



## looking for harvey weinstein

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Some time ago, on MySpace, I came across a book interestingly titled Looking for Harvey Weinstein. It was written by **Shirley and Holly Yanez** and is subtitled The True Story of Modern Day Michaelangelo. After we became friends, The Girls, as they call themselves, left me a hilarious comment that I just had to acknowledge. They also sent me a complimentary copy of the book, and I'm glad they did. What a story! And what a post-story story, as well. Chronicling their adventures in Hollywood networking, the book is, by turns, hilarious, shocking, inspirational, and depressing.

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Shirley and Holly are English natives who gave up careers in London to seek fame and fortune in Los Angeles. There, they married two brothers, whom they refer to as 'The Jailers'. Neither marriage worked out. After losing quite a bit of money and making the acquaintance of a genius (a Russian fresco painter named Ilia), they decided to open a gallery to promote high art in Hollywood.

Looking for Harvey Weinstein details their adventures in attempting to secure funding, meet celebrities, and get a megastar name to attach to their project and cause. Each episode ends in disappointment—this after endless faxes, phone calls, eMails, and 'celebrity stalking' sessions. They meet several unforgettable characters, along the way, and party way too hard—as a means of coping with the madness. Particularly memorable are the series of miscommunications and misfires The Girls had with drummer Tommy Lee and his staff; and, of almost equal moment, is an encounter with a fast-talking local politician whose promises fall substantially short of what he actually delivers. A pilgrimage to Cannes, in order to meet Weinstein, as well as Shirley and Holly's tortuous meetings with folks at Miramax, provide great food for thought and speculation on the whole subject of celebrity in our culture

The art project doesn't work out; the artist, Ilia, "is still starving to death in a place where people have never heard of Michaelangelo and think fresco is a soft drink". The postscript to the wild and fantastic accounts in the Yanez page-turner is, perhaps, even more compelling; the authors explained it to me this way:

Since January 2006 we have given up everything—sex, drugs, drink, chocolate, fags [Brit slang for cigarettes], caffeine and meat. We have done this to find self-discipline and, although it has been very hard, we now are in control of the machine called the body. Our minds and our souls are what we nurture everyday. We teach Yoga and meditation to

anyone who wants to find their center. Looking for Harvey was a time of self-discovery and finding the dream within was the lesson. Perseverance is all we had when we lost everything, including millions in the stock market. It is the key but becomes synonymous with passion when you follow your heart and purpose.

The TV show has evolved after a BBC documentary aired in September 2006, following our lives and the work we now do with those who still seek Harvey Weinstein. In December, we secured a one-year contract with the UK's leading daytime talk show host, Trisha—think Oprah—as lifestyle gurus. 'Love your life living for less' is the strand. After a lifetime of living with Ego and Money, we are now teaching the world to dress in Charity shop clothes—think thrift store—eat the right foods, and learn to be happy without money. Like we say in the book, we have now proved anything is possible. You just have to believe in yourself.

We have just returned from a cheap last-second holiday to Barbados, showing our audience that you can get to paradise on a shoestring and still rub shoulders with the rich and famous for next to nothing. Whilst we were there, we hung out with the locals and worked on some life skills with young, homeless kids on the beach. It was fantastic to break down the bravado and let the tourists see the dark side to paradise. We have nothing materially, now, but have everything others seek and envy everyday. The great thing about our book is that it tells the tale of how *not* to live. Is it good people doing bad things or bad people doing good things? Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change. So, we have documented the past and now live in the present forging the future we want, and no one one can quite believe it.

The story contained in Looking for Harvey Weinstein, as well as the lessons exacted in The Girls' current mission—The Ministry of Common Sense, as preached on their TV show and Web site—is infinitely interesting and rewarding. Be warned that the book is not always pretty, nor is it particularly G-rated; but, as they say, it "teaches people how *not* to live". And what they're doing, today, is something that I believe will inspire even the most jaded reader.

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