

# JEREMY WALKER + ASSOCIATES, INC.

Dear Sundance Clients:

January 16, 2007

We've been talking about writing this letter for some time and hope you take it in the spirit of preparation for Sundance in which everything else we've shared with you has been offered.

During a recent Sundance, a filmmaker freaked out at a JW+A staffer because, the filmmaker said, that staffer had not informed him of the opportunity to poach a gift bag worth, as he put it, "over \$50,000" that he'd heard was handed out at a particular party.

No matter that the agency had put extraordinary work into the launch of the film or that the filmmaker had previously made it clear he didn't want to go to that party.

What did matter at that moment, to that filmmaker, was swag.

Another recent incident involved a movie star who hijacked a JW+A staffer and her vehicle so that the star could scour the swag lodges high above Deer Valley for an entire Sunday afternoon. Out of cell phone range, the staffer could neither seek advice nor be reached by us, and her absence had a domino effect on our entire day. It really sucked.

At the risk of sounding shrill, those and other incidents over the years have led us to determine that swag is not only a pain in the ass; it is, like cocaine, evil.

We've watched swag, like cocaine, turn nice, smart, humble, creative people into monsters. Like cocaine, swag produces a giddy high of self-importance and supreme confidence. As with cocaine, once tasted, the consumer of swag instantly wants more. When people see other people doing swag, they want to do it, too. And, like cocaine, once it's out in the open, swag permeates the culture, and it's all anyone can talk about.

But as ubiquitous as it is, not everyone at Sundance gets swag. You should be prepared for the idea that directors, particularly directors who make documentaries or foreign language films but really all directors in general, tend not to get as much swag as stars.

For all of these reasons, JW+A has decided that, at the risk of sounding like Nancy Reagan, we may "just say no" to swag, and depending on the circumstances, we may even say no to swag *on your behalf*.

You see, the swaggers have figured out that if they sponsor and perch themselves at the media outlets to which we will be taking you to get photographed and interviewed, they can try to lay stuff on you at the same time. We've learned that this can very easily throw a big fat wrench into our schedules, so please don't be upset with us if we have to say "Not right now, please" or "Maybe they can come back later."

(more)

This seems like a good time to more clearly define our relationship to you and your film, and to all that swag.

To date, we have prepared your materials, scheduled interviews and photo shoots and have maybe even helped you plan a party. But please understand that swag just isn't our thing. We do not generally traffic in it. Because we are busy doing other, more important things for your movie, once we get to Park City we probably won't be too focused on helping you procure it.

However, we will not pass judgment upon you should you score swag on your own. But we may not be able to hold your swag or schlep it for you. Please do not count on us to ship your swag home. If we are transporting you and your actors from one screening or interview to another, and if space is an issue in our vehicles, we may even insist that the swag get left behind, so that we may stay on schedule and get to where we need to go.

It is here that we think it would be helpful to make what we think is an important distinction between *hospitality* and swag.

Many of you have already taken advantage of generously sponsored cocktail parties and dinners offered to you and organized for you by companies working on behalf of certain media outlets or other organizations. In our view, these events are *hospitality* and usually a great way to meet journalists and a good medium in which to complete publicity chores.

It is a matter of *hospitality* that a large Main Street space controlled by publishing side of the magazine *Hollywood Life* during the Festival is hosting us for back to back TV interviews that you and your stars will likely participate in. It is a matter of *hospitality* that this house may offer you and your stars gifts when you are there, and it is your choice whether or not to accept them. We only ask that you make the TV interviews that you and your stars are there to do the priority, and to please leave us out of the gifting and its ramifications.

No matter how many distinctions are made, we at JW+A are of course truly hypocritical as we try to turn our back on swag, because in the past we, too, have hoovered up all kinds of free stuff, and we will surely accept freebies again this year. As someone here recently and eloquently argued: "Get real. No one ever got killed over free lipstick."

As true as that notion is, please help us avoid letting the allure of free stuff get in the way of our work with you, your film and its stars over the next couple of weeks.

Sincerely,  
Jeremy Walker + Associates