

Hollywood Reporter

By Mike Connolly

Mike's Mailbag—

Dear Mike: Was that actress DRUNK in this year's Santa Claus Parade on Hollywood Boulevard, while riding along and trying feebly to wave at everybody? Or does she just act drunk every time I see her on TV? Is she an alcoholic?—Mrs. E. W. Ramsey, Altadena, Calif.

Dear Mrs. E. W.: Not drunk, just a little giddy. She started off in the parade (it was a cool night, remember?) with a wee noggin of Tom and Jerry, just to start the holiday season in jolly spirits.

Dear Mike: Driving home from Inglewood, Calif., in the summer of 1957, my brother Duke turned to me and said, "I'm going to take James Dean's place," as he sat behind the wheel of his '52 Buick. At first I thought he was kidding but, when I saw he didn't smile or look around, I knew he was deadly serious. He was not satisfied with an office job. He had to go on to bigger things. He quit Notre Dame, with only six months to go to graduate. Listen, if you're smart, you'll invest \$500 in me. I can sing better than Vinton, Edwards and Chamberlain put together. I'm a better actor than Curtis or Derek. I'm better looking than Hudson.—Gus Conroy, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Gus: Your brother sounds like a better investment. Whatever happened to him?

Dear Mike: You wrote that an upcoming movie, "The Fume of Poppies," is about a dope fiend. If it has any remote connection with the book of the same name (author: Jonathan Kozol or something like that... it's been two or three years since I read it) it has absolutely NOTHING to do with dope addiction. If my guess is right, it's no wonder Hollywood people gripe (or worse) about inaccuracies. When you don't have the facts, why make them up? — Dick Madrigal, Peoria, Ill.

Dear Dick: Producer John Thiel bought the title only. I didn't read the book but the picture will be about a hop-head, with (Thiel hopes) Peter Fonda starring.

Dear Mr. Connolly: What in the world ever happened to Cantinflas, after that big splash he made in "Around the World in 80 Days?" — Ariel Emerson, Morgantown, W. Va.

Dear Ariel: He's so rich, he doesn't care if he never leaves Mexico, where he is practically THE national idol. But he is listening to a pitch from a Spanish promoter for a cross-country campaign through

Spain with his bullfight clowning act.

My dear friend Mike: My name is Al Pirro but I like to call myself "Al Mud," because I just can't get a start in this business as a singer-entertainer-comic. Agents are not interested in me. They're too busy... and I've been at it since 1954. Can you introduce me to a good agent? I am like an Italian Eddie Cantor, if they ask about me... but I am what I am! I'm available for benefits, etc. — Al Pirro, Azusa, Calif.

Dear Al: I think you're spreading yourself too thin. If you're really a good singer, start in as a singer (that's what Sinatra did) and then work around to the other talents (Sinatra again). If you stay in Azusa, I would suggest you build yourself a fabulous act and, believe me, if it's really great they'll be breaking down the doors to get in to see you—in which event, the agents will be coming to you. On the other hand, while I wouldn't want to urge you to leave home, it is true that greater opportunities are to be found in such "show-biz towns" as New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Chicago. But the old saw about that mousetrap still goes: Build it and the world will beat a path to your door.

Dear Sir: What do those dizzy Dodgers think they're up to, doing a nightclub act with Joey Bishop? — Aaron Fleming, Dillon, Mont.

Dear Aaron: Don Drysdale will sing "Fly Me to the Moon" and Tommy Davis will tear off a tune on a clavichord, which I understand is something between a clavichord and a clavier, or maybe Tommy said clavier. They open at the Sands in Las Vegas Dec. 21 and I, for one, ain't gonna miss 'em.

Dear Mr. Connolly: What are that darlin' Dinah Shore and her new husband, Maurice Smith, doing these days? I miss her on TV! — Mary Virginia Rizzo, Bedford Heights, Ohio.

Dear Mary Virginia: They're building a new home in Palm Springs, happy as all get-out, and Dinah says she doesn't care if she never works again.

(Mike Connolly welcomes all readers' questions, but due to the large volume of mail received, it may be some time before the answer to your question appears in his column.)

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