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ENDPAPER

ENDPAPER; Not So Different, Perhaps, After All

By CHARLES MCGRATH

From Hollywood, then, came Barry, Michael and the other Michael. Also, Steven, Jeffrey and David. They came that summer in matching choppers, which landed on the croquet lawn, crushing several wickets and, with the might of their rotor wash, causing the potted palms to topple. And Kevin and Harrison and Tom, or maybe it was both Toms -- I can’t remember. And Arnold and Sly, puffing on cigars so big that an ordinary person couldn’t lift them. Madonna came several times, drawn in a chariot by four glistening men wearing dog collars and leather harnesses and loincloths. They were not the same glistening men every time but they were so identical, one with another, that no one could tell the difference.

Mr. and Mrs. Buttafuoco were from some other part of the Island, as I remember. They came only once, uninvited it was said, and though Mrs. B. made a good impression, Mr. B. got into some kind of row in the parking lot and had to be evicted.

From Palm Beach came John Kluge and from Wall Street Ronald Perelman, their thoughtful heads sparkling like chrome in the summer sun. And Kirk Kerkorian, Saul Steinberg (the other Saul Steinberg) and Sumner Redstone, who brought along his own baloney sandwich and refused to eat any of the party food. Dick Snyder came, and brought his own chef. Larry Tisch was there, and Larry Gagosian, Larry Bird, Larry Eagleburger and some guy who didn’t have a last name, just Larry. Edward (Ed) Turner and Robert Edward (Ted) Turner. The Newhouses came, S. I. and Donald, but didn’t stay long. They smiled a lot, shook a few hands and then when you turned around they were gone. The other Donald came and stayed and stayed, hanging around so long that he was mistaken for a waiter.

The Georges came, Soros and also Steinbrenner, who handed out pink slips to all the pool boys. They weren't real pink slips, but authentic looking copies he had printed up as a gag.

Also, Giorgio, Isaac, Karl, Calvin, Ralph, Geoffrey and Donna. All of them wore dark jackets over snowy-white T-shirts and trousers with pleats so voluminous that if you weren’t careful you could get lost in them. Each was adorned with his or her own new fragrance, so that they resembled scent strips, wafting an odoriferous blue cloud in their wake.

O. J. did not come, but he sent a nice note.

Of the other jocks, there were Michael Jordan and Deion Sanders, Wayne Gretzsky and Greg Norman, all of whom took turns driving golf balls that had been provided for them, cartons and cartons of Titleists, into the sparkling blue waters of the Sound. Steffi and Monica came, and so did Pete and Andre, but they couldn’t use the tennis court, because it had been turned into an outdoor dance floor where the aspiring
trophies waited. They stood there all in a row, their prenuptial agreements already signed, their blond hair shining, their bronzed backs displayed to great advantage in sleeveless black cocktail dresses, and you could just walk up and pick one, waltz her across the court, and be married by a justice of the peace waiting in the rose bower. These trophy wives were the kind who love you for yourself and not for your money.

The moguls were there, Gerald Levin and John Malone and Rupert Murdoch. And a lot of lawyers in dark suits whom you've never heard of but who were worth a fortune, every one of them, or they would not have been there. Not to mention the Japanese. No one knew their names, either, but it didn't matter. All you had to do was smile and bow at them.

In addition to all these I can remember that Oprah came at least once, along with LaToya. And Michael Milken, Ivan Boesky and Claus von Bulow, who kept to themselves. Anna Wintour came, and so did Liz Tilberis, but never at the same time. Harry and Tina dropped by but didn't stay, as they only wanted to borrow some fax paper.

I never saw Barbara Walters, Diane Sawyer, Leslie Stahl or Connie Chung, but they were there, I have no doubt. Also Newt, Arianna Huffington, Howard Stern, Alfonse D'Amato and an annoying little fellow with jug ears whose name, if I ever knew it, I have forgotten.