

CBS Alumni Winter 2015

CHARLIE PETTIJOHN, REVISITED

BY MORT GOLDSTEIN

During our working careers, we interact closely with any number of people. Or, perhaps we are only aware of employees who work at the same company, but we don't really know the first thing about them. Such was the case with my knowledge of Charlie Pettijohn, who worked in CBS's Program Practices Dept.



I knew of Charlie, but my delivering his mail, or working in the production scheduling and the program cost departments did not call for any close working relationship. I left CBS without ever knowing anything about his life, his heritage, or what he did after he retired from the company. The closest I came to even meeting him was when we were

both in Kelbo's restaurant one night getting slightly sloshed, and I gave him a casual nod as we passed by each other.

Then, some fifty years later, at a recent Pacific Pioneer Broadcaster's luncheon, I met Charlie's daughter, Adrienne, who shed light on her father's amazing storied family background with Hollywood celebrities, leading politicians, and titans of business. She spoke of her father's newly published book, "Diary Of A Rich Man's Kid". It sounded intriguing, so I bought and read it.

As the son of a rich man, who held a very respectable position in the entertainment industry, Charlie got to meet not only luminaries in the film industry, but celebrities in the realm of sports, and world renowned figures. He and his family even had a private audience with Pope Pius XII while on a visit to the Vatican in Rome.



In his book, Charlie tells of a man who he was introduced to by his father. He also tells us about a friend during his youth. For a while, both men had disappeared into relative obscurity, only to re-emerge later in life as Presidents of the United States, like FDR, and JFK. There's an unusual story of the very bizarre involvement Charlie had with J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, and with John Dillinger, Public Enemy # 1.

An outstanding golfer, Charlie could boast of not one, but three holes in one, and who had won the championship of the Lakeside Country Club in Toluca Lake.

Pettijohn has also amassed a multitude of stories about incidents that occurred during his career at TV City.



A story about Red Skelton, Stage Manager Willie Dahl, Jimmy Hesen and William S. Paley is hilarious. So is an account with Stage Manager Dave Powers, John Frankenheimer and James Gregory during taping of a Playhouse 90. Remember Allan Sherman, producer of Your Surprise Package? There's a marvelous anecdote about him. Uproarious is a yarn about Network President Bob Wood, Carol Burnett and Harvey Korman. Certainly, Charlie chronicles his tumultuous relationship with Tommy Smothers.

Diary Of A Rich Man's Kid is a fascinating narrative about a man whom his coworkers may have known, but were never previously aware of the countless captivating aspects and experiences of his life. It's absorbing, beguiling, humorous, and very enjoyable reading.

NEW MEMBERS

Robert Bernstein,

TVC Videotape Technician for 40 years.

Mitch Waldow,

KNXT news writer (1983-84).

