

- And hi to everybody everywhere. Hope you're well, and can enjoy the last bits of summer, wherever. And obviously in S.A., last bits of winter, hopefully. Okay, so as we had, I think all of us have said often, August was meant to be sort of holiday highlights, a much lighter tone, lighter touch on everything. And to end it, I thought, when Trudy and I spoke, we would do it on Woody Allen for the obvious reasons. I mean, this is a remarkable individual, in my opinion, a remarkable Jewish artist, a remarkable artist of the 20th, into the 21st Century, in so many ways. And I want to try and show today why I think he is way beyond what some may see as a stereotype perception, or what may have been received in some parts of the world. I want to focus primarily on two things. The one is Woody Allen just as the writer, as the artist, as the comic brilliance of the mere, just of the act of writing. And let's never forget, he writes and acts, and directs pretty much in all his films. I mean, that's not easy; that's tough. So the artist, on the one hand, and then, of course, the whole question of Jewish identity that comes up again and again in his movies, whether in lesser or greater form. And what's he contributing to the whole contemporary discussion and conversation around Jewish identity, and how it's represented in the arts, in this case, film or writing, theatre, et cetera. And how he takes certain ideas of theatre and the comic character, traditionally the fool, was known as the fool, and just takes it so much further as a theatrical concept, if you like. So those are some of the main aims I want to look at in looking at Woody Allen, and purposely left until the end, because obviously, one can do so many lectures or talks on this guy, but to hold it to one. And I'm going to do something a bit different. Instead of focusing as usual just on one or two movies or one or two plays, whatever, I'm going to look at clips from a number of some of his main works, and some slightly lesser ones, perhaps.

So to help give us that sense of the overall bigger picture, if we step back and look at him almost as if we are 20, 30 years beyond where we are now, and looking at what did this artist contribute to these questions of comic brilliance in writing, directing, and to the notions of debates of contemporary Jewish identity. Just to give a bit of context here, these are obviously pictures of him. And on the left is when he was in his teenage years at school. And then on the bottom left is a statue from the early 2006 in Oviedo in Spain. And that's the statue, which is quite interesting. It's a human-height level, and just there on the pavement, of Woody Allen. In Spain, he's loved, as he is, and I've spoken before, and I'm going to mention it. I did some amazing workshops in Soweto many, many years ago, and they loved Woody Allen. You know, the clips from it, and watching and talking, and wanted to engage so much more with Woody Allen was the one, more than Chaplin or Groucho, Buster Keaton, or many of the other great comedians that we can get on film. It was Woody Allen that struck a

chord, which has been fascinating to me to experience. And the question is the eternal nebich. Well, I should have put a question mark here, is he? What has he done with that archetype, the schlemiel, the nebich, what has he done with that, and taken it so much further in the classic tradition of the fool in literature, in particular, theatre and, for our times, in film? So it's around this idea of the nebich and what he is. Okay, this is my favourite, one of my great favourite quotes.

Just never forget, Woody Allen has written 56 movies, 56 films, and directed them all. Okay, there's only one or two of the very recent ones he hasn't acted in. But he's acted in almost all of them, and written and directed. And he's written many TV series, TV scripts, "Sid Caesar" and many others. And he wrote his own stand-up comedy routines. And he contributed to other writers on TV, and so on. And he's written books and plays. I mean, the production. If we look, again, if we imagine we're 20, 30 years away from now, if we will for a moment just look at it, we will say this is a remarkable output. This is a Jewish artist, or an artist who is Jewish, and the output is remarkable. You know, it's on the scale of Dylan, for me, the number of albums and the number of works that he has written, created, and done. It's almost one a year, if not more. That is an incredible output. And the sheer amount of hard work and guts that goes into it. Very different from the loser image of the nebich, or the sacrificial lamb image of the nebich. This is one tough guy to write so many, direct so many, get the funding, get the actors, get it all done, and produce and produce, and he's now in his 80s, as we all know.

Okay, this is one of my favourite lines. "Alvy, you're incapable of enjoying life." That's from "Annie Hall's" Diane Keaton. "Alvy, you're incapable of enjoying life. "You know that. "I mean, you're like New York. "You're just this person. "You're like this island unto himself." It's, for me, it speaks not only about Woody Allen, obviously, but it speaks, there's a certain question around Jewish identity. "You're incapable of enjoying life." I mean, we're obsessed with analysing, understanding, trying to figure out ironic humour. Are we marginal? Are we centre of a counter-culture? Are we able to just enjoy the sunset, the moment, the city, the holiday, the sports match? Can we just enjoy and just forget about everything else? Or is it always some other part that is subtextually analysing, thinking, figuring out, coming from the tradition of the Jewish character as the outsider, marginalised outsider, that archetype, which is part of the nebich archetype, if we like. But it's the loser I'm going to show is absolute; what Woody Allen does is flip it into the winner, the one who outwits the opposition or the other, whoever the other may be. "You're incapable of enjoying life. "I mean, you're like New York City. "You're just this person. "You're like an island unto yourself." You know, for me, I don't want to go on and on too much, but it really speaks to this notion of identity. It's brilliant, I think.

Okay, I'm going to show this here. This is an interview by "Time Magazine" with Woody Allen. And what's brilliant about it is what I've been mentioning. 56 movies; he's now in his early 80s. That's at least one a year, to write, direct, act, get all the actors, the producers, shoot, edit, everything, and he gets the funding, and to write all the other stuff, plays, books, essays, early TV scripts, and so on. All the things I've mentioned. The sheer hard work and guts of the man. Okay.

(A video clip of an interview by Time Magazine with Woody Allen plays)

- I start to have some problems with reality.

- [Interviewer] Speaking as a young neurotic person, has being neurotic in life done more good or more harm in your experience?

- Well, it's interesting. People tend to think that I'm neurotic, and this, I feel, is a testimony to my acting ability. Over the years, I've played the neurotic, and I played it so well, I think, I'm not a good actor, but that I can do. And I played that one little thing that I can do well, that is a neurotic character, so effectively that people tend to think I'm neurotic in my life. When, in fact, the truth of the matter is, if you looked at my entire life, you would find that I'm not really very neurotic. I'm very structured, normal. I have a wife now of 10 years. I have two kids that I'm devoted to. I have been very productive my whole life. I don't sit around brooding and contemplating suicide or getting high, or dissipating myself. I've been a very disciplined worker. I have my jazz orchestra that requires practise and discipline, and I play with. I have my writing. And I've been able to do all these things on an ongoing basis for years, and a neurotic personality would have trouble with that. So I think that I'm not neurotic, that I'm very middle class, blue collar, beer-drinking, television, T-shirt jerk at home, not someone who's ensconced in Kierkegaard or Spinoza. But my image is quite different 'cause of what I've played.

- [Interviewer] Do you agree with Picasso's quote, "Good artists copy, but great artists steal?" And if so, who have you stolen from?

- Oh, I've stolen from the best. I mean, I've stolen from Bergman; I've stolen from Groucho; I've stolen from Chaplin. I've stolen from Keaton, from Martha Graham, from Fellini. I mean, I'm a shameless thief.

- Okay, I'm going to hold this there from the interview, because I've seen this kind of thing being interviewed a couple of times with Woody Allen, but this is the clearest and most articulate. And I agree, one cannot be that neurotic as the character he's acting, and write so much and direct it, everything that I've said about all those films and other works that he's written, directed and acted in, and done. A

neurotic person, as he says, would not be able to. He'd be full of anxiety, dread, depression, many other situations would come in. It's a persona. It's an archetype he's acting out. Obviously, he can tap into it, but he can act it. And I agree, I don't think any of this would've been produced if he was anything vaguely like the character that he's created. So, you know, Chaplin isn't anything like the character Charlie Chaplin created, and many of the others. So I think we can accord him that benefit, the understanding of it, not necessarily the inhabiting in his own life.

Just to remind us, over six decades, he's been in multiple Academy Award-winning films. He began, as I've said, as we know, in the '50s working with Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner, Neil Simon, for the "Sid Caesar Show" in the '50s. That's an extraordinary group of brilliant, talented, amongst the best writers of the second half of the 20th Century. In 2004, Comedy Central ranked him the fourth greatest of all the comedians; that's an amazing accolade. In a British survey done by the BBC, Woody Allen was ranked the third greatest comedian of all time. By the mid-'60s, he was writing and directing the slapstick ones we know, "Take the Money and Run," "Bananas." And then, of course, came 1977, the great romantic comedy, "Annie Hall," which influenced hugely the writing of romantic comedy film scripts after that. That's the key. Four Academy Awards that film won. Best Picture, Best Director, Woody Allen; Best Screenplay, Woody Allen; Best Actress for Diane Keaton. That's four Academy Awards for "Annie Hall," and it was up against some serious opposition at the time. And then, of course, later it was "Zelig," which is, for me, one of his great brilliant films of all time. He's had 16 nominations for the Academy Award for Best Screenplay, and he's won three times for the Best Original Screenplay. That's a phenomenal amount. He's won nine British Academy Film Awards. This is a kid whose grandparents immigrated to the States from Austria and Lithuania. Let's never forget, stepping back again, as I mentioned at the beginning, the extraordinary output and the huge achievement. And I'm not saying every film is great or brilliant, or average or whatever; of course it's not. There are some that are far better.

But the extraordinary output and the constant ability to be tough enough to write, produce, direct, all carry on and on. The persona is obviously anxious, nervous, intellectual, the nebbish, the loser, who then becomes the winner who outwits, as I said, the other. And I'm going to talk about that a little bit more later. Diane Keaton said, "Woody showed me the ropes "and I followed his lead. "He is the most disciplined person I've ever met in my life. "He works so hard." Now, she's not kidding or joking around. "Annie Hall," it's widely recognised, set the tone and the standard, as I said, for the modern romantic comedy. In the American Film Institute's ranking of the 100 best films in America of all time, "Annie Hall" is ranked number 35. Diane Keaton also said, "He has a mind like nobody else. "He's bold; he's got that courage in his work. "He's got courage." And that is

what it takes to do something really unique, along with a genius imagination. And then, of course, much more recently, "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," a much more recent film, Penelope Cruz, Scarlett Johansson, others, which won the Best Motion Picture at the Golden Globe, and Penelope Cruz won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. These are just a few of the accolades that he has produced and helped others to win or won himself. So we need to really, I think, absorb that. You can read so many of the great directors and writers, Tarantino quoted; he's Tarantino, "He's one of the greatest screenwriter "of all time in film history." Jon Stewart, Scorsese raves about him; Spike Lee, "Woody Allen is great, great, brilliant." And then a very interesting comment by the very influential and important American film critic and scholar, Pauline Kael; her books are fantastic. And she wrote this, which I think hits the nail on the head, "His comic character is so appealing "because he's the smart urban guy "who appears to be the loser. "He's anxious, vulnerable; "but by his intelligence, he triumphs. "He is the outsider who outwits. "He comes from the margins, "but he's the outsider who outwits," And I think Pauline Kael hits the nail on the head. "It's the loser setup, but the outwitting happens." And that's something I'm going to come to, because I think it's so important when we look at what he has contributed. In terms of the comic character, we would normally have the fool in ancient Greek theatre. It would just be part of a narrator, never an agent in the action of the play or in Shakespeare, the fool, like in "Lear" or any others, the gravediggers. They're merely comments on life, metaphysics, and on the action of the main heroic characters, or tragic characters. They don't have agency to make decisions and influence the dramatic action. But then as theatre develops through Gogol in Russia, that I've spoken about before, and "The Inspector General," and others. And then, in the 20th Century, the second half of the 20th Century, the brilliant Italian playwright, Dario Fo, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature, very rare for a playwright to win it, "Accidental Death of an Anarchist." And the character there is the classic comic comedian, the classic archetype of the comic character in Italian and ancient Roman tradition, who is the observer, is the insight, is the intelligent one, but is a nebuch because doesn't have the ability to influence the action. But Dario Fo turns it on its head, taking the tradition from Gogol and others in the previous century.

(A video clip of an interview by Time Magazine with Woody Allen continues)

- [Interviewer] At what point did you begin to note that the character you played in some of-

- And what he does, Dario Fo does, is he turns "Accidental Death of the Anarchist," he turns the accused character, 'cause a lot of it is about the accused character interacting with a police inspector interrogating, and many other things, and shows that that character is

the driver of the dramatic action. So the comic, the fool, comes from the margin of the observer, intelligent insight, but actually passive and unable to act, the loser, in action terms, and now becomes centre stage in the play where he or she drives the dramatic action. And that's a massive shift in thinking about the role of the fool or the classic archetype of the comic character, going back to the Greeks, the Romans, all the way through to our times. And Woody Allen, and Pauline Kael, for me, gets it. 'Cause that's what he's doing. He's taking the nebuchadnezzar, and he's saying, "Right, this is a loser." This is a socially awkward, inadequate, et cetera, et cetera, all those qualities we know, but through the intelligence of the character can outwit the opposition, and win and achieve. And that follows the great 20th Century from the 19th Century of Gogol, a great shift in the tradition of the role of the fool or the clown in theatre, and in our case, in film. So there's an enormous contribution. Because, see, what he's doing is he's bringing the outsider to be the main character, the upstart, to use Hannah Oren's phrase. You know, the Jewish person is either parvenu or pariah from the host nation or parvenu. Parvenu the upstart who makes good. So the upstart who makes good is able to use his or her intelligence and sheer streetwise suss to outwit and win. And the assimilationist longing debate falls within that, because this is the character being created. The ironic is that the outsider is now the central main protagonist, central character.

Okay, for me, he's one of the most productive Jewish artists of our time and all time. Woody Allen said, "Jewishness is not part of my artistic consciousness. "Of course, any character I play would be Jewish "because I'm Jewish." And that's classic. We go back to Kafka and many others, where we can see the alienation, the outsider quality that I'm speaking about; the attempt to try and outwit in Kafka and the character fails, but the attempt is there to try and figure out. And we can see that he is part of that whole tradition, in a way. What he's also done, and with Kafka, I think we could say the same. Of course, I'm Jewish, but it's not necessarily a Jewish character always, or only Jewish themes. So what he has done is he has taken that theme of the nebuchadnezzar, who is the winner, turns from loser to winner, and universalized that archetype. So that anybody from Soweto to Europe, to England, to Africa, to whatever part of the world, to America, anywhere, can identify with that character and find the humour, the comedy, understand how the alienated, marginalised outsider individual can not only survive but win. It's turned it from a Jewish tradition into a universal quality. That's an amazing achievement. That's what Dario Fo does with the, what I mentioned, the grand, the great comic clowns of ancient Rome and Greek theatre. So he's taken an archetype persona's Jewish roots, for me, and universalized it. So the clown becomes a universal outsider. Charlie Chaplin does it in another way. The victim becomes the victor. Look at the tradition of Isaac Bashevis Singer, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Salinger, Mailer, Joseph Heller. They're all doing the same. Look at Yossarian in Joseph Heller's "Catch-22." An apparent Loser, but with

irony and brains, outwits the other.

First understands how the system works, and then twists it, turns it. So I see this quality because the intelligence of the character uses irony to help understand the system and outwit it. And that's the source of the humour, is the ironic, dramatic voice that we call in theatre, which is so powerful in theatre and film. The loser becomes the hero who wins. That's what he's created. And hence a universalism, so anybody who feels marginalised, alienated, the small little man or woman doing their job or whatever, can identify. Aristotle spoke about the character we feel the most for is the character who undergoes undeserved misfortune. His characters all always, you know, the very physicality, the loser, everything I've spoken about, the anxiety, et cetera, is undeserved misfortune; doesn't deserve it. Events are happening to this little character, and he got to try and figure out a way to overcome it. Almost like Groucho who does as well, and Chaplin as well, but he's doing it in his own way, to me, with the Jewish roots. He's a contemporary Tevye from "Fiddler on the Roof." caught between tradition of these Jewish roots and modern alienation. Escaping from the ghetto but still with the ghetto mentality, got to belong to the Jewish group, which is then assimilate or not with the much larger host nation. It may be America, Britain, wherever, Europe, wherever, in search of a place of his own where to belong. That's another archetype which is built into the character. And, of course, the humour is a way to make life much more bearable, but it comes, for me, from the irony. And irony is necessary for his characters, and the Chaplins and the others, to outwit the system set up to defeat him. And every alienated person can now identify in modern society, because what he has achieved is to universalize it. For me, what Woody Allen gives for the Jewish character is attention of a very real conflict. For example, if it's in America or Britain, it's Jewish versus American culture, or Jewish versus British culture, an identity. For the non-Jew, I want to suggest, is that the conflict is the personal versus mass culture identity, which is very different from Jewish versus British or American or Canadian, or South African, whatever identity. So and in "Annie Hall," we see so much and so much of the others. So, for me, he's rejected Jewish identity, which is perhaps located more in religion from older times, and reinvented Jewish identity as an attitude, mostly of irony in the tradition of Kafka. It's the Jewish tradition, he's reinvented his attitude to win in life, a small, ordinary person, as opposed to the Jewish identity more related before or rooted in tradition in the past. There's a very interesting new book by David Evanier on Woody Allen; he talks about it, that he's one of the most rigid workaholics in the world of art. And after interviewing many of the other artists in America and elsewhere, as Diane Keaton attests to, and so many others.

Okay, I'm going to show a couple, some more now. This is one of my favourite little clips. And this is, here, this is going with his wife to visit his mother, and this is part of a documentary.

(A video clip from a documentary about Woody Allen)

- Now, so how do you feel now about the fact that both Christopher and I go out with Asian women?

- I personally don't think it's right.

- [Father] You go where?

- That's me, my opinion.

- With Chinese women.

- Not Chinese; Asian.

- I would've liked him from the beginning to fall in love with a nice Jewish girl.

- [Woody] A nice Jewish girl?

- Yes.

- [Father] They have a nice movie out.

- That's why the Jews someday will be, not in your time, be extinct, and that's very bad.

- [Woody] This has truly been a lunch from hell.

- I love the warmth, the son and the mother. And she said, "Look, it's okay, but I'd much rather "you'd married a Jewish girl," and they'll be extinct. I mean, it immediately catastrophized the worst possible thing, because her son is marrying, you know. And that's what I mean. The mother is the tradition. Marry a Jewish girl, do this, do that, follow the tradition. And he's aware of that compared to what I'm talking about, of his own position that I'm speaking. I love that.

Okay, and then on the Jewish mama theme, and I know that Trudy has been dealing with it fantastically, I was going to show a short clip. This is not of Woody Allen's mother, but a brilliant comic moment on that theme.

(A video clip with an elderly Jewish mother plays)

- Good evening. I'm so happy to be here and meet you. My son did not quite tell the truth. Today I am 91 and a half. Thank you. My son also did not tell another thing about our relationship. My son, and I hate to divulge this, has ruined my life. As a Jewish mother, I never thought that I would have to tell a secret. Jewish mothers are born

with certain genes. They can't be acquired. They can only be very carefully honed. Jewish mothers are born to complain. Actually it's called kvetching.

- Okay, and this goes on and on and on. It's a fantastic short sketch. I just wanted a little clip just to, for me, it echoes Woody Allen's own mother. And it echoes the idea from that phrase from "Annie Hall," from the Diane Keaton character, "You don't know how to enjoy it." Complain, kvetch, this, that, whatever. There's always something else cooking and going on. Can't just be in the moment. Okay, I'm going to share the next one here. This is from very early Woody Allen, very, very early stand-up comedy.

(A video clip of Woody Allen's early stand-up comedy plays)

- Let's make him feel at home. Woody Allen, here he is.

- Thank you; thank you. I was actually on television around three weeks ago now, and I mentioned that I was married, or had been married, and that I had had a bad marriage, is what I mentioned. I mentioned that I married one of the few white Muslims in New York, actually. And too young. And I wanted to elaborate on it. I was, I had a bad marriage, and it was partially my fault. For the first year of marriage, I would say, I had what you would call a bad basic attitude toward my wife. I tended to place my wife underneath a pedestal all the time, and we used to argue and fight. And we finally decided that we would either take a vacation in Bermuda or get a divorce, one of the two things. And we discussed it very maturely, and we decided finally on the divorce, 'cause we felt that we had a limited amount of money to spend on something, and that a vacation in Bermuda's over in two weeks, you know, but a divorce is something that you'll always have, you know, so. Seemed good. And I saw myself as a bachelor again, you know, living in the Village in a bachelor apartment with a wood-burning fireplace and a shaggy rug. And on the wall, some of those great Picassos by Van Gogh, and just great swing, airline hostesses running amuck in the apartment, you know. And I got very excited. And I ran into my wife, she was in the next room at the time listening to CONELRAD on the radio. She was a very nervous woman. And I laid it right on the line with her. I came right to the point. I said, "Quasimoto, I want a divorce. No mincing words. And she said, "Great, get the divorce." But it turns out in New York State, they have a very funny law that says you can't get a divorce unless you can prove adultery. And that's very strange, because the 10 Commandments say "Thou shall not commit adultery," but New York State says you have to.

- Okay, I'm going to hold it there, just to show very, very early, very young Woody Allen. But look at the strength, look at the confidence with performing, the comic timing, the writing. You know, this isn't a terrified, anxious little character or individual here in his stand-up routine; something else entirely. Building the story to

get the punchline, and letting us get it. The comic timing, the use of gestures, the way he holds it with the story, which comes from his writing, for me, early days, and you can see the talent, and in the accent. Okay, this is another piece here. Oh, this is a really fun piece.

(Various clips of Woody Allen's early films play)

- Let's make him feel at home. Woody Allen, here he is.

- Get this one here, on life.

- We love your work; my wife has seen all your films.

- I especially like your early funny ones.

- You know what the palace is? That's 24 living rooms and a dungeon. But seriously. Don't you see the rest of the country looks upon New York like we're left-wing, communist, Jewish, homosexual pornographers? I think of us that way sometimes, and I live here.

- Come back, back, back, more, more, more. Back, back, back. The question is, have I learned anything about life? I feel that life is divided up into the horrible and the miserable. Those are the two categories, you know? The horrible would be like, I don't know, terminal cases, you know, and blind people, cripples. I don't know how they get through life. It's amazing to me, you know. And the miserable is everyone else. So when you go through life is you'll be thankful that you're miserable. I look around the world and all I see is human suffering. 'Cause life is so cruel. See what I mean? Well, that's essentially how I feel about life. Full of loneliness and misery, and suffering and unhappiness, and it's all over much too quickly. War? Fellas, I'm a pacifist; I don't believe in war. Boy, this Army cooking'll get you every time. You got the wrong guy.

- Okay, these are just some very, very short clips for me to show, in the early days, and Woody Allen speaks about it, he was trying to string as many one-liners, jokes, gags, in the films. And we get a sense of that, you know, "Bananas," playing against that. There's so many quick, quick, sharp, fantastic one-liners, which we love. And then it all starts to change and move towards "Annie Hall," and where he starts to take on a full story, much more three-dimensional characters. And the persona that I'm thinking about of the clown, the comic character, turns from being, in a sense, the loser nebbich, into the outwitted victor, and through the intelligence, and of course, irony in every single moment, what, for me, gives his acting such brilliance, and what gives the character such strength. He's acting on the ironic level, which is a subtext all the time, together with the literal level. Paul Simon once said about Bob Dylan that he can never sing with Bob Dylan because Paul Simon understood that his voice could

only sing in one emotional register, whereas Dylan is dripping with irony in his voice. So he's singing the literal, but there's an ironic subtext implied, almost invisible, but in the voice as well is a duality. John Lennon has it and a lot of others. And, for me, Woody Allen has it. And that's what gives such a strength inside the nebich character. Okay, I want to move on to another clip here, and this is "The Club."

(A video clip of a documentary of Woody Allen plays)

- The other important joke for me is one that's usually attributed to Groucho Marx, but I think it appears originally in Freud's wit and its relation to the unconscious. And it goes like this, I'm paraphrasing. "I would never want to belong to any club "that would have someone like me for a member."

- [Narrator] Woody Allen is one of the most important directors of all times.

- When Woody Allen calls, when Martin Scorsese calls, when you're lucky enough to get those calls, as I was, you're going to do it, whatever they ask you to do.

- [Joaquin] And I just was amazed that he was so committed to this work that he hasn't lost the drive or the love that he has for making films.

- [Narrator] Over the years, he made more than 50 movies. Some of them were so innovative that they changed the comedy genre.

- Relationships; I think people should mate for life, like pigeons or Catholics.

- [Narrator] For the first time ever in the history of cinema, he introduces a main character who suffers from hypochondria.

- [Woody] God, there's a tumour in my head the size of a basketball.

- [Narrator] And who's a bit clumsy. Sex and death are two subjects that come up constantly in his movies.

- [Woody] Sex and Death, two subjects that interest me the most. You know, they both only come once in my lifetime. At least after death, you're not nauseous.

- [Narrator] He's forever in love with Manhattan.

- [Mariel] He loves New York so much; I mean, it's his city.

- [Narrator] And has a soft spot for jazz music.

- [Woody] I brought my clarinet and we've locked the doors from the outside.
- [Narrator] The breakup between him and Mia Farrow throws Woody Allen in the middle of a huge scandal.
- [Newscaster] The Woody and Mia saga isn't over by any means.
- Okay, I'm going to hold that there. This is just the beginning of a fantastic, very long documentary on his life, his work, spanning almost six decades of his entire work. But it just shows, we're getting a sense of a position of an artist, of real, real stature, and real influence and innovation, over a 60-year period, and recognised by so many around the world.

Okay, this is one of the great classic scenes, which we all know, but irresistible to show.

(A video clip from the 1977 film "Annie Hall")

- We saw the Fellini film last Tuesday. It is not one of his best. It lacks a cohesive structure. You get the feeling that he's not absolutely sure what it is he wants to say. Of course, I've always felt he was essentially a technical filmmaker. Granted, "La Strada" was a great film; great in its use of negative imagery more than anything else. But that central cohesive and core-
- [Woody] I'm going to have a stroke.
- [Diane] Well, stop listening to him.
- [Line Critic] Must lead through an artist's work, leading from one to the other.
- [Woody] He's screaming his opinions in my ear.
- [Line Critic] That's what I'm talking about. Like all that "Juliet of the Spirits" or "Satyricon," I found it incredibly indulgent. You know, he really is. He's one of the most indulgent filmmakers, he really is.
- [Woody] The key word here is indulgent.
- [Line Critic] And without getting, let's put it this way.
- [Woody] What are you depressed about?
- [Diane] I missed my therapy; I overslept.

- [Woody] You're kidding, how can you possibly oversleep?
- [Diane] The alarm clock.
- [Woody] Do you know what a hostile gesture that is to me?
- [Diane] I know, because of our sexual problem, right?
- [Woody] Everybody on line at "The New Yorker" has to know our rate of intercourse?
- [Line Critic] It's like Samuel Beckett, you know. I admire the technique, but it doesn't hit me on a gut level.
- [Woody] I'd like to hit this guy on a gut level.
- [Diane] Stop it, Alvy.
- [Woody] He's spitting on my neck. You know, he spits on my neck when he talks.
- [Line Critic] The thing, the most important thing of all-
- [Diane] And you know something else? You know, you're so egocentric that if I miss my therapy, you can only think of it in terms of how it affects you.
- [Line Critic] Built on shock is what it is.
- [Woody] They're probably on their first date, right? They probably met by answering an ad in "The New York Review of Books." Thirtyish academic wishes to meet woman who's interested in Mozart, James Joyce, and sodomy. What do you mean our sexual problem? I mean, I'm comparatively normal for a guy raised in Brooklyn.
- [Diane] Okay, I'm very sorry. My sexual problem, okay? My sexual problem, huh?
- [Woody] I never read that. That was Henry James, right, novel? The sequel to "The Turn of the Screw"?
- [Line Critic] It's the influence of television. Now, Marshall McLuhan deals with it in terms of it being a high intensity, you understand, a hot medium as opposed to-
- [Woody] What I wouldn't give for a large sock with horse manure in it. What do you do when you get stuck on a movie line with a guy like this behind you?
- [Line Critic] Wait a minute, why can't I give my opinion? It's a

free country.

- [Woody] He can give, do you have to give it so loud? I mean, aren't you ashamed to pontificate like that? And the funny part of it is, Marshall McLuhan, you don't know anything about Marshall McLuhan's work.

- [Line Critic] Oh, really, really? I happen to teach a class at Columbia called "TV, Media and Culture," so I think that my insights into Mr. McLuhan, well, have a great deal of validity.

- [Woody] Oh, do you?

- [Line Critic] Yeah.

- [Woody] Well, that's funny, because I happen to have Mr. McLuhan right here. So, so yeah, just let me, let me, come over here a second.

- [Marshall] Oh, I heard what you were saying. You know nothing of my work. You mean my whole fallacy is wrong. How you ever got to teach a course in anything is totally amazing.

- [Woody] Boy, if life were only like this.

- Okay, to hold it there, so what for me is, I mean, this is 1977. What for me is still so powerful, besides the writing and the interaction, I can listen to it again and again, the writing is so good, is, first, he's the loser nebuchadnezzar outsider, you know, who is just kvetching, as the Jewish mother said, kvetching, complaining, whinging, whining, moaning, about society, about this guy behind, but not engaging, not showing action to change the direction of the dramatic action. So he's on the outside commenting and narrating, almost, going way back to the clown in ancient Greek, Roman, Italian, all the Shakespeare, the fool, all of these, they can't influence events. They only go, they can comment on it and from the loser perspective in the nebuchadnezzar case. But what he then does, Woody Allen, is he shifts the scene into where the character takes agency to change, to defeat the guy behind, bring McLuhan in. And we suddenly, it's a wake-up, a shake for us. And then the final part, it's a three-part story, the final part is to say, "If only life was like this," looking straight at the camera. And so it's irony upon irony, but it's that shift from loser to winner, and then the ironic comment to us, you know, the audience. So, for me, it encapsulates this, whether he's conscious of it or not. But he's doing it, and it shows the sheer guts, toughness that he spoke about, the first clip I showed, Diane Keaton, so many of the others speak about. This is not just the pathetic little shriveled-up, miserable, depressed character persona that some people might stereotypically portray or imagine. Okay, to move on to the next one is, this is, yeah.

(A video clip from the film "Annie Hall")

- [Woody] Millions of books written on every conceivable subject by all these great minds. And in the end, none of 'em knows anything more about the big questions of life than I do. Jesus, I read Socrates. You know, this guy used to knock off little Greek boys. What the hell's he got to teach me? And Nietzsche with his theory of eternal recurrence. He said that the life we live, we're going to live over and over again the exact same way for eternity. Great. That means I'll have to sit through the "Ice Capades" again. It's not worth it. And Freud, another great pessimist. Geez, I was in analysis for years; nothing happened. My poor analyst got so frustrated, the guy finally put in a salad bar.

- [Priest] Now, why do you think that you would like to convert to Catholicism?

- [Woody] Well, because, you know, I've got to have something to believe in. Otherwise, life is just meaningless.

- [Priest] I understand, but why did you make the decision to choose the Catholic faith?

- [Woody] You know, first of all, because it's a very beautiful religion, and it's a strong religion; it's very well-structured. You know, I'm talking now, incidentally, about the against-school-prayer, pro-abortion, anti-nuclear wing.

- [Priest] So at the moment, you don't believe in God.

- [Woody] No, and I want to. You know, I'm willing to do anything. I'll dye Easter eggs if it works. I need some evidence. I got to have some proof. You know what, if I can't believe in God, then I don't think life is worth living.

- [Priest] It means making a very big leap.

- [Woody] Yes, well, can you help me?

- [Mother] What, oh, my God!

- [Woody] I don't understand. I thought you would be happy.

- [Father] How can we be happy?

- [Woody] But because I never thought of God in my life. Now I'm giving it serious thought.

- [Father] But Catholicism? Why not your own people?

- [Woody] Because I get off to a wrong foot with my own thing, you

know. But I need a dramatic change in my life.

- [Father] You're going to believe in Jesus Christ?

- [Woody] I know it sounds funny, but I'm going to try.

- [Father] But why? We raised you as a Jew.

- [Woody] So just 'cause I was born that way, you know, I'm old enough to make a mature decision.

- [Father] But why Jesus Christ? Why, for instance, shouldn't you become a Buddhist?

- [Woody] A Buddhist? That's totally alien to me. Look, you're getting on in years, right? Aren't you afraid of dying?

- [Father] Why should I be afraid?

- [Woody] 'Cause you won't exist.

- [Father] So?

- [Woody] That thought doesn't terrify you?

- [Father] Who thinks about such nonsense? Now I'm alive. When I'm dead, I'll be dead.

- [Woody] I don't understand; aren't you frightened?

- [Father] Of what? I'll be unconscious.

- [Woody] I know, but never to exist again?

- [Father] How do you know?

- [Woody] But it certainly doesn't look promising.

- [Father] Who knows what I'll be. I'll either be unconscious or I won't. If not, I'll deal with it then. I'm not going to worry now how it's going to be when I'm unconscious.

- [Woody] Mom, come out.

- [Mother] Of course there's a god, you idiot. You don't believe in God?

- [Woody] But if there's a God, then why is there so much evil in the world? Well, just on a simplistic level, why were there Nazis?

- [Mother] Tell him, Max.
- [Father] How the hell do I know why there were Nazis? I don't know how the can opener works. ♪ Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare, Hare, Hare ♪
- [Hare Krishna Devotee] What makes you interested in becoming a Hare Krishna?
- [Woody] Well, I'm not saying that I want to join or anything, but I know you guys believe in reincarnation, you know, so it interests me.
- [Hare Krishna devotee] Yeah, well, what's your religion?
- [Woody] Well, I was born Jewish, you know, but last winter, I tried to become a Catholic and it didn't work for me. I studied and I tried, and I gave it everything. But, you know, Catholicism for me was die now, pay later, you know, and I just couldn't get with it. And I wanted to.
- [Hare Krishna devotee] You're afraid of dying?
- [Woody] Well, yeah, naturally; aren't you? Let me ask you. In reincarnation, does that mean my soul would pass to another human being? Or would I come back as a moose or an aardvark or something?
- [Hare Krishna devotee] Take our literature.
- [Woody] Uh-huh.
- [Hare Krishna devotee] Read it over, and think about it.
- [Woody] Okay, thank you very much.
- [Hare Krishna devotee] You're welcome. Hare Krishna. ♪ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Rama ♪
- [Woody] Who are you kidding? You're going to be a Krishna? You're going to shave your head, and put on robes and dance around at airports? You look like Jerry Lewis. God, I'm so depressed. Bang, I had to get out of that house. I had to just get out in the fresh air and clear my head. And I remember very clearly, I walked the streets. I walked and I walked. I didn't know what was going through my mind. It all seemed so violent and unreal to me. And I wandered for a long time on the Upper West Side, you know, and it must have been hours. You know, my feet hurt, my head was pounding, and I had to sit down. I went into a movie house. I didn't know what was playing or anything. I just needed a moment to gather my thoughts and be logical, and put the world back into rational perspective.
- So and it continues. What he's doing here for me is he's moved from

the one-line gags and the great funny one-liners of "Bananas" and the early movies, into now a full three-dimensional character, into a story with human characters who are trying to develop it in the classic tradition of character. Three-dimensional, interacting with other characters, inner thoughts, inner soliloquies coming from not only his stand-up comic routines from early on, but actually the inner thoughts, the soliloquy more, of the speech of the thoughts, not just continuation of one-line gags. So we see that evolution, we see the irony, you know, with the Catholic priest and then with the Hare Krishna, all the time. And, of course, the great irony with his own Jewish mother and father, which echoes what we saw early on with the Jewish mother, when Woody Allen goes to his own mother, "I wish you'd married a nice Jewish girl." That's Tevye; that's tradition and modernity. That's the traditional way, that's the traditional. At least have something of that belonging to that tradition coming from the mother and the father. Why Christ, why not, you know, et cetera. And the restless, young, alienated, marginalised urban character of today who is alienated and searching for some kind of meaning, but can't find it in a religious context. And that's why I'm saying that I think what's extraordinary that he's contributed is to say that the secular modern Jewish character that he portrays doesn't identify with Jewishness as a religion in terms of identity, but identity becomes defined as attitude. And that's the irony, the outwitting from the nebuchadnezzar, all that sort of thing going in as well. And it's that attitude that has become universalized. The ordinary small guy taking on the big questions of the world or taking on somebody in a queue outside a movie, taking on their mother, their father, whatever. And that's, for me, part of the brilliance of what he has contributed. The next one's from "Manhattan." And, for me, it's the sheer writing. And obviously, there's the fantasies here. But the sheer writing and the energy that he gives, and the passion in delivering the speech.

(A video clip from the 1979 film "Manhattan")

- [Woody] Chapter one, he adored New York City. He idolised it all out of proportion. No; make that he romanticised it all out of proportion. Yeah. To him, no matter what the season was, this was still a town that existed in black and white, and pulsed to the great tunes of George Gershwin. Ah, no, let me start this over. Chapter one, he was too romantic about Manhattan, as he was about everything else. He thrived on the hustle-bustle of the crowds and the traffic. To him, New York meant beautiful women and street-smart guys who seemed to know all the angles. Ah, no, corny; too corny for a man of my taste. Let me try and make it more profound. Chapter one, he adored New York City. To him, it was a metaphor for the decay of contemporary culture. The same lack of individual integrity that caused so many people to take the easy way out, was rapidly turning the town of his dreams. No, it's going to be too preachy. I mean, you know, let's face it. I want to sell some books here. Chapter one, he adored New York City. Although, to him, it was a metaphor for the decay of contemporary

culture. How hard it was to exist in a society desensitised by drugs, loud music, television, crime, garbage. Too angry; I don't want to be angry. Chapter one, he was as tough and romantic as the city he loved. Behind his black-rimmed glasses was the coiled sexual power of a jungle cat. I love this. New York was his town, and it always would be.

- Okay, what I think is, for me, is fantastic is that he has so many levels of irony happening. This is the opening, and he's describing what he's writing, and then commenting on that. There's double irony there. And then going through three or four different versions for the opening Chapter One. Completely very innovative in terms of filmmaking. We hear the thoughts of the writer, but it's coming through the character persona of the Woody Allen archetype. And, at the end, ending up with almost like a Damon Runyon character. You know, the tough, the black-rimmed glasses, and it's going to be a mafia guy or something like that, compared to all the other academic to angry or this or that. You know, also, we get an echo of the sheer amount of hard work that Woody Allen puts into his writing. You know, that he probably goes through many draughts to find, "Okay, I'll do this; no, too angry. "No, this is too cheesy," too whatever. And then to come up with it finally. I think a fantastic example of the melding of the writer and the archetypal persona of the character, and, of course, the love of New York City. I'm going to just jump here and show two more clips. The one from one of the great movies of Woody Allen, "Zelig." And, as I'm sure everybody knows, the character in the movie is called The Human Chameleon. And the character's born with a condition which nobody can understand, that he can take on any identity of people around him. It's a brilliant, simple, and effective metaphor of contemporary, marginalised, to use the jargon, alienated life, where you could take on any identity through osmosis, almost. Because everything now is about public performance. I can perform a president, I can perform a prime minister, I can perform being a professor. I can perform being an actor, perform being a business person. It's all about the performance of the character, and the inside has been so shrivelled and edited out. And from the great metaphor that "Zelig" is about is a universal thing going way back to Kafka, all of them, all the way through. But again, it's rooted, for me, in that Jewish humour I spoke about, 'cause it's coming from such an alienated and outsider position. Can't fit in, can't assimilate, even if he wanted to, the dominant with the culture, and has to stay on the outside, but is trying to find. And the only way is to completely negate his identity, and take on the identity of anybody who happens to be around as if it's a new medical condition. And that's the premise of the joke in "Zelig." It's a mocku-documentary. It's a mock documentary.

(A video clip from the 1983 film "Zelig")

- [Susan] He was the phenomenon of the '20s. When you think that, at

that time, he was as well-known as Lindbergh, it's really quite astonishing.

- [Irving] His story reflected the nature of our civilization, the character of our times, yet it was also one man's story, and all the themes of our culture were there. Heroism, will, things like that. But when you look back on it, it was very strange.

- [Saul] Well, it is ironic to see how quickly he has faded from memory, considering what an astounding record he made. He was, of course, very amusing, but at the same time, touched a nerve in people, perhaps in a way which they would prefer not to be touched. It certainly is a very bizarre story.

- [Narrator] The year is 1928. America, enjoying a decade of unequalled prosperity, has gone wild. The Jazz Age, it is called. The rhythms are syncopated, the morals are looser, the liquor is cheaper, when you can get it. It is a time of diverse heroes and madcap stunts, of speakeasies and flamboyant parties. One typical party occurs at the Long Island estate of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Porter Sutton, socialites, patrons of the arts. Politicians and poets rub elbows with the cream of high society. Present at the party is Scott Fitzgerald, who is to cast perspective on the '20s for all future generations. He writes in his notebook about a curious little man named Leon Selwin, or Zelman, who seemed clearly to be an aristocrat and extolled the very rich as he chatted with socialites. He spoke adoringly of Coolidge and the Republican party, all in an upper-class Boston accent. "An hour later," writes Fitzgerald, "I was stunned to see the same man "speaking with the kitchen help. "Now he claimed to be a Democrat, "and his accent seemed to be coarse, "as if he were one of the crowd." It is the first small notice taken of Leonard Zelig. Florida, one year later. An odd incident occurs at the New York Yankees training camp. Journalists, anxious as always to immortalise the exploits of the great home run hitters, notice a strange new player waiting his turn at bat after Babe Ruth. He is listed on the roster as Lou Zelig, but no one on the team has heard of him. Security guards are called, and he is escorted from the premises. It appears as a small item in the next day's newspaper. Chicago, Illinois, that same year. There is a private party at a speakeasy on the South Side. People from the most respectable walks of life, dance and drink bathtub gin. Present that evening was Calvin Turner, a waiter.

- [Calvin] And a lot of customers, a lot of gangs has come in the place, 'cause they always good tipppers and take good care of us. And, of course, we try to take care of our customers. But on this particular night, I looked over and here's a strange guy comin' in. I'd never seen him before. So I asked one of the other waiters, I said, "John, you know this guy? "You ever seen him?" So he looks, and "No, I ain't never seen him before, man. "I don't know who he is. "But I know one thing, he's a tough-lookin' hombre." So I looked over and

then, next thing, the guy had disappeared. I don't know where he went to. But about this time, you know, the music usually gets started, and the band started, ♪ Dra-da-da-da-Dra-da-da ♪ playing, and I looked, and here's a guy, a coloured guy, a coloured boy over there playin' trumpet. Man, he was playin' back. And I looked at the guy and I said, "Well, my goodness, he looks just like that gangster." But the gangster was white, and this guy's black, so I don't know what's happenin'.

- [Narrator] New York City; it is several months later.

- The story goes on, and we can get the main idea. And it reminds of Vaclav Havel's great play, "The Garden Party," written in the '60s, where the main character is the opportunist where he plays chess with himself so he'll never lose, and will do anything to advance the career up the bureaucratic ladder, take on different personas all the time. And the internal identity gets shrivelled and lost, and disappears almost in like a Kafka nightmare. So he's taking the Kafka idea, the irony of it and the metaphor, but playing it with wit, the music, and the humour, and the metaphor, the English accent of the narrator. You know, all of these things are feeding in, for me, to an extraordinary film around identity of all these aspects that I've mentioned, and ultimately, like Chaplin's "Modern Times." But the identity for the contemporary for our times now is the ability just to take any identity, put it on oneself like a postage stamp on an envelope, and hey, ho, we become that identity. And we can get away with anything, almost, because it's a question of how we perform it that matters, not the internal stuff.

Okay, and if I can just end, if it's okay with everyone, with one minute from, which brings the whole thing together of the Jewish thing of the Woody Allen in "Annie Hall," going to Annie's mother.

(A video clip from the film "Annie Hall")

- It's a nice ham this year, mom.

- Oh, yeah; Grammy always does such a good job.

- Great sauce.

- It is; it's dynamite ham.

- I went over to the swap meet, Annie, Gramme and I. Got some nice picture frames.

- [Annie] We really had a good time.

- Anne tells us that you've been seeing a psychiatrist for 15 years.

- Yes, I'm making excellent progress. Pretty soon when I lie down on his couch, I won't have to wear the lobster bib.
- [Rob] Duane and I went out to the Boat Basin.
- [Duane] We were caulkin' holes all day.
- [Rob] And Randolph Hunt was drunk, as usual.
- [Mom Hall] Oh, that Randolph Hunt. You remember Randy Hunt, Annie. He was in the choir with you.
- [Annie] Oh, yes.
- [Woody] I can't believe this family. Annie's mother is really beautiful, and they're talking swap meets and Boat Basins. And the old lady at the end of the table is a classic Jew-hater, and they really look American, you know, very healthy, like they never get sick or anything. Nothing like my family, you know? The two are like oil and water.
- [Father] Ah, who needs his business?
- [Mother] His wife has diabetes.
- [Father] Diabetes. Is that an excuse, diabetes?
- [Dinner Guest] Let me tell you-
- [Father] The man is 50 years old and doesn't have a substantial job.
- [Mother] Is that a reason to steal?
- [Annie] Oh, yes, that's right.
- [Father] What are you talking about? You know what you're talking about?
- [Mother] Sure, defend him.
- [Duane] Oh, you'll remember her, Annie. We were in 4-H together.
- [Father] He had a coronary.
- [Dinner Guest] You don't say.
- [Mom Hall] How do you plan to spend the holidays, Mrs. Singer?
- [Mrs. Singer] We fast.

- [Dinner Guest] Fast?
- [Father] No food; we have to atone for our sins.
- [Mom Hall] What sins? I don't understand.
- [Father] Tell you the truth, neither do we.
- Okay, just to hold it there. For me, that pulls it all together, everything we've spoken about, of the character, the question of Jewish identity, the Jewishness, and the comic and the clown, coming together finally, and for me, the brilliance of "Annie Hall," and it's in "Zelig," and I think it's in "Crimes and Misdemeanours," where the characters are so well-rounded, the story's so fantastically written, and the theme's so clear. Okay, let's hold it there, and thank you very much, everybody.
- [Host] Did you want to take questions?
- Yeah, sure.

Q & A and Comments

Okay, Barbara, thank you. "Watched your recording on Elvis." Oh, okay, thank you.

"The New York Times Magazine' called him a waif in lips clothing. That's great.

Romaine, "I think, among other things, "you redid the notion of shame." That's fantastic. "Very difficult emotion, making it tolerable to the audience "to use humour." Yeah, that's a fantastic idea, actually. I hadn't thought of that; it's brilliant. 'Cause shame is such a contemporary idea now in ways of looking at characters and films, and musicals.

Q: "Who ranked higher as the best comedian?"

A: I'm going to leave it to you. Have a look at the American and the British; you'll see it if you just Google quickly.

Q: "Am I correct in thinking Woody Allen has been in psychoanalysis?"

A: Yeah, he was in psychoanalysis. But I still think that if we go back to that very first clip where the workaholic, the sheer output and the courage to do it. Because, you know, he's up against the odds all the time. Aside from his personal life, he's up against, you know, he's writing, directing, acting, all the time. He's got to raise the money. He's got to be financially successful. He's got to cost it,

everything. Not easy.

"'Midnight in Paris,' brilliant," Mona, I agree.

Q: "But he often doesn't win the girl, does he?"

A: He may not win the girl, but he wins self-respect. That's another way of defeating the system.

Q: "In which films does the nebuchadnezzar he plays come out as a hero? Mostly he seems to me so sadly perplexed, but no further ahead in his life."

A: I think he does, because he's trying all the time. He doesn't just sit back and take it, like in the clip in the queue, the "Annie Hall," the movie queue with that irritating academic behind. He takes it on, rather than just whinge and whine, and kvetch. He takes it on.

Yes, it's fictitious; Marshall McLuhan. You know, he says to us finally, as an ironic joke, that "I wish life was like that," but trying to find a way to defeat it. And it's in that image also of the car. When the car, he helps the car, on the New York street, to reverse, you know, "Come, come, come, come, come." And intentionally, let it bash against the car there.

Ah, okay, move on. That's a Chaplin, classic Chaplin and many others type of visual gag of the loser/winner, or not obvious winner sort of marching down with cavalry, but just getting back in the moment.

Carol, "His humor's very secular Jewish New York. A large group, not the outsider, we don't understand him."

Yeah, I mean, as I said, I showed a whole lot of clips many, many years ago to a group of people in Soweto, and they loved this more than Chaplin, more than many, many others.

Melvin, "Have you seen the moose story?"

Yes, thank you.

Paula, "Did the authorities in the former Soviet Union allow Woody Allen movies to be shown?"

I don't know. That's a fascinating question, Paula. It'd be really interesting to try and find out, maybe. You can, or I can.

Monty, "He tells a story of how he was kidnapped. The kidnappers asked for ransom and the mother said, "Keep him, because we already have rented out his room."

Yep.

Maria, thank you for your kind comment, Maria. "The whole interview with that 91-year-old Jewish mother." If you want to Google, you can email me or Lockdown, and I can send the link.

Michael, "Previously in Apartheid, we missed out on Woody Allen because of the anti-Apartheid boycott. In America, we missed out on him because of political correctness."

That is a whole massive serious debate, and which I think is pretty sad, unfortunate comment on our times. And to quote Tanya, who is Trudy's fantastic daughter, as Claudia's the other fantastic daughter, and Phil, fantastic son-in-law. And Tanya wrote a brilliant article, and she spoke about "where rage has overcome the law." And the whole stuff around his personal life and what's been going on, from the publishing company refusing to publish, to what's been happening in the media, you know, trial by media, all of that stuff.

"He hadn't been found guilty of anything in a court."

Okay, I agree, Michael.

Hi, Ron, "I thought Woody Allen presented his actors only a sketch."

No, he writes it. It's pretty much all written. I mean, he might change, or they might improvise during rehearsals, or during early, early days of taking some of the film, the shooting, but it's written.

Brandy, okay, Barbara, thanks. Okay, Ron. "He says he's not an intellectual, but all the characters he plays talk about philosophy."

Exactly. But he's doing it ironically, because the philosopher, he's philosophising, the character is philosophising. But then you'll talk about, okay, your therapy about your sexual needs to the Diane Keaton character, or I want to become Catholic; if I have to eat Easter eggs, whatever, just tell me, I'll do it. He's constantly playing with philosophical ideas and subverting them. Set up and subvert. And that's classic for the contemporary clown character who has taken agency in the play or the movie.

Neville, hi, hope you're well, Neville.

Q: "Woody Allen always denies he's neurotic, but don't you think that someone who wants to be known by a nickname instead of his real name, Allen, is trying to hide from his upbringing?" "His real last name was Konigsberg," yes. "He spent his whole life denying; who am I? "He's a man full of contradictions in the film genre."

A: Yeah, I think this is part of the whole debate, you know, that is he neurotic as a person and as an artist, or is it the character

archetype he's created. And that's why I wanted to show that interview with him right at the beginning, where he said, "Look, would a neurotic write as much as I've written, and direct and produce, and get the actors, everything I've spoken about, if they were really that neurotic?" I don't know if they'd be able to.

Edith, "Brighton Beach Memoirs." That was Neil Simon, which we could talk about, you know? If I'm right; God, my mind's just gone now.

Everyone, thank you; Susan, thank you. Nanette, Lorna, thank you, very kind comments. Jennifer, okay, thanks. "Match Point." I know, it's the one he made in England. It's 56 movies. How do you take on 56 movies? And he's only in his early 80s. He's writing and making them all the time. In that same interview with "Time Magazine," the one I showed early on, he talks about, "I get up, I have breakfast, I do my exercises, "I practise the clarinet for a bit, and then I go and write, or then I go and edit. And then I come back and have lunch, and then dinner," and so on. It's such, what Diane Keaton said, such a structured life. And that's how he produces. Otherwise, he'd never produce so many.

Nancy, and thank you, Barbara.

Q: "Do you see anyone continuing his tradition?"

A: That's a fascinating question, Barbara. I don't know. I mean, there's certainly some who have written an incredible amount. I mean, Seinfeld, more contemporary, maybe and others, who've written a huge amount but then stopped at a certain point. And it's very different what Seinfeld's doing compared to this whole, for me, it's been an incredible growth trajectory of Woody Allen, from the one-line comic, one-line gags, the stand-up, the monologue, and then into anything-for-a-gag in "Bananas" was fantastic, and "Play It Again, Sam," the early movies, and then huge change with "Annie Hall" and all the others just before and after that, where it's full-developed characters, story, everything and so on, is such a development for me. And then finally, with "Zelig," taking on Western civilization with irony and wit.

Cheryl, "My parents, oh, Woody Allen filmed a short clip in my parents' apartment in Manhattan." Cheryl, that's fantastic; that's fascinating. "He had some Chinese takeout and also some cutlery. Someone gave him the cutlery, and he started eating. My mother had a fit and said, 'This is a kosher home.' "And he said, 'We'll bury the whole house.' He understood what it meant to be kosher." That's an amazing story, Cheryl. And your mother had a fit, then she said, "It's a kosher home." What an incredible story, and thank you for sharing with everyone.

Lucien, "You mentioned several precedents. Another is Italo Svevo."

Yep, sorry for my pronunciation. "The Italian-Jewish writer who wrote 'Zeno's Conscience.'" Yep, "Confessions of Zeno." "Also a fantastic story of a loser nebuchadnezzar outsider who wins in the end, outwitting even the analyst."

Yes, thank you. Barbara, thanks for your kind comment.

Q: "What are your thoughts about his more recent film?"

A: Woo, that's going to take us time.

Q: "How do the early films, such as 'Take the Money and Run,' compare with the later?"

A: I think we try to speak about that a lot.

And then Linda, "He's in his late 80s." Sorry, okay, he was born in '35. You're right; not early 80s, late 80s and still going. It's like John Cleese. These people do not stop. And Pablo Picasso. It's incredible, the drive, the ambition, the need, the hunger, which I admire so much.

Okay, thank you so much, everybody, and hope you have a good evening. And if you're in England, there's a public holiday tomorrow. Everywhere else, take care.