the pimps, whores, thieves, underground operators, he says: Our playground is jeopardized by the German Hun. Well, all Paris, every thief, burglar, pimp, he come out and picked up a musket. Stopped the German hordes.

Today you don't see any kind of patriotism like that. They're trying to tear down the courthouse, they try to throw paint on Johnson's car. How can you compare that era, coming into this? Those were men, and today you've got to question whether they're homosexual or whether they're not.

Since the Depression, manhood has been lost—the manhood that I knew. Where four or five guys went on an endeavor, they died trying to take the endeavor off. It was no big deal if they did die. If it didn't come off right, there was no recrimination. Everybody put skin off what they set on.

Today, the foible of our civilization is to attack the policeman with a rotten egg, throwing it at him. Or walking around with a placard, that they're against whatever the present society advocates as civilized. Those people today—the Fall of Rome could be compared with it. Because they were the strongest nation on earth, and they disinterrogated into nothing. Through debauchery, through moral decay.

They need a narcotic to do anything, they can't do it on their own. They need a drug. Back in my era, we could cold-bloodedly do it.

Jerome Zerbe

"They're doing eight pages in color of this apartment in the fall issue of Architectural Digest. *So anybody who cares can see it."*

In the apartment on Sutton Place are all sorts of objets d'art: *jades, prints, photographs, original portraits of friends and acquaintances, statues . . . "two Venetian ones I admired in Venice. Hedda Hopper gave them to me. She was my long-time and greatest friend. Everything was given to me. You see, being a poor boy . . ." (Laughs.)*

THE THIRTIES? My own poverty. My father allowed me an allowance of $300 a month. On that I went to Paris and started painting. Suddenly he wrote and said: no more money. And what does a painter do in the Depression without money? I came back to America and was offered a job in Cleveland. Doing the menial task—but at the time I was grateful—of art-directing a magazine called *Parade*. $35 a week. It was 1931.

I thought, to goose up the magazine, I would take photographs of

people at my own home. In those days, you didn't have strobe lights and all that sort of thing. We had our little Kodak cameras, and would hold up a flash and would open up the flash . . . but I got photographs of Leslie Howard, Ethel Barrymore, these people. Billy Haines was a great star in those days.

We published them in *Parade*. It was the first time that what we call candid social photography was founded. I had known I'd start something. *Town and Country* asked me to go over various estates and I went over and photographed people I knew. They were all horrified at the thought and couldn't wait for the pictures. (Laughs.)

After my father died, and no money, I sold my library books to the Cleveland Museum and the Cleveland Art Library. With that money, I came to New York and started out. *Town and Country* had guaranteed me $150, which seemed a lot. This is '33.

One day, a gal from Chicago called me up and asked if I would have lunch with John Roy and herself at the Rainbow Room. So we lunched, and he said: "Jerome, it's extraordinary how many people you know in New York. Would you like to come to the Rainbow Room? I'll pay you $75 a week, if you'll come, take photographs, and send them to the papers, and you will have no expenses." The Rainbow Room, here at the Rockefeller Center. This is 1935. The famous room at the top.

So twice a week, I would give a party and photograph my guests, all of whom were delighted to be photographed. The first night of this, I was so pleased, because I had been so poor. I still had my beautifully tailored clothes from London. I still had the accoutrements of money, but I had no money. You know? It was cardboard for my shirt and my shoes when they got old.

So I went to the El Morocco to celebrate this new job. John Perona said, "I'll take you on the other three nights." That made $150 a week. Then he said, "Jerry, cut out this Rainbow Room racket. They're getting more publicity than I am. I will pay the same amount, if you leave you camera here. You won't have taxi fares, you won't have problems."

So I went to work for John Perona. From 1935 to 1939, I worked at the El Morocco. He's a legend. He's dead now. He was a fabulous guy, just fabulous. He and I fought all the time. And I was always quitting. adored him.

I invented this thing that became a pain in the neck to most people. took photographs of the fashionable people, and sent them to the papers. Maury Paul of the *Journal-American*, at least four times a week, woul use a large photograph on his society page of important people.

The social set did not go to the Rainbow Room or the El Morocco until I invented this funny, silly thing: taking photographs of people. Th minute the photographs appeared, they came.

They became celebrities at that moment . . . ?

That's right. I would send the photographs not only to New York papers. I sent them to the London *Bystander,* to an Australian paper, to one in Rio . . . I sent them all over the world. So people would come in to the El Morocco and I would get a note saying: "The Duchess of Sutherland has arrived and would love to have her photograph taken." (Laughs.) You know?

My two favorite people of all times were Mr. and Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt. Rose and Will, I knew very well as friends, as well as people in the night club. They would arrange once in the spring and once in the fall. . . . Rose would bring two hats and three coats, and I would photograph her for the next six months. And dole the photographs out every two or three months. But I'd do it all in one night. She was perfectly happy with that. It was a perfect arrangment. Extraordinary people came to the El Morocco all the time. You couldn't get in without a black tie. Not possibly. There would be lines waiting on the street—one whole block—to get in.

We're talking now about the Depression . . . ?

No, the Depression was over by '34. I think, pretty much. But because I invented this goddam thing (laughs), the Byron Foys, people like that, would call up, reserve a table. They'd hold it just so long: then, if they arrived, Carino, who was the greatest of headwaiters, knew—and, by the way, might I say, when he died, he left an estate of $450,000. Taxes in those days were not great. And people would often pay up to $200 to get a good seat in the El Morocco, in those days.

They were the top, top social. These were the people whose houses, one knew, were filled with treasures. These were the women who dressed the best. These were the women who had the most beautiful of all jewels. These were the dream people that we all looked up to, and hoped that we or our friends could sometimes know and be like.

Do you recall the Crash?

No, because it didn't hit the family. My father had coal mines, and it didn't hit the coal mines until '31. He still gave me $300 a month, and I went to Paris and lived it up.

My father was president of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Coal Company. It was on the West Virginia border—Cadiz, Ohio. Where Clark Gable was born. I went down there, because at the time he offered me the presidency at $12,000 a year. It was an incredibly large amount of money. I'm talking about 1932 or 1933. I went down there and spent two weeks in the town. The mine was 897 feet, the shaft, underground, and the working

surface was three and a half miles. I spent two weeks down there and came back and said: "Mother, forgive me, to hell with it."

The men loathed their slovenly wives, and every night they go and play pool or whatever it was. The houses were drab beyond belief. You'd think a woman would at least put up a plant—a flower or something. And suddenly I flew into town with two or three friends for several weekends. We disrupted the place like nobody's business. (Laughs.) We'd go to the bars, and these guys would say: "Jesus, where did you get your shirts?" Where did you get this or that? and I'd say: "Why don't you go to your houses and make them more attractive?" And they said: "Our wives are so goddam slovenly. We don't even want to go to bed with them." I'm talking about the miners. They came out at five o'clock at night absolutely filthy. I've got a photograph of myself, I can show you, as a miner. I can show you how filthy I was.

And they all went through this common shower, got clean. Would they go home? Hah! For food, yes. And their squawling brats. And take right off to a bar. They loathed their life. The manager once said to me, "I never knew what it was to have fun with people until I heard your laughter. . . ."

We all had such fun, of course, and he joined in the fun. And this brings up another story. . . . At the time I photographed King Paul of Greece, he became a great friend. He said, "Mr. Zerbe, you and I have many friends in common. Do you realize in our position we are never allowed to laugh? Everybody treats us with such respect. And I hear you have outrageous stories."

When you went to this mining town—the year . . .

1933. Of course, to me it was a horror. That stinking little hotel. The lousy food and the worst service. And I was spoiled. When I was a kid, Mother always said to me: "Jerome, I think it's much easier for you to have your breakfast served in bed." So I always had my breakfast in bed. And I always had the fire lit in my fireplace. I was a very spoiled brat, and I loved that.

Did your friends ever talk much about Roosevelt?

Listen, dear boy, Franklin Roosevelt in those days we didn't even talk about. John Roosevelt and the young Franklin were great friends of mine. I photographed them in my apartment. We never did discuss the old man, ever. Well, I never liked politics. I think all politicians are shits. Franklin—I admired him very much. I thought the American public was so frightfully gullible to allow this man, he was a dying man, to be elected for that last term. Oh, that voice!

"My dear friends. . . ." You know, it became such an irritation. It was

so patronizing. It was so the great man talking down to us common little herd.

Was his name ever discussed at El Morocco?

Well, no, actually. I have a great respect for the family. I'm sorry the boys haven't done better. And they haven't. What President's sons have? What happened to the Hoover boys?

Did his name ever come up with some of the people you photographed?

Yes, but always with a rather hatred. They didn't like him. Eleanor was a great woman, who was a real, real schlemiel. You know, making the most of everything she could out of a bad everything. But there was always admiration for her.

Did the people you knew in the Thirties ever talk about what happened outside? You know . . . those on relief . . . ?

I don't think we ever mentioned them. They did in private at the breakfast table or the tea table or at cocktail time. But never socially. Because I've always had a theory: when you're out with friends, out socially, everything must be charming, and you don't allow the ugly.

We don't even discuss the Negro question. Let's forget they're only one-tenth of this country, and what they're putting on, this act—someday they're going to be stepped on like vermin. There's too much. I'm starting a thing: equal rights for whites. I think they've allowed themselves, with their necklaces and their long hair and nonsense, to go too far.

Now I've had the same manservant, who's Negro, for thirty-three years, which is quite a record. I suppose he's my closest friend in the world. He's a great guy, Joseph.

But aren't beads and necklaces worn by some of the beautiful people today, too?

I was thinking tonight . . . I have to go out to dinner, but I don't have my Malta Cross, which had blue enamel and diamonds, which is really very good. Because I loaned it to somebody. I'll have to wear what I really love, which is my Zuñi Indian. This is authentic and good, and people all accept that.

Do you remember ever seeing apple sellers in the city?

No, there were none of those. Not in New York. Never, never. There were a few beggars. You came to recognize them because they'd be on one block one day and one block the next. And finally one day, I saw this pathetic beggar, whom I'd always felt sorry for. This Cadillac drove up. I'd just given him a quarter. And it picked him up. There was a woman

driving it. And I thought: well, if they can drive a Cadillac, they don't need my quarter. His wife had a Cadillac.

You don't recall bread lines or stuff like that?

I never saw one. Never in New York. If they were, they were in Harlem or down in the Village. They were never in this section of town. There was never any sign of poverty.

What does the phrase "New Deal" mean to you?

It meant absolutely nothing except higher taxation. And that he did. He obviously didn't help the poverty situation in the country, although, I suppose . . . I don't know—New Deal! God! Look at the crap he brought into our country, Jesus!

Do you sense a different feeling toward people on welfare today than there was in the Thirties?

Oh listen, we had no little bastards dressed as they are today, putting on acts these days. The children were slapped down by their parents. I think they're encouraged by their parents today. I think our country is in a very dangerous and precarious position, and I would predict, if I dared, that within twenty or thirty years, we're gonna have a complete revolution here in America. Probably a dictatorship.

I feel the signs. The portents are going that way. Look what happened at Columbia. Why, they should have turned the fire hoses on those little bastards and get them out right away. Instead of tolerating them.

Any final thoughts . . . ?

The Thirties was a glamorous, glittering moment.

Judy

She is twenty-five years old and does public relations work.

YOU GET THE IMPRESSION there was this crash, this big explosion, and everything goes down. And all of a sudden one day, the sun comes up, and there's a war. There's all kinds of people making planes and napalm and this kind of thing. Affluence is equated with war. I hate it, I hate everything about it.

If another Depression came, the first ones out of work would be people