films like *Metropolis* and "*M*". Under Hitler, in 1933, it became a major propaganda organ for the Third Reich.

**Eisenstein:** Sergei Eisenstein was the dominant genius of the early Soviet Cinema. His forceful, imagistic films like *The Battleship Potemkin* impressed Hollywood moguls back in the mid-1920s. David O. Selznick thought it was the most impressive film he'd ever seen. He brought Eisenstein himself to Hollywood in 1930, for a projected film of Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. It was too ambitious to be filmed. Eisenstein tried another American film, *Que Viva Mexico*, but it was never completed and he lived out his career with major films under the Stalinist regime, like *Ivan the Terrible*.

**Speculator:** A broker, someone who would have bought it previously, held it, and sold it for a profit. Remember, this is at the height of the Stock Market.

**Will Hays:** In addition to hosting the first collection of Vitaphone shorts, Will H. Hays was a former head of the Republican National Committee, as well as Postmaster General under Harding. The film industry, realizing they needed friends in high places, as well as someone who could benignly regulate behavior, offered Hays the title of President of the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America. Essentially, a PR flack and a lobbyist, Hays and his office tried to regulate behavior on screen. The talkies made their job essential and immediate; a Code was drawn up by the Hays Office in 1930. It was eventually accepted by the studios in 1934 as the Production Code.

**Play-or-pay contract:** exactly that: a contract that guarantees compensation whether the film is shot and produced, or delayed and cancelled.

**Janet Gaynor:** A gamine, pert actress, the typical girl-next-door, Gaynor was a sensation in 1926 and 1927, when she won the first Academy Award for best actress for such films as *Street Royal* and *Seventh Heaven*. She would go on to make the first *A Star is Born* in 1936, and she retired three years later.

**We'll create a name for her:** Glogauer is not necessarily referring to changing Susan Walker's name (like countless of films stars, such as Judy Garland (Frances Gumm) or John Garfield (Julius Garfinckle). He means he'll create an identity for her. The first movie star was Florence Lawrence, known as "The Biograph Girl." Shrewd studio publicity created a personality and a mystery about her that made her famous. In 1925, Samuel Goldwyn created a star out of a Russian actress named Banky Vilma by switching her name around and spending millions promoting her as a movie icon. He succeeded, but failed at the same gambit in the 1930s with another Russian beauty named Anna Sten, whom he called "The Soviet Cinderella." It didn't work.

**Mayor Walker/Grover Whalen:** Grover Whalen was the official "greeter" of New York City; Jimmy Walker was its mayor until 1932.

**Photoplay, Motion Picture magazine:** "Motion Picture" magazine debuted in 1909, with novelized screenplays and movie reviews. *Photoplay* upped the ante with interviews, gossip columns, and "Miss Lonelyhearts" columns--as well as photos, of course. In 1928,



they were the only national film magazines; more would come in the 1930s, with sound, but their influence and readership was huge. They were a publicity flack's dream come true.

**Twenty-four sheets:** So-called for the number of "folds" (always divisible by four), this was the biggest form of movie poster at the time.

**Supervisor--in full charge--over all production:** This is an almost unbelievably huge deal. Production supervisor was second only to the head of the studio. They were in charge of what scripts got filmed, to whom they were assigned, how the pictures were made, what changes were made in them, how and when they marketed and distributed. Early production supervisors were David O. Selznick, Irving Thalberg, and Darryl Zanuck. Although the studio executive hired personnel and dealt with stockholders and business concerns back east, the supervisor was the most important employee on a day-to-day basis with considerable artistic influence.

**"Racing Form":** The bible for race touts--it gives the line-up for races around the country that day, the odds, and the pay-offs.

**Caliente:** A racetrack in Tijuana, much frequented by denizens of San Diego. It now races only greyhounds and includes jai alai.

**"case of gin":** In 1919, Prohibition came in, making the purchase and imbibing of alcohol over a tiny percentage (2%) a Federal offense. Of course, bootleggers and rumrunners managed to subvert the authorities and gin was the easiest thing to make in one's bathtub--or probably just bought off a friend. Franklin Roosevelt repealed Prohibition as one of his first acts as President in 1933.

**Simmons' pew:** "Nothing like a good Simmons' mattress" ran the advertisement for the bedding company--it still does!

**The Elks:** The moving spirit for the Elks was an Englishman named Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian. Born October 22, 1842, this son of a clergyman was a successful comic singer and dancer in the music halls of London. In November 1867, Vivian arrived in New York City to try his fortune. Other actors and entertainers soon gravitated toward his magnetic personality, and soon this group dubbed themselves the Jolly Corks, a name derived from a practical joke of the time. When one of their members died shortly before Christmas in 1867, leaving his wife and children destitute, the Jolly Corks decided that in addition to good fellowship, they wanted to have a more enduring organization to serve those in need. On February 16, 1868, they established the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Over the years, the mission has been consistent, and the membership has become more inclusive. Today's guidelines for membership are that the candidate be invited to join, be a citizen of the United States, and believe in God. Kaufman always had a healthy suspicion of "joiners," his 1924 play, *The Good Fellow* pokes fun at these community service organizations and their rituals.

**Launch a battleship:** In the days when there were battleships, they were launched by a dignitary swinging a bottle of champagne tied to a rope against the prow of the ship. This was routinely captured by newsreels at the time.



**Exhibitors:** In many ways, back in the 1920s, the exhibitors were as powerful as the studios. This was the chain of theater owners, who demanded product for their houses. Most studio executives got their start as exhibitors; Marcus Loew, the power behind M-G-M in the 1920s, owned the largest chain of theaters--they bear his name to this day.

**"Foolish Virgins":** *Foolish Wives* was a 1922 Universal Picture, directed by Erich Von Stroheim. A sophisticated sex comedy, it had a million dollar budget, was the ninth highest grossing film of the year and was a sequel-in-style to Stroheim 1918 film, *Blind Husbands*. *The Married Virgin* was a 1918 picture with Valentino, so the word was used in titles before.

**Glogauer Super-Jewels:** This is quite cheeky on the part of K&H. "Super-Jewels" was the name given to the prestige pictures on the Paramount lot by its studio chief Carl Laemmle in the 1920s, meaning they had limited distribution in first-run theaters. Ironically, one of his most successful "Super-Jewels" was *Foolish Wives* by Erich Von Stroheim in 1922.

**Bootlegger:** Someone who ran illegal liquor; a standard character of the day. Gershwin's 1926 musical *Oh, Kay!* is all about them.

**Biograph** was one of the first film studios, the major competitor with Edison. In the early days of film, in the 1900s, actors weren't even identified by name. It wasn't until the presence of the leading lady **Florence Lawrence** that Biograph producers realized that a recognizable star could be a commodity. Lawrence became the "The Biograph Girl", also the first star launched by publicity in 1909. When she moved to the IMP studio, she became the "Imp Girl." **Maurice Costello** was one of the first male stars to be recognized; a fatuous ingenue, his nickname was "Dimples." He and Lawrence did make several films together in the 1910s.

**Super-special:** This was an omnibus film, maybe a collection of songs, actors doing scenes, etc. *Hollywood Cavalcade*, *Hollywood Party*, and *Show of Shows*, a 1928 Warner Brothers film, where John Barrymore spoke for the first time (he recited from *Richard III*) were all super specials.

**"All-talking, all-singing, all-dancing"** This was the catch-all moniker affixed to the rage of talking musicals in the late 1920s, including *Broadway Melody*, the first talking movie to win an Oscar. However, the technical problems of reproducing singing were so great in the early 1930s, that audiences were turned off by the squeaky primitive musicals. In fact, posters often advertised that there was no singing whatsoever in some movies. Busby Berkeley changed all that in 1933 with *42<sup>nd</sup> Street*, which gave the camera more flexibility.

**The Emperor Jones:** Eugene O'Neill's great 1920 one-act, where a Pullman porter takes over a small Caribbean island as dictator. As the Expressionistic play goes on, Jones is pursued by his own furies--an incessant beating of the tom-toms that grows and grows until the climax. Moss Hart had played a small character in a 1926 revival of the play opposite Charles Gilpin, who had created the role.



**Eastern Star:** The order of the Eastern Star is a fraternal organization founded in 1850 to recognize women. It is a distaff version of the Masons, requiring an affiliation with a Mason to join, and built around five women in the Bible.

**Knights of Columbus:** The largest Catholic lay organization in the world. Founded in 1882, the Knights supported the tenets of Catholicism through social and community events and charities.