

## Chapter 30

# AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

(DREW BARRYMORE)

Then, three years later when the angelic trio reunited for its sequel, *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*, I was granted a sit-down interview with Barrymore, Diaz and Liu for a big *USA Today* cover story.

I still cringe when I recall how unnecessarily aggressive I was in that interview. The thing is, I was up for a staff position at *USA Today* to take over as their West Coast celebrity reporter—a primo gig that would allow me access to all of Hollywood's major events and celebs. And I wanted that job bad!! So, in an effort to wow the newspaper's editors, I pushed all politeness aside and dug extra hard to land provocative quotes for my article. While I ultimately did end up being offered the staff position, my *Full Throttle* feature very well could have cost me my angel wings.

Our interview took place in a Santa Monica oceanfront hotel suite with all three angels tightly squeezed together into one loveseat as if they were conjoined triplets gestating in a supermodel's womb. I sat across from them and asked about Barrymore's recent divorce from actor Tom Green, who'd appeared in the first film but was now absent. Liu protectively stepped in to deflect the question, allowing me to then ask what has to be the most intrusive—and if I'm going to be totally honest—downright RUDE question I've perhaps ever posed in a celebrity interview. It was a question about a subject matter most of us have been schooled by our parents to *never* ask anyone: salaries.

These days, talk of celebrity paydays (primarily as they relate to an unfair disparity between male and female actors) has become less shocking, but at the time it was a topic that was just not broached.

For taking part in the movie, it had been reported in the entertainment trade papers that Diaz was earning a whopping \$20 million (plus profit sharing points), while Barrymore was collecting \$14 mil (enhanced with profit sharing and a hefty producing fee), while Liu pocketed a comparatively low (but what now seems kinda generous) \$4 million.

The way I posed the question was, "How do you, as friends, deal with the knowledge that you are paid such different salaries?"

What I got back were three blank stares, almost as if they were in a film scene that had come to an abrupt, inexplicable stop. Just as I was prepping for one, two or perhaps all three of them to ascend from their loveseat in slo-mo, taking the form of high-flying wire-fu angels with their pointed feet directed at my neck, Diaz finally broke the unbearable silence.