

This opening extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

Entirely Up to You, Darling

Richard Attenborough and Diana Hawkins

AND THE WINNER IS . . .

DH— A COUPLE OF hours ago, Dick, Sheila and I were on our way to the Oscars, Hollywood's glitziest event of the year. We hardly spoke in the limousine but Dick kept yawning as he stared out of the smokedglass windows; a sure sign of tension.

For him, this evening marks the end of a very long journey. Over the past two decades, Sir Richard Attenborough's pig-headed determination to make a film about Mahatma Gandhi has brought him close to bankruptcy, made him a laughing stock and obliged him to accept a whole series of acting assignments he really should have declined.

A former viceroy and two prime ministers have helped to bring him here. Four billionaire brothers, a maharaja and a maverick movie mogul have cruelly let him down. And, over and over again, Hollywood refused to invest a single cent in his epic project. One studio head summed up the attitude of the whole community when he spat: 'Who the fuck wants to see a movie about a little brown guy dressed in a sheet carrying a beanpole?'

Tonight, amazingly, the film that Tinseltown derided is up for eleven Oscars. Dick has two of these nominations; one for Best Director and the other as producer of Best Film.

With the ceremony under way, he and Sheila are seated close to the stage, with Ben Kingsley and his wife, Alison, a couple of rows behind.

As the film's director of marketing, I'm further back, as is flame-haired Marti Baum, Dick's Hollywood representative, known as Agent Orange.

Close by is Jake Eberts, the tall Canadian who stuck his neck out to save Gandhi from extinction, and our supportive distributor, the enigmatic and quietly spoken Frank Price, head of Columbia Pictures. Dotted around the stalls are fourteen of the film's technicians, all but one British.

The cavernous Dorothy Chandler Pavilion is packed with stars and moguls, movers and shakers, players and hangers-on. With television cameras trained constantly on the auditorium, no seat must ever be left vacant, so if anyone takes a comfort break, their place is immediately filled by one of the extras in evening dress hovering in the aisles.

Our main competitors are *E.T.* and *Tootsie*, both apple-pie American to the core. Dick and I are convinced that *E.T.* will sweep the board.

We've known this since we saw Spielberg's wonderful movie at a matinee in Manhattan several months ago. The theatre was full of kids with their parents and, unlike any British audience, they'd all stood up and cheered as the end credits rolled. When the lights came up, we looked at each other, knowing we didn't stand a chance.

As usual, the Oscar ceremony is overrunning. Everyone, it seems, is breaking the two-minute rule by making rambling acceptance speeches.

I'm incredibly nervous and sneaked out a little while ago for a cigarette, my seat being taken immediately by a stunning girl in a satin gown.

This was after John Williams's original score for *E.T.* had beaten our east-west collaboration of Ravi Shankar and George Fenton. As I returned, our brilliant make-up artist was also losing out to the French film, *Quest for Fire*. Now, with Best Visual Effects and Best Sound Effects both going to *E.T.*, it's beginning to feel ominously like a landslide.

Next up is Best Film Editing and I'm clapping like mad because, although Spielberg's film was expected to take the prize, the worthy winner is our own John Bloom. So at least *Gandhi* has one Oscar. But depression descends again when *E.T.* walks off with Best Sound.

Our rival is not in contention for Best Costume which traditionally goes to a movie displaying a great deal of extravagant and innovative design. Although *Gandhi* required more than a thousand authentic period costumes, it's inconceivable we can beat the science fantasy, *Tron*, or Zeffirelli's lavish screen adaptation of *La Traviata*. So it comes as a total surprise when John Mollo and his Indian colleague, Bhanu Attaiya, receive an Oscar apiece.

Back at the hotel this morning, Bhanu was optimistically rehearsing her acceptance speech. Certain she wouldn't win but not wanting to deny her the pleasure of anticipation, we said nothing. And now onstage, Oscar in hand, this shy woman in a sari who's travelled all the way from Delhi is totally speechless.

Suddenly, unbelievably, *Gandhi* is on a roll. Our art department, headed by Stuart Craig, wins Best Art Direction and Set Decoration. Billy Williams and Ronnie Taylor win Best Cinematography, and Jack Briley collects the statuette for Best Original Screenplay.

We've won five and lost out on three. But the big ones, the ones that really matter,

are still to come.

First of these is Best Director. Dick's competing with Wolfgang Petersen for *Das Boot*, Sydney Pollack for *Tootsie*, Sidney Lumet for *The Verdict* and, of course, Steven Spielberg, director and producer of *E.T.*

The revered Billy Wilder is to present this award. Since his arrival in America during the 1930s, this extraordinarily creative producer, director and screenwriter has been nominated twenty-one times, receiving three Oscars for *Lost Weekend*, one for *Sunset Boulevard* and two for *The Apartment*.

In a voice that still bears traces of his Austro-Hungarian origins, Wilder announces, 'The winner of the Best Director award is . . . Richard Attenborough for *Gandhi*.' Dick joins him onstage, accepts the statuette, places it on the podium and stands there for a long moment, gazing out at the audience.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' he eventually says, 'and fellow members of the Academy. Without Jake Eberts and the National Film Development Corporation of India, *Gandhi* would never have been made. Without my agent, Marti Baum, I would not have been able to maintain my courage. I am also enormously indebted to Frank Price and Columbia Pictures for the risk they took in agreeing to distribute this film. Finally, I should like to say to my fellow nominees, I am profoundly honoured to be in your company.'

Now it's Best Actor. Essentially a theatre actor, this is the first time Ben Kingsley's appeared in any major film, let alone carried a whole production in a pivotal role that spans sixty years of his character's life.

And this total newcomer is up against Jack Lemmon, Peter O'Toole, Dustin Hoffman and Paul Newman. Is O'Toole perhaps empathising just a little with Ben in the nail-biting moments before the vital envelope is opened? Exactly twenty years ago, he was nominated for his own stunning debut in *Lawrence of Arabia* and, in the event, lost out to Gregory Peck.

But Ben does not lose out. Deservedly, but incredibly, this young Anglo-Indian – real name Krishna Bhanji – has won the 1982 Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role. It's an amazing moment and one that will determine the entire course of his future life and career.

With the ceremony drawing to a close, we've finally arrived at the last, most prestigious and influential prize of all. This is the Oscar which goes to the producers of the movie which, uniquely, has been voted Best Film by the entire membership of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The contenders are *E.T.*, *Missing*, *Tootsie*, *The Verdict* and *Gandhi*. All the other pictures have two producers; we have only one.

Television star Carol Burnett is about to open the envelope containing the winning title, so far known only to the scrutineers at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Nine television lenses zoom in on nine tense nominees.

'And the winner is . . . *Gandhi*!'