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Burning the Candle on Both Coasts

Sinner, saint, gambler, romantic, politico, producer and winner are just a few words that might describe one of Beverly Hills' most eligible bachelors. His name is Brad O'Leary, and he also must qualify as Beverly Hills' busiest bachelor as his phone rings so often that he should consider hiring Judy, the Time-Life operator, to orchestrate his communications madness.

What exactly is O'Leary's game? That depends precisely on what he's doing at any given moment. He's part owner in Chasen's restaurant; he owns race horses; he owns PM Consulting Corporation, a highly successful grassroots lobbying firm in Washington, D.C.; he's president of Associated Television News in Los Angeles, a producer of documentaries; a publisher of the well-regarded political newsletter, *The O'Leary Report*; co-author of the recently completed *The Deaths of the Cold War Kings*, excerpts of which appeared in *Ego's* first two issues. Other authorships include *Presidential Follies*, and the successful romantic restaurant and hotel guides, *Dining by Candlelight*, and *Bed & Champagne*. Oh, and I forgot--for several years, he co-hosted The O'Leary/Kamber Radio Show for the NBC Mutual network.

When I met O'Leary for this interview, I thought of a snazzy Hemingway. He seemed casual in his impeccable attire, with age-defying good-looks and mannerisms that only hinted at his Irish lineage. Right off the bat, I got the grand tour of the 12,000 square-foot Benedict Canyon mansion he calls home, and I immediately noticed the quiet good-taste of the decor and a passionate touch. First, there's a wine seller worthy of a four-star restaurant, and so much fine art that I could've spend hours just wandering around and examining it all. But O'Leary's crown jewel could turn most collector's green: his legendary collection of priceless historic documents that include letters from the likes of George Washington, General Lafayette, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. Every American president is on display as well as signed documents from Jules Verne, P.T. Barnum and just about every Civil War General. Then there is the original flag that flew on John Paul Jones' ship, The Ranger. This flag represents one of the first two flags ever saluted by a foreign country. The Smithsonian has nothing on O'Leary's crib!

Rare hide-covered chairs and an authentic 17th century Russian hutch provide subtle clues to what is obviously one very well-traveled man. And traveled O'Leary has, with enough journeying to make Vasco DaGama blush. An example? Just within the last six months, O'Leary's been to Russia, Hong Kong, Macao, Australia, Paris, New York and the Caribbean. And he's been at it for a long time: In the '50s he was called to active duty for the Berlin airlift and in the early '60s, he was in Vietnam helping refugees and

running orphanages in Saigon and Macao. By the 1980s, O'Leary was roaming the hills of Afghanistan with the Mujahideen, and in the '90s was in Moscow two weeks after the failed coup attempt. Yet, for all of his globe-trotting, he still finds the time to run many successful enterprises.

Spanning the Washington-Hollywood Divide

Long before Bill Clinton brought Hollywood and Washington together, there was Brad O'Leary. O'Leary has legitimate roots--and homes--in both towns. When the Reagan and Bush administrations needed celebrities, they turned to O'Leary. And when Hollywood needed access to Presidents Reagan and Bush and other Washington power brokers they, too, turned to O'Leary. The man is a legitimate bi-coastal player in a universe where few dwell. Sure, some Hollywood celebrities might brag that they're on Clinton's A-list, but no one in Hollywood has as many powerful friends in both worlds.

His friendship with studio executives and celebrities gives O'Leary an instant access to Hollywood's top players. His closest cronies in Los Angeles include former Paramount chief and movie producer Bob Evans, and actor Paul Sorvino. He's hosted scores of large soirees at his home that include some of Hollywood's top talent, including Tom Selleck, Joe Mantegna, Roger Moore, Patrick McNee, Louise Mandrell, Erik Estrada, Stella Stevens, and Robert Conrad, to name a few.

At Associated Television, O'Leary's been the executive producer for a number of television shows. American Adventurer, Evil, Mystery, Magic and Miracles, Crime Strike, and Safari are just a handful of his offerings that can be found in such networks at Sci-Fi, The Learning Channel, and PAX.

Politics First Love

But O'Leary's roots weren't always in L.A. In fact, he started out as a beat reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* where he forged an acquaintance with fellow journalist Patrick Buchanan. A career in journalism eventually led him to politics. One of his early campaign efforts, John Danforth's Senate campaign, only led him deeper into politics. During the 1970s, O'Leary moved to Texas and eventually became executive director of the Texas Republican Party. He continues to maintain a residence in Austin, Texas, which should only serve to underscore his credentials in a George W. Bush administration.

O'Leary's circle of Washington friends reads like a who's who of the GOP power brokers. Senators Kay Bailey Huchison, Phil Gramm, Congressmen David Drier and Tom Delay, political strategists David Keene and Vic Kamber, NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre and Bush point man Jack Oliver are but a small sampling of his D.C. network.

O'Leary never escaped politics and political opportunity never escaped O'Leary. After moving from Texas to Washington, he honed his fundraising skills to an art that remains under-appreciated to this day. He is the inventor of the "mega-event." Along with

fundraising pioneer Bob Odell, O'Leary was one of the architects of the GOP's highly successful fundraising apparatus – one emulated by the Democratic Party. O'Leary's success is the GOP's success, and to date, he has raised over \$1 billion for conservative candidates and causes. O'Leary continues to be heavily active in politics; raising money for the National Rifle Association and recently for the George W. Bush for President campaign.

Most would find such non-stop professional endeavors to be exhausting, but to O'Leary it's all just a walk in the park. Does he have any fun, though? Sure, his work *is* his fun, and when most guys this successful would be retiring early, there's no end in sight for Brad O'Leary. Like the Energizer Bunny, he just keeps going and going and going....