On beginnings:

"My father was an automobile dealer and a born salesman; my mother was a born shopper -- a combination that provides an ideal heritage for advertising. I majored in political science at Adelphi and thought law then was the logical next step. But then I worked one summer at Grey Advertising and thought, 'Gee, these people are having a lot of fun!' After graduation, I put my book together. Like many, I yearned to work at Doyle Dane Bernbach, so when I was hired by DDB, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. The year was 1969 and it was an incredible time in an incredible place for a young writer. I worked on Volkswagen, Chivas Regal, El Al; won awards, moved up."

On taking the plunge:

"In time, I became executive vice president and creative director and a member of DDB's New York board of directors. Roy Grace was chairman and creative director, worldwide. We were overseeing a vast amount of creative work, but were not doing much of the work ourselves. So in 1986, we opened the newest and smallest agency in New York. Our prime objective? We wanted to do the work again. We began without a single client in hand. But we believed innovative advertising would win business -- and it has. Today, we're moving toward $100 million in billings. And we have an agency filled with bright, talented people who share our vision."

On influences:

"It's hard to single out our influences at Doyle Dane Bernbach; you'd walk down the halls and you'd see the best advertising people of our time, creating advertising that was making history. Everyone was there -- or had been there early in their careers. Helmut Krone, Bob Gage, limited space. There is no room for creative meandering. The compelling part of an ad can't lead to the point; it has to be the point."

On creative leverage:

"Grace & Rothschild has a natural affinity for clients who need the greatest possible creative leverage. Many of our clients are significantly outspent by their competitors. When you lack a big budget, you'd better have a big idea. That's our strength. Our commitment, from the start, has been to produce provocative creative work and advertising that makes a business difference. Doyle Dane Bernbach made its mark helping underdogs become top dogs. That's our specialty."

On conceptual elegance:

"The best advertising is conceptually uncluttered and sharply focused. To start with, consumers aren't interested in advertising. Expecting readers to stick with you while you deliver a complex message is expecting a lot. Reduce the load you ask an ad to carry and you increase the impact. In one ad, for example, we focus on Range Rover's ability to drive through water. This allowed us to create an ad that said, 'We brake for fish.' It's important to have clients who understand the value of restraint-like Charlie Hughes, Land Rover's president. He's played a major role in Range Rover advertising."

On creative risk-taking:

"Innovative, ground-breaking creative is often discouraged as 'risky.' But the biggest risk an advertiser faces is invisibility. It's hard to look like everyone else, it's advertising. Conformity may be comforting, but it doesn't communicate. Thousands of advertising messages are competing for consumers' attention every day. In such an environment, advertising professionals. While it's important to be professional, never forget this: the only meaningful evaluation of advertising isn't given by professionals, but by the consumers at whom the advertising is aimed."

On advertising as a commodity:

"To many large advertisers, advertising has become a commodity. They buy executions by the pound -- and, understandably, consider price the dominant factor. However, this flawed theory has no chance of working unless an advertiser is able and willing to substitute capital for creativity. In today's business environment, that's a cost fewer and fewer companies can cover. And even those who are accustomed to overspending their competition are discovering that is no longer a guarantee of success. Today's consumers are more sophisticated. To reach and move them, advertising must be more inventive, more intelligent, more inspired. That's the trend that will dominate the next decade or so. Our creative challenge isn't to be as good as we were, but to be better than we ever thought we could be."

On The Wall Street Journal:

"I could use a lot of words to tell you how I feel, but put simply, I love The Wall Street Journal. Yes, I read it every day -- or, to be honest, every night. Why at night? Because that's when I have the time to truly enjoy The Journal. As an advertising person, I've always liked creating ads to appear in The Journal. The readers are intelligent, pragmatic, sophisticated. And whenever, wherever they read The Journal, they read with more intensity, more interest, more purpose. While other publications aim to reach the same kind of people, it's my sense that Journal readers have a special relationship with The Journal. Our agency's best work is intelligent work for intelligent people.
Phyllis Robinson, Leon Meadow, Evan Stark, Bert Steinhauer; it's a long list. Bob Levenson was an important influence in print. Stu Hyatt, whom I'd met at Grey, made copywriting make sense to me. And, it goes without saying, Ray Grace. Then, as now, he was singularly focused on the work -- absolutely determined to do the best advertising humanly possible.

**On the creative function:**

"Contrary to what some people believe, creating advertising isn't like writing novels or screenplays. It requires a quirky ability to distill inventiveness, imagination, wit and flair into a precise selling message -- communicated in limited time or moment, there's nothing riskier than blending into the crowd."

**On the strength of objectivity:**

"When we watch television or look through a magazine or newspaper, we don't have any trouble telling good work from bad. We're consumers; and we respond instinctively. We like advertising that touches us, amuses us, surprises us, impresses us. Conversely, we don't like self-serving, over-written, heavy-handed advertising that gives us no credit for intelligence or taste. But some advertising people forget all of that when they evaluate advertising created for their products. They stop looking at it like consumers -- and view it like people. Logically, that kind of advertising works best in an intelligent publication for intelligent readers: The Wall Street Journal."