9
Merry-Go-Round

Merry-go-round. A ship decorated with orchids. The nude in champagne. Hedda Hopper tells off Marie Antoinette. Hitchhiking for the Garden of Allah. Westbrook Pegler and La Boca Grande. Mr. Hearst and the President disagree.

MD: At the slightest drop of a hat, any occasion at all, we would say, "Let's make a costume party." Then the telephones would start ringing and we'd get costumes sent up [to San Simeon] from Los Angeles. Carloads of people would arrive [by train], and musicians, extra chefs and all that sort of thing. It was really fun.

TC: The best description of how costumes were sent to San Simeon so the guests could make their choices can be found in Alice Head's memoir, *It Could Never Have Happened*, pp. 154-155, quoted in the context of 1931 in *Hearst and Marion: The Santa Monica Connection*, pp. 127-128.

MD: W.R. loved the costume parties.

We had one at the beach house [for his seventy-fifth birthday in 1938] where he was President Madison and looked very handsome. I was a character from [the 1923 movie] *Little Old New York*.

Norma Shearer came in her *Marie Antoinette* costume [from the MGM movie, then in production], even though it was supposed to be an all-American party. She came down from her own house [at 707 Ocean Front], which was four or five blocks away [south of the Beach House], and her dress was so huge that the back seat had to be taken out of the car for her to get in. She had on a wig that weighed tons.

Merle Oberon was one of the ladies-in-waiting. Hedy Lamarr was there, and Charles Boyer was made up as an ambassador. Ouida Bergere, who was married to Basil Rathbone, came; Basil arrived as the French ambassador.

TC: Ouida Rathbone included the party of 1938 and others from earlier in the thirties in her illustrated feature, "Happy Birthday, W.R.," *Esquire* magazine (December 1972), pp. 165-177.

MD: When they got to the library, they found there was only one door, and they wanted to take it down to let Norma Shearer through. I said, "No, no. She'll have to take her dress off. I'm not going to take the door down."

Hedda Hopper was in the hall and saw this amazing entrance. She said to Norma, "How dare you come as Marie Antoinette, with a French court, when you know that Mr. Hearst had been chased out of France [in 1930]? How dare you? You should turn around and go back."

They had a fight in the hall, and Hedda wrote about it.

TC: Miss Hopper's column, "Hedda Hopper's Hollywood," was brand new, less than a year old in this first half of 1938. She's often vaguely thought to have vied with Louella Parsons on that score as far back as the 1920s (when Hopper was mainly an actress, as she had been since 1916).

MD: The butler [George Eckert] came to me. I said, "Take them around the ballroom way. You can open both doors there to let them through." Norma had a headache all night because that white wig weighed about twenty-five pounds, but she didn't take it off.

We had photographs made, and Liz Whitney was made up as a squaw, and she was lying on the floor, posing. W.R. got mad and said, "If you want to have your picture taken, stand up."

Finally we went in to eat, and Norma's gown was so big she had to have four chairs.

Now I knew she didn't mean it as an insult, but it was supposed to be an all-American party. And she knew that Mr. Hearst had been kicked out of France. She might have had a little quirk in the back of her head. Irving [Thalberg] always said she had a little something funny back there. But that was how she arrived. I don't remember Irving being there. It might have been after he was dead.

PP/KSM: *The party took place in April 1938, two years after Thalberg had died.*

MD: There was a Tyrolean party [in October 1934], after Norma and Irving and W.R. and I had gotten back from [Bad] Nauheim. We had a brass band. That was also at the beach house and everybody was in German costumes.

TC: The Thalbergs never went abroad with W.R. and Marion.

MD: At San Simeon, we had a covered wagon party [in 1933], and a paper wedding anniversary [in 1930] for Connie Talmadge and Townsend Netcher. We had another cowboy party there [in 1940] and also a big masquerade party. Anybody could be whatever they wanted to be.

At the Lexington Road house [in Beverly Hills] we had a baby party, and people you didn't know could get in. A character with a big head and a mask came in wearing a diaper. He was wandering around all night long, and everybody was wondering who he was. By the time we really got curious, we couldn't find him. We thought he was a prowler, but nothing was missing. In fact, something was added. There was a gun left in the hall.

TC: A "kids party" was staged on New Year's Eve, 1931, but the setting for it was the Beach House in Santa Monica, not the Lexington place in Beverly Hills.

MD: W.R. didn't dress for that party [the baby party]. He wore an evening jacket with long striped pants. I told him that he should wear a ruffled waist, but he wouldn't. He put a stocking cap on and I said, "You should put a hat on—a real hat." He said no.

TC: W.R. didn't dress for the kids party, either. The two parties may well have been one and the same: conflated in Marion's memory of things.

PP/KSM: *Louella Parsons had written about an earlier costume party at the Lexington Road house in August 1926: "Marion Davies was the hostess at a brilliant costume ball given at her home. . . . A Russian dining room and a new swimming pool were built for the occasion to take care of*

the 200 guests who accepted her invitations. The Biltmore and the Ambassador [Hotel] orchestras played."

MD: There were many parties, but the circus party [at the Beach House] [in 1937] intrigued me so much I had to have another party within a month. The merry-go-round was brought back, and the hall wall torn down and put up again. We put it on the tennis courts, and they tore that wall down and put it back twice, to get it in and out of there. W.R. didn't care about the expense at all. He said, "Have the merry-go-round again."

TC: No such second "party within a month" was held. In fact, within less than a month of the circus party, W.R. and Marion were heading back to New York to face his financial Armageddon. As for W.R.'s stance toward the expenses these social events required, his position by 1938 (and probably before that date as well) was anything but casual. See *Hearst and Marion: The Santa Monica Connection,* p. 221.

MD: I said, "Let's leave it here." But we couldn't; it belonged to Warner Brothers.

We had the *Midsummer Night's Dream* party at the beach house, and that was Jack Warner's party. He had a huge orchestra, about 125 pieces, seated in front of a blue ship decorated with orchids. He put carpets all around, except for the dance floor, and he supplied the food and decorations. I think I supplied the liquor, but it cost him a fortune. It was an enormous party.

It was [the evening] after the opening of the movie, and the picture didn't end until two in the morning, and everybody was so tired that only half of them came to the party. We expected five or six hundred, so that didn't make it any too merry.

PP/KSM: *A gala premiere of the film* [A] Midsummer Night's Dream, *starring Dick Powell, Olivia de Haviland [Havilland], Anita Louise and James Cagney and directed by Max Reinhardt, was held at the Beverly Hills Theatre, Wilshire Boulevard at Canon Drive, on October 16, 1935.*

MD: The beach house was a lot of fun. We had a bar downstairs that was called the Rathskeller. It was underneath [the house proper],

where the dressing rooms were, by the bath-house. There was an enormous room [the same Rathskeller], kind of a lounge, with a wonderful oak bar that had been brought from England. The wine cellars were behind it.

PP/KSM: *The Rathskeller was constructed in England in 1560. Despite the Germanic name, the room had belonged to an inn in Surrey [County, near London] and seated fifty.*

TC: After the demolition of the Beach House in 1956, the Rathskeller found its way to San Diego, where it was reinstalled in a restaurant; it can still be seen there today—in the Red Fox Room (also called the Red Fox Steak House).

MD: We used that [the Rathskeller] until Aimee Semple McPherson attacked me over the radio. She said, "Marion Davies has a bar in her house." Everybody had a bar in their house. Why did she have to pick on me? We had used it only once, I think. But then I turned it into a nice little soda fountain. We put in ice cream and stuff, and, needless to say, only children used it.

TC: On October 16, 1934, while W.R. and Marion were still in New York, following their recent trip to Europe, Aimee Semple McPherson wired Marion at 1700 Lexington Road in Beverly Hills. Miss McPherson said, "Charmed to have you at Parsonage [in Echo Park] eight tonight. Giving recital of own composition." Marion answered her from San Simeon on November 3; she sent her reply to the Angelus Temple in Los Angeles: "Terribly sorry to have been out of town when your kind invitation arrived. Would love to have attended. With best wishes." (G&RH)

Ilka Chase portrayed the Beach House and, though not by name, the Rathskeller in *Past Imperfect* (New York, 1942), pp. 108-110; see *Hearst and Marion*, pp. 98-99.

MD: Every weekend we would have an orchestra in the ballroom, and supper—a buffet—for everybody. We would have only a hundred or a hundred and fifty people in on a weekend, and we'd look at movies after dinner.

TC: Alice Heads gives the best description of a Beach House buffet in *It Could Never Have Happened*, pp. 212-213, quoted in *Hearst and Marion,* pp. 158-159.

MD: We'd have a full show. A short and a newsreel and a feature picture. We had a screen that used to come up from the ground [in the Library]. One night we got to playing around with it, and Princess Marie de Bourbon fell down and busted the screen.

PP/KSM: *The Princess was an actress who had played Marie Antoinette in Marion's 1924 epic drama Janice Meredith.*

TC: The Princess was part of the Hearst-Davies circle, mostly because of the writing she did for W.R.'s newspapers and magazines.

MD: It took about two hours to get the screen fixed so we could see the picture. It was just one of those tricks. We were just jokesters. Anything for a laugh.

PP/KSM: *Harpo Marx went to many of these parties, and he writes about them: "My initiation [to the 'Hearst Crowd'] was a costume ball [evidently in 1931], to which I went, uninvited, as Kaiser Wilhelm. I won second prize. Nobody knew who I was except Charlie [Lederer], who had smuggled me in."*

PP/KSM: *From* Harpo Speaks! *by Harpo Marx with Rowland Barber (Bernard Geis Associates, 1961).*

PP/KSM: *"It was fun for a while [Harpo continues], playing Mystery Man to the hundred most famous people in Hollywood. But I had to cut out early, before I keeled over from suffocation and exhaustion. I must have been wearing fifty pounds of disguise: spiked steel helmet, bald wig, mustachios, nose and chin putty, uniform with medals and epaulets, knee-high boots, studded sword-belt and a three-foot ceremonial sword. When I got tired of going around goosing everybody with the sword, I could only keep it from dragging on the floor by walking on tiptoe. Even more tiring was holding the monocle in my eyes. My face hurt more than my feet did."*

Harpo tells of his exit from the party, with a ride toward home that developed into a family dispute between his benefactors, and abruptly ended with his abandonment on Sunset Boulevard, three miles short of his destination. Hitchhiking for the Garden of Allah Hotel [at 8150 Sunset

Boulevard, Hollywood], he was able, as Kaiser Wilhelm, only to stop traffic, but not to procure a ride home. He went to the police station.

And later to San Simeon, many times:

"One thing we had in common was a knack for gymnastics. One rainy weekend, Marion and I practiced acrobatic stunts in the main library [of Casa Grande], after pushing a lot of junk out of the way. . . . Marion's diamond necklaces and bracelets kept falling off, and we kept picking them up, but as far as she knew she didn't think she lost any."

TC: The George & Rosalie Hearst Collection contains some messages to or from Harpo Marx. One was sent to him from San Simeon by the Hollywood language coach Georges Jomier, addressed to the Beverly Wilshire Hotel and dated December 27, 1935: "Dear Harpo: Much to my regret will not be able to cook tomorrow chicken Jomier for you and your friends. Have promised Mr. Hearst and Marion Davies to spend New Year's Eve with them. Will be delighted to do it after January sixth. Happy New Year."

Marx had wired Jomier from Los Angeles on December 26 with his special request for dinner.

MD: I [remember] reading about the party that Earl Carroll had in New York [in February 1926 at the Earl Carroll Theatre], with the champagne. It was held in the theatre, I think, after the show. A girl [wrongly identified in 1975 as Evelyn Nesbit] was supposed to [be] nude in the champagne. It was a party just for the bachelors and the married men who didn't want to be married for the time being.

TC: The girl, who was seventeen, was named Joyce Hawley; by 1926, Miss Nesbit was entering her forties. The episode (involving the appropriately youthful Miss Hawley) is recounted in detail in Ken Murray, *The Body Merchant: The Story of Earl Carroll* (Pasadena, California 1976), p. 65 *ff.*

Elsewhere in his book (p. 121), Murray tells of when Carroll was at San Simeon in 1933, at the same time that Charles Lindbergh and his wife were there. However, *War Within and Without: Diaries and Letters of Anne Morrow Lindbergh, 1939–1944* (New York and London 1980) leaves little doubt that when the Lindberghs visited Wyntoon in 1941, Mrs. Lindbergh was meeting W.R. and Marion for the first time (pp. 199-207). Also, to judge from those same pages, the likelihood that either of the Lindberghs had ever been to San Simeon seems highly improbable.

MD: There was a big scandal about that [the Hawley episode], and I think Earl was convicted and jailed [in May 1926]. I'm not sure [and] I was in New York at the time. The papers had it every day, for quite a while.

I don't think he meant to do any harm, but when you have a big party at your house it's very hard for the host or hostess to keep control. Most of the guests behave themselves, but some don't. It's still that way.

MD: We went to the opening of *Gone with the Wind* with Raoul Walsh and his wife [Lorraine] and Clark Gable and Carole Lombard. It was at Grauman's Chinese Theatre [on December 28, 1939], I think.

PP/KSM: *On Hollywood Boulevard, which, in December, was also known as Santa Claus Lane.*

TC: W.R. and Marion wouldn't be arriving in Los Angeles from Wyntoon early enough on December 28 to attend the premiere; in fact, they wouldn't be in L.A. at all on Thursday the 28th; they stopped briefly at San Simeon instead; *Hearst and Marion*, pp. 308-309. Through arrangements made by Louis B. Mayer, W.R., Marion, and their guests saw *Gone with the Wind* at San Simeon in May 1940; *Hearst and Marion*, pp. 334-336.

MD: I guess Raoul Walsh's wife was bored. She disappeared. As it was a long picture [220 minutes], Clark said, "Let's go into the lobby." We asked where the office was, so we could sit in there.

Phones were ringing, and we answered them. People would say, "Can we have reservations for next Tuesday?" We'd say, very sorry, no reservations. We're very busy; no reservations for at least six months." The manager didn't know what we were up to. We had just asked if we could sit in his office, quietly.

But Clark had said, "You answer that phone, I'll answer this one." Carole got another one, and we had a good time.

They were always joking.

I was doing a picture with Clark then, and after work we used to go down to the beach house and have dinner and then go to Venice for the rollercoasters.

PP/KSM: Cain and Mabel *was the last picture Marion made with Clark Gable, but it was not in production in December 1939, when* Gone with the Wind *was released.*

TC: *Cain and Mabel* was made at Warner Bros. in the first half of 1936, after which W.R. and Marion went on a trip to Europe that proved to be their last sojourn on the Continent.

MD: Carole took over the pier at Venice one time. She engaged the Fun House with all the jingly things and games with things that go down from the top. Katharine [Kathryn] Menjou, Adolphe's second wife, was there, and she went down one of those chutes and hit the bottom of her spine, which is the coccyx. After that we used to call her Coccyx Katie.

TC: Adolphe Menjou and Kathryn Carver were married from 1928 to 1933.

MD: We used to drive those little cars that crashed into one another. Charlie Chaplin, Harry Crocker, and all of us went regularly, every night, no matter how late or how much work there was.

There was a man with a straw hat who would drive up and bonk us, and we would roll back and forth. You could get black and blue.

I don't know if Chaplin ever went on those—he was too conservative. But Carole and Clark and Eddie Kane and Harry Crocker and Polly Moran and various other guests who were at the beach house always went.

TC: Clark Gable and Carole Lombard began dating in 1936, the same year that Eddie Kane died.

PP/KSM: *Polly Moran was an actress who made more than thirty films in California. She was also a rather flamboyant and unpredictable lady. The titles of some of her films perfectly match her offscreen personality: TELLING THE WORLD [1928], WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS I [1928],*

SHOW PEOPLE [1928, THE UNHOLY NIGHT [1929], WAY OUT WEST [1930], HOLLYWOOD PARTY [1934], and CHASING RAINBOWS [1930].

She was also in Marion's film IT'S A WISE CHILD [1931, the same as she was in Marion's film Show People*].*

The amusement parks were built on the municipal fishing piers at Santa Monica and Ocean Park and Venice beaches, south of Marion's Ocean House [the Beach House]. Marion and her friends could have walked, ridden down Ocean Front Walk in a tram, or been chauffeured to these entertainments.

TC: The last mode of transportation was the most likely, especially regarding the Venice Pier, which lay more than three miles south of the Beach House.

MD: One night someone was yelling, "Come on in. Come on in and see the naked woman dancing . . ." It was Polly Morgan yelling. We tried to get her away, but there was a crowd around, and they knew who she was. She was yelling, "Come on in, all you crazy folks without any mentality. Come on in and see a crazy show." We decided we would pretend we didn't know her, so we went to a shooting gallery. That was the way to get Polly off.

Lots of nights in the winter I went alone to the pier. I had decided that the rollercoaster was not going to defeat me. I wanted to show them I wouldn't scream even when it went down—*whoop!* W.R. didn't like the rollercoaster and didn't want me to go. He said there were an awful lot of accidents on them, and he would beg me not to go. I'd say, "I'll be seeing you," and he would stay behind. I think he went with me once.

I got on that rollercoaster one night and didn't get off until seven in the morning. I kept paying the man, and I sat in the front seat, the middle seat and the back, and I stood up with my arms folded. I even sat backwards. Then I said, "I have it controlled."

That was fine until the next time we went. A sailor in front of me lifted up his head at the wrong time. His head went right off into the ocean.

That cured me. No more rollercoaster.

To me, Venice and Ocean Park were gaiety. I had not been allowed to go to those things [in the East] as a youngster.

I liked the hamburgers and the hot dogs and the airplanes. To me the ferris wheel was just divine, though everybody thought I was nuts. I would go on the ferris wheel to memorize my dialogue.

TC: Each of the three piers along the Santa Monica-Venice shore had a roller coaster, but only one of them—the middle one, the one in Ocean Park—had a Ferris Wheel during the heyday of the Beach House (the late 1920s to late 1930s). This middle pier was the same one that became Pacific Ocean Park in 1958.

MD: Lili Damita and Errol Flynn came one night. Once there was a drunk who dropped his hat among the dodgem cars, and when he saw Clark Gable and Carole Lombard and Charlie Chaplin, he was too shy to take his hat back. They were passing it around, back and forth, and he was running for it.

W.R. went as many times as he could stand it. Not frequently. He was afraid I might get hurt because I was so exuberant. One time we got caught way up on top of the ferris wheel. I think it was a gag pulled to scare people. Once we went down in the diving bell [on the Ocean Park Pier]. We went to the bottom of the ocean, and you could see the fish. It was a beautiful thing until the man said, "I think the cable is broken."

My sister Ethel was with me, and she was a bit of a scaredy cat. There was a telephone and I said to him, "How far down are we?" He said we were about three miles under the sea.

I said, "What's wrong?"

He said, "The cable broke."

Then I thought I recognized George Hearst's voice and I said, "You pull this thing up." Well, he had thought it was a good gag.

MD: After FDR defeated Landon, we went to Washington and Cissy Patterson gave a big party. W.R. stopped at the White House,

and he was the first to stay for a weekend after Roosevelt had been inaugurated.

PP/KSM: *The Governor of Kansas, Alfred Mossman Landon, was the Republican Party's presidential candidate in 1936.*

TC: The events described in this section are conflated with those of October 1934, when W.R., Marion, and their party visited Washington, D.C., upon returning from Europe. They did not see the President in 1936 or at any other time after 1934. They did see Alf Landon in Topeka, Kansas, late in 1935 before returning from New York to California. Cissy Patterson and Paul Block were with them then.

As for relations between the Hearst and Roosevelt camps in 1936, FDR said on November 9 that year (the Monday after he defeated Landon), "One of the most amazing of the undoubted facts of the campaign was the discrediting not only of the Hearst papers, the Chicago Tribune, the New York Herald Tribune and Sun and The Boston Herald, but also of dozens of smaller papers which aped the others in coloring every news story and crowding their editorials with every known form of misrepresentation." FDR to Josephus Daniels, Mexico City, in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters, 1928–1945* (New York 1950), Vol. I, pp. 626-627.

MD: We arrived [in Washington] on a Friday, the night of the party. Saturday morning at eight, W.R. arrived at Cissy Patterson's house [possibly having spent Friday night, October 5, at the White House]. I was there with Harry Crocker and some other guests. W.R. wanted to go right back to Los Angeles.

TC: Both of W.R.'s principal biographers, W.A. Swanberg and David Nasaw, touch on the White House event of October 1934, but no more than thinly. In quoting the President through Elliott Roosevelt as saying, "I hope you will stay with us Monday night at the White House," Swanberg points toward October 8, FDR's letter having gone to W.R. in New York on Wednesday, October 3. *Citizen Hearst*, p. 447; *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters, 1928–1945* , Vol. I, p. 424. The President's letter would have reached New York too late, it would seem, for W.R. to have arranged to stay as soon as Friday the 5th; Marion's recollection needs to be weighed with that factor in mind.

MD: Of course I had an awful hangover from Cissy Patterson's party. So did Harry Crocker. I had just gotten to sleep at eight, and at eight-fifteen I got the word that I had to get up.

Cissy sashayed in in a long robe and said, "He's downstairs." W.R. was way down at the other end of the house, and we had to go and catch an eleven o'clock train.

He had had a talk with the President. It was very affable and everything was fine except that the President had asked him if he wanted a cocktail and W.R. had said no.

I said, "Why did you let the President take one alone? You could have taken it and thrown it in the wastebasket. That was a terrible insult."

He said that F.D.R. had only one. I said, "He might have taken two if you had taken one. That was no way to be." Well, they had a very nice talk, but then W.R. decided that the White House was a little cold and he couldn't sleep. He was nervous. He was supposed to have another conference [with F.D.R.] in the afternoon, but had gotten a little tired, and he decided he wanted to go back to Los Angeles. He told me this on the train.

I think W.R. and the President may have had some little disagreement—I do not know what. I do know that W.R. would never spend a weekend at somebody else's house, whether it was the White House or Buckingham Palace. He always wanted to be in his own place.

I could understand that feeling, and I got used to it. I got to be the same way. I was miserable even overnight at somebody else's house. I couldn't sleep. I wanted my own bed, no matter how ancient it was. And I had an eighteenth-century bed [at the Beach House] and I was almost as old as it was.

W.R. didn't say much about his conversation. He just said that the President was charming. We had met him in California [in 1932], but I couldn't talk to him very much. It was at the Electric Parade at the Coliseum [in Los Angeles], and all the stars were supposed to ride

around in the ring and get out and meet the President and say, "How do you do?"

TC: The foregoing event took place in September 1932, several weeks before Roosevelt was elected to his first term.

MD: Mrs. Roosevelt was really charming. I adored Anna [Boettiger, the Roosevelts' daughter], and the boys were nice. At one time Elliott had worked for Mr. Hearst, in the radio station in Texas [KTSA in San Antonio]. He was in charge, and he did very well. Anna had worked for W.R. also. She and John Boettiger worked on the Seattle newspaper [the *Post-Intelligencer*]. John was supposed to be the publisher, and Anna was the managing publisher [or rather an editor], in charge of the women's page.

I don't think W.R. agreed with all of the President's policies, but he liked the [Roosevelts' personality]. After all, W.R. had the right to express his own opinion, the same way he had done with [Herbert] Hoover. When he didn't like something, he would attack. Like the Pearl Harbor thing and lending money all the time.

PP/KSM: *And W.R. opposed a plan to license the press—part of the National Recovery Act in 1933.*

TC: Marion's recent words warranted more commentary than Pfau and Marx gave them. She was speaking here in the context of the early 1940s; and with "lending money all the time" she could have been recalling an event like the Lend-Lease Act of 1941.

MD: He [W. R.] was definitely against a third term for Roosevelt [in 1940]. I might say I think it may be better to give a president a longer term, because four years go by so quickly. We could use it like a monarchy, like in England, where it goes on forever. If they were in for life, why would they try to graft? When you only have four years, there's a temptation to say, I'll get everything I can.

If the public doesn't like the president, they should have a vote and say they don't want him in. But that isn't so simple.

MD: Mr. Hearst had an editorial writer in New York who wrote the general editorials. He was called Mr. [E. F.] Tompkins.

TC: Tompkins went on to compile *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Randolph Hearst*, the so-called "Blue Bible" that was privately published through the *San Francisco Examiner* by the Hearst Corporation in 1948.

MD: Any extra ones [editorials] that were in the papers were written by W.R. He would notify Mr. Tompkins to write about such and such a thing, just as a suggestion, and Mr. Tompkins would write it and send it to W.R., who would okay it or make some changes. You couldn't tell the difference from his own editorials. Mr. Tompkins was very used to W.R.'s style of writing.

TC: Along with Tompkins, Benjamin DeCasseres in New York (and sometimes Merryle Stanley Rukeyser), plus Charles Ryckman and Jose Rodriguez in California, wrote editorials in the Hearstian mode in the 1930s and 1940s. See *The Unknown Hearst: 1941*, p. 9.

MD: The editorials were never signed, so you never knew which was written by whom.

I would talk to W.R. about some of the editorials. I maintained that some women might know about politics, even if I didn't. However, I used to put in my two cents worth every once in a while.

W.R. would write them in his own handwriting. He might ask me what I thought about something like the anti-vivisection thing or the Roosevelts. I usually agreed with him.

Among the other writers, he liked [Walter] Winchell, but the one he adored was Bill Curley [in New York]. There was Baskerville [William Baskervill] from Baltimore, and Walter Howey was always the little white-haired boy. W.R. met [Westbrook] Pegler once and was nicely impressed by him.

TC: Pegler didn't begin writing for the Hearst newspapers until 1944 at the age of fifty. He'd been with the Scripps Howard papers for most of the preceding years, since becoming a journalist as early as the 1910s.

MD: Pegler was a different person entirely from his writings. He was so sweet and kind that I couldn't imagine how that poison came out of his pen. You read his things and said, "That is not the man I met, who was so charming."

W.R. saw him only once [during the final period at San Simeon, 1944–1947]. Pegler and his wife [Julia] came up to San Simeon and we had dinner one evening and luncheon the next day. Then they motored down to Los Angeles. We didn't talk about anything in particular, just how nice the place was. Everybody always said that.

W.R. didn't write to Pegler about the Eleanor Roosevelt thing [Pegler having attacked her]. He would wire the editor and say, "Would you kindly tell this gentleman not to write nasty things about a woman. I do not believe in hiding behind a woman's skirts."

They would think they had Pegler under control, and then, the next thing you'd know, there it was again.

W.R. wanted to fire Pegler, but he found out that he had a contract. He said to pay him off unless he behaved himself. Aside from Mrs. Roosevelt, Pegler was all right, but Mr. Hearst got awfully tired of his attacks. I got tired, and I got mad, too.

PP/KSM: *Pegler had referred to Mrs. Roosevelt [repeatedly] as "La Boca Grande."*

Later he suggested that his readers who visited London might want to drink a few pints and then desecrate the statue of F.D.R. in Grosvenor Square.

His statements about others would lead to court, and the many judgments against him form a unique case in the history of American journalism and jurisprudence. But he stayed with the Hearst newspapers until 1962, when he attacked W.R.'s memory and was fired.

MD: I think it started at a party in Washington. Mrs. Pegler was invited, but then she was asked not to go because Mrs. Roosevelt was going to be there. A woman can influence a man, just like that.

If anything was wrong with a man, you could say: It must be his wife. Women have loads of influence, and they know it, too. But what

good was it to the newspapers if one man, supposedly and apparently intelligent, was constantly roasting one faction of a family?

TC: Oliver Pilat's biography of Westbrook Pegler is fittingly subtitled *Angry Man of the Press* (New York 1963).