

## You're Getting Up My Nose, Not My Skirt

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Within six months of entering the film industry in July of '95 I met with no less than three attempts at giving me a "leg up." First was the producer with "friends" at the CBC who could possibly get me a job there...well, until I failed to invite him to my bed after a "friendly, no-pressure" drink. Then

there was the producer who said he could probably "use me for something," then asked ten minutes later if he would be seeing me naked that evening. Thirdly—and the most ludicrous of them all—was the locations manager who, during my interview for a PA job, asked if I could give him a massage. "Oh sure," I replied, "and while I'm at it why don't I just go stand on a street corner."

Being new to the biz and not sure how best to handle these morons, I called up an accomplished director friend of mine in L.A. for advice. I told him of my experiences, of my pride in wanting to believe I had talent, not ass, to sell; and how I desperately wanted to cut these losers down by pointing out that if I were going to screw my way to the top, I'd start at the top—and they're not there yet! His response I can only describe as post-feminist, ie., *If, after a hundred years of feminism, men still insist on thinking with their gonads, who am I to buck the trend?*: "Women are grossly under-represented in this industry," my friend advised, "and if they have access to another weapon I say go ahead and use it, but use it to *your* advantage. If it happens again, Michelle, and you decide to

do it, remember to really really really get something in return, or you'll feel doubly the fool." Hmmm. Hmmm. Naaaaw, no thanks. It's not that I can't separate sex from love, or that I have anything against sex as business, it's the power politics that get up my nose. That, and the awful disappointment of meeting men who just don't know the difference between joyful flirtatious banter and sexual aggression.

When I speak with female colleagues about this, each usually has her own horror story and yet each also chooses to remain silent, fearful of talk in a small town. I am usually met with the typical "Don't make waves or you'll never work again" response, and while I know they are right, they are right precisely because of this reluctance to unite against a common affront. I think it's time we women—and our enlightened male colleagues—put an end to this garbage. Every other industry in this country has had to clean up its act; why should the film industry be exempt?

I for one have decided that I *do* have talent, that I *don't* have to lay down and take this, and I *will* speak out. I recently found the courage to inform the LM's production company, and as for those two producers, well there's always girl talk. So to all the women who have been victims of harrasment and all the men who still think this is the way to behave, I direct you to the motto of the now successful duo of Bette Midler and Bonnie Bruckheimer: "We're All Girl [Productions], and we hold a grudge."

Michelle Demers