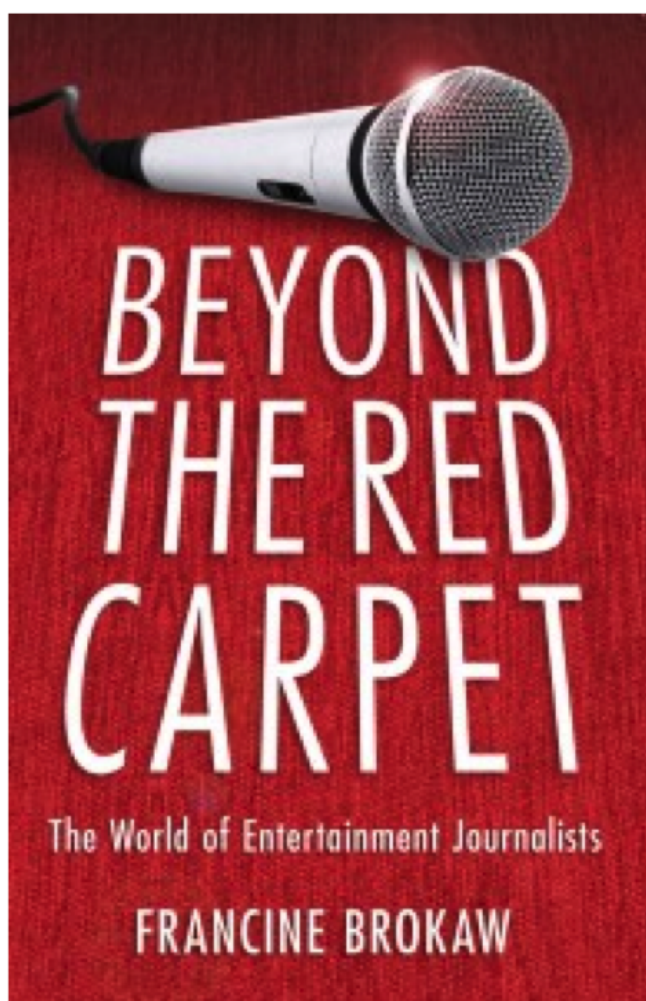


# Entertainment Journalist Francine Brokaw Talks About Tinseltown Twosomes and Life 'Beyond the Red Carpet'



By Whitney Baker

Francine Brokaw's writing career, which spans over two decades, has taken a few twists and turns: she's focused on everything from politics and travel to celebrity interviews and entertainment news. Her new book, *Beyond the Red Carpet: The World of Entertainment Journalists*, out today, looks at the ever intriguing world of the rich and famous. Lucky for us, she shares never-before-told stories and behind-the-scenes secrets about Hollywood's hottest residents. Having interviewed celebrities like Johnny Depp, George Clooney and Tom Hanks, Brokaw knows what it takes to get these folks talking about life on and off the red carpet.

We chatted with the author about her experiences in the entertainment industry, specifically those celebrity interviews about lasting love and messy break-ups, and her advice for up-and-coming journalists.

**Related Link:** [Dating After Being Dumped: How to Avoid Messy Rebound Relationships](#)

**Tell us a little bit about what inspired you to write this book.**

Nobody really has any idea what entertainment journalists do and experience. I think when people hear the words "entertainment journalists," they think of the hosts on shows like 'Entertainment Tonight.' That's a very minute percentage of us. We're actually in the trenches, dealing with the publicists and celebrities. It's a totally different life than what people have in mind. Like I say in the book, Kevin Costner mentioned that our friends probably think we have these wonderful and fabulous lives, but it's really a lot of hard work.

**Do you have a favorite story from the book that you can share with us?**

I always love speaking with the veteran actors. I love James Garner; he was just so open talking about fellow actors, like Steve McQueen (who he co-starred with in 'The Great Escape') and Kim Novak (who worked with in 'Boys' Night Out'). He brought them down to earth and told us things about them that they probably wouldn't want the public to know. He was very candid.

Julie Andrews is always fun too.

**Can you walk us through a celebrity interview? What goes on behind the scenes?**

I usually have a list of questions that I want answered or that I need answers to for a specific article. Then, when the celebrity mentions a new project or some aspect of their personal life, you can go into further detail about that topic. A one-on-one interview requires a lot more research than a roundtable interview or press conference – you can't rely on other journalists to ask questions that you may not have thought of.

I will say I have had to run into the paparazzi while going into interviews, and it's frightening. I feel for celebrities because these photographers are really intruding into their lives. As an entertainment journalist, I don't want to be thought of as intrusive.

**Have you ever interviewed a celebrity couple – either together or separate? Any stories to share?**

I haven't had the opportunity to interview a celebrity couple together, but I have spoken to partners separately.

I interviewed Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas at different times, and they seemed to be very compatible. Catherine's interview was at a resort in the Palm Springs area, and she was so excited that her husband was able to come along. She said that he was probably golfing, which was one of

his passions, and she tried to catch sight of him out the window. I thought that was really sweet.

I've also spoken with both Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston. I interviewed Brad right before the break-up, and he let nothing slip about their impending divorce. And then a few months later, we hear that they've split. I interviewed Jennifer afterwards, and she didn't want to talk about it at all.

**Related Link:** [4 Things Jennifer Aniston Taught Me About Love](#)

I interviewed Hilary Swank during her almost-decade long marriage to Chad Lowe, and she said how great they were together. Someone asked about the basis for their relationship, and she implied that trust and honesty were the most important things. And then we read later on that he was hiding his addiction from her. When I interviewed Chad right after the break-up, he refused to talk about anything related to his personal life.

Then there's Mandy Moore, who was so gushy about her relationship with Andy Roddick. She called him her soul mate and told me all about how they met, how they were meant to be together. And that didn't last. It's funny to hear what people say about their relationship and then see how things play out.

**How do you approach the topic of love and relationships in an interview? How personal is *too* personal?**

If they happen to bring up a dating partner or spouse, that's my invitation to ask about their love life. I've had celebrities mention the great love of their life and talk about their fabulous relationship, and then they break-up a few months later. It's interesting to see what people volunteer.

For instance, around Valentine's Day, one of my friends asked Antonio Banderas, who is married to actress Melanie Griffith, if they had any specific plans for the holiday. He happened to

say that their relationship was really going well but that he can't guarantee that it is forever, which I thought was very honest of him.

**And finally, what advice do you have for someone interested in entertainment journalism?**

Be prepared to do a lot of work. It's not easy; it requires a lot of preparation, research and time. It takes talent to bring information out of celebrities. Plus, it's a 24/7 job – sometimes you need to do a phone interview with a celebrity who is working in Europe; the time zone is different, but you have no choice because you're at the beck and call of the celebrity.

Also, you can't always rely on research. I read a story on IMDB about an actor saving someone from drowning, so I asked if it had really happened. He said that he didn't know where they got that and it had never happened. You have to put question marks by a lot of things that you find online and figure out if it's fact or fiction.

Brokaw leaves us with this final observation when the interview is done. "I gotta tell you, it's much easier asking the questions than answering them!"

*You can purchase a copy of 'Beyond the Red Carpet: The World of Entertainment Journalists' in bookstores and online nationwide today. You can also purchase a signed copy when you buy it from her website at [www.FrancineBrokaw.com](http://www.FrancineBrokaw.com). For more information about Brokaw, follow her on Facebook and Twitter at @FrancineBrokaw.*