

Eskin for **MAYOR?**

By *Carmen Elizabeth Greger*

I don't claim that one can fully get to know someone intimately during the course of one two-hour conversation, even if it is succeeded by numerous episodes of e-correspondence, but I do think a general sense of the individual's true character can be established.



Needless to say, I wasn't too enthusiastic about interviewing one of Philadelphia's most controversial media figures. He's got his die-hard following, no doubt, but his public persona seems so entangled in negativity, and in what I personally would consider insignificant (glammed-up fur coats and gaudy diamonds). His schtick would suggest an attempt to define himself through material means. But, that's just a 'King of Bling Thing' and he claims he doesn't really need all that jazz. Howard is "just having fun", rest assured.

A man who hangs up on callers that don't jive with his strong personal opinions, but only after calling them an 'idiot or a dope' (in some cases), would you call his actions dogmatic or just 'air time efficient'? Howard Eskin irrefutably knows his sports. His show has been ranked number one in the male demographic, ages eighteen to fifty-four, in the afternoon drive (3 pm- 7 pm) for five years running.

Born and bred in our own timelessly thriving sports town, he's a natural Philly fan, whose Philly pride is as high as most. He grew up watching the Philadelphia pros and although he never made it to the big leagues, he definitely had some game of his own. Howard has over thirty years of sports broadcasting experience and with child-like enthusiasm attends 250-300 games per year as part his busy work schedule. But, he's paved his path that has led him to a roadblock of disconnect with some major Philly personalities, some of whom I, among many, greatly respect and will remain unmentioned. Howard claims that technically he has no regrets, because every choice and experience has made him who he is today. All these 'notions' aside, I put on my seat-belt and prepared myself for any kind of ride Eskin would take me! I went in with an open mind, and he turned out to be an open book.

Howard chronicled many details of interactions with and feelings about certain Philadelphia people; namely players, coaches, fellow media personalities and public figures (sidenote: Eskin credits Jim O'Brien from Channel 6 with a lot of his success, "I wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for him.") He continued on to include details of the deep appreciation he has for his family and the huge lack of respect for our 'infamous' President (irrefutably not a Bush fan by any stretch of the imagination).



At the exit of the 120 minute interview, and after savoring and digesting our follow-up e-chats, I must say I had gained a much greater appreciation for who Howard Eskin is, why his schtick is the way it is and what constitutes the driving forces behind his modus operandi. I actually liked him a lot better after getting to know him. Undoubtedly, there is a much softer side of Howard than meets the eye, perhaps not as soft (plush or cushy) as the mink he dons, but certainly not

as rough as his unshaven scruff.

I was initially shocked to see that Howard and I shared three prominent 'admiration': a favorite poem (Frost's "Road Not Taken"), a great respect for the amazing Alex Scott and a fanatic appreciation for integrity in the media. I was also delighted by his proud admission that two of his peak accomplishments are having five kids and five decades under his belt. He's an avid reader (mostly non-fiction sports and/or politics related), a part-time humanitarian (always looking for ways to give more to those in need), and a golfer with a 2.7 handicap. Howard hopes to add 'best selling author' to the list with nothing less than rave reviews over his book in the works, "Never Had a Bad Day". The title of his book, is an echo of his life motto: "If you have more good hours than bad in a day then it's not a bad day, technically it's a good day. Additionally, if eight of those are spent sleeping, you're already ahead of the game."

We spoke chapters of Howard the Man, Howard the Myth, Howard 'The King' (of Sports Talkers and of Bling), but when I asked him to describe Howard the Boy, the cat sort of got his tongue until he could muster up that his childhood was as adventurous and fulfilling as any boy's life, but that he was very shy and quiet. That is, until he got into sports (one of the biggest confidence boosters around by far). "Why shy?" I inquired, to which he freely disclosed that he was born with an odd birth mark of raised freckles on one side of his face that he tried to have removed to no avail, which had him feeling inadequate and intimidated. He gained plenty of self confidence though through his athletic endeavors, however, and later grew a beard to cover his physical 'imperfection'.

Overall, Howard protests his being branded a negative or nasty person. He's not cruel, nor rude, he's 'simply just honest', and 'honesty can be brutal'. So whether Howard's controversial nature, offensive manner and abusive reputation are based on fact

or fiction, fact is he lost a good amount of weight and that's a positive dose of success anyway you slice it.

Just how did Howie do it? He ran to LA and lost fifty pounds. LA Weight Loss, that is. He also got some solid exercise insight, information, and motivation from Dr. Nick DiNubile, (76er's Sports Medicine Doctor) that added some consistent and progressive weight training to his wellness regimen that redefined both his look and his outlook. Although Howard now actively sweats, he has sworn to himself to never 'Sweat the Small Stuff'. And in case you're wondering, no, he doesn't have a trainer, "With a buddy like Dr. Nick, who needs one?"

When I asked him if he'd ever run for Mayor Howard replied smugly but with a hint of promise, "If I did, I'd win." Hmm... Eskin for Mayor? I'm not saying he'd get my vote, but perhaps his hypothetical Mayoral plans could be effective?

His Philly Pride is as high as most. Howard Eskin has made his bed and he's lying in it pretty comfortably, But wickedly controversial doesn't need to be his schtick or crutch however you view it. He's got the respect of the your-an-idiot-badge-of-honor-wanna-has. He definitely has a lot going for him, but now perhaps he just needs to behave a bit more decently and a touch more 'positively' to gain the respect and listenership of the other half of Philly. Many people hold excess weight as both physical and emotional baggage. Howard seems recently to have discarded plenty of both. In our conversation, he very openly sheds some light on his own character, secrets to his successes, both personally and professionally, and the obstacles he had to overcome in order to achieve them. Now, fifty pounds leaner and plenty more solid, we can finally meet, get to know, and even truly appreciate the softer side of Howard.

PF: Your weight loss is commendable. Exactly how much did you lose and how did you do it?

HE: I lost about fifty pounds. I eat six times per day, BLD and snacks. The exercise is great! I always exercised, but didn't eat right and it didn't make any difference. LA Weight-loss has been great! They're a big support and I go once or twice per week just to check in and make sure I'm not fluctuating more than a couple pounds. I just don't want to lose it again. I have lost it too many times in my life.

PF: You mean you don't want to gain it again...

HE: Ha! Yeah, I don't want to gain it again. I also started weight training and it's completely changed my physique and energy level. I look and feel better than I did when I was younger.

PF: Give us the details of your nutritional intake/composition.

HE: I'm very disciplined, but do treat myself once a week. I can go out and eat whatever I want, but have the mental discipline to get right back on track. Breakfast is usually a protein and a starch and a snack is usually a fruit. Lunch is a protein, a vegetable and a starch, then yogurt or fruit or LA Weight-loss bars that I really like. Dinner is a protein, vegetable and a starch and I have a snack at night. I do twenty-five minutes of weights after about forty minutes of cardio.

PF: What motivational advice do you have for those attempting to lose weight/get fit?

HE: Get over your fear. Nick told me to do weights because it speeds up metabolism and will make me more energized. I was never one of those people who wanted to get big, or even needed to be cut or have ridiculously defined muscles, but it has really changed how I look and feel. The thing that pleased me the most is I lost more body fat just by doing muscle work. I'd tell everyone to weight train.

PF: Having shed fifty pounds of unhealthy fat, how different do you feel?

HE: I feel great! My attempt was only to lose twenty-five but it was so easy, so I kept going.

PF: Democrat or Republican. Why?

HE: I'm registered as a Democrat; but I'm just for what's right. The Republicans made me so angry when I realized their intentions were not to better the country, but to bury Bill Clinton, who was the best President (besides his moral values). The Republican Whitehouse we have now is a disaster! We shouldn't make decisions along party lines; we should base it on how we feel.

PF: What is Philadelphia's biggest flaw?

HE: The leadership we have in city hall which is a harsh statement, but it's the truth. I mean they tried to get the Olympics here in 2016. Tell me what would entice the Olympic Committee to bring them to Philadelphia with the way this city's been run over the past three years?

PF: So, would you ever run for Mayor?

HE: The answer is no, although I could win.

PF: And what would you say is Philly's biggest asset?

HE: Its location and its charm, but its location most of all. We're near everything. We're near the shore, the mountains, Washington, New York, and Atlantic City. We can do or get to anything from the Philadelphia area.

PF: You've been called many things, including 'stubborn', 'opinionated', 'confrontational' and 'arrogant'. Is your rough-around-the-edges, often brutal, on-air personality staged for publicity or is it your true nature?

HE: I am myself. People that don't know me will call me all of the above. People that do know me may still call me all of the above, but they respect me for it. They know I genuinely have a good heart and try to do a lot of charitable things.

I stand by what I say, don't flip-flop and am not afraid to say what I think. If someone's an idiot or a dope, I'm not afraid to tell them that. I know I've got a controversial reputation, but 99% of the people that think they know about me don't truly know me.

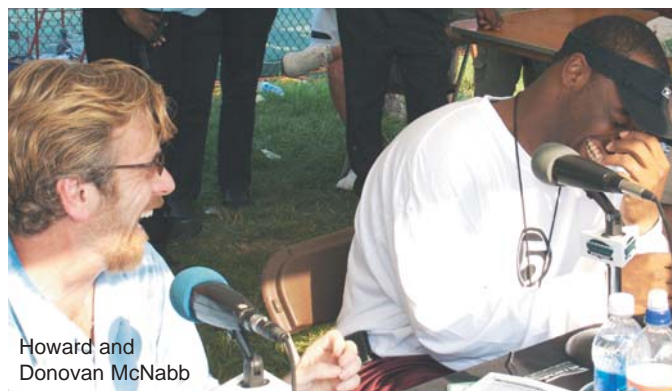
When I first started talk radio, I was afraid to say how I really felt because I didn't want to piss anyone off. I learned though that you can't please everyone anyway, and I've definitely gotten over that fear.

PF: OK, you've also been called 'intelligent', 'unique', 'well-spoken' and 'gutsy'. Which other four words would you use to best describe yourself?

HE: Hmm... let's add NO-FEAR. If you're scared get a dog.

PF: If you were to become Mayor of Philadelphia, what would be the first three things on your Mayoral agenda and why?

HE: Education would be the first thing, the smoking ban would go into effect immediately, and you've just gotta put a better



Howard and
Donovan McNabb

effort into preventing crime as it's on the rise.

PF: Who is your all-time favorite Philly pro coach?

HE: A toss up between Billy Cunningham and Larry Brown; both 76ers coaches and unfortunately those days are long gone.

PF: What about a current coach?

HE: Andy Reid would be number one even though he gets buried in this town. He's a terrific coach. Andy does it his way because he knows if he starts listening to the fans too much, he's going to be sitting with the fans. He does what he thinks is right and doesn't sway trying just to please the fans.

PF: And player?

HE: Charles Barkley. Not only was he a great player, but he's a great person with a big heart. He's connected and kind to the fans. Charles is very unique, extremely talented, very honest and low-key.

PF: We're aware of your past interest in being the Phillies' GM. Would you leave your show at WIP if required in order to take this new position?

HE: I would have to take a pay cut, but I'd take the position and do a better job, just to prove I could. It would be a great challenge and I'd actually really love to do it. I'm an average guy who embraces challenges and takes chances and that's gotten me to where I am now. There's no reward in life without risk, so you've gotta take those opportunities.

PF: Would you say you've made your parents proud?

HE: Oh, clearly. My mother passed about four years ago, and she made sure I was aware of how proud she was. My whole family is very loving and proud and it's really nice.

PF: Which sports did you play as a kid?

HE: Basketball, Baseball and Football.

PF: Which positions did you play?

HE: Guard, 3rd, 1st and pitcher and my football position fluctuated but I had ability and great hands.

PF: Please use one word to describe the following people/places

PF: Pat Croce	HE: Excitable
PF: Andy Reid	HE: Genuine
PF: Larry Platt	HE: 'Timetotalkletsdolunch'
PF: Citizen's Bank Park	HE: Mickey Mouse (<i>too small</i>)
PF: Donald Trump	HE: Overrated
PF: Charles Barkley	HE: Hilarious
PF: South Philly	HE: (has) Heart
PF: The Dallas Cowboys	HE: Over
PF: President Bush	HE: Overmatched
PF: David Akers	HE: Dedicated
PF: Bobby Abreu	HE: Overrated

PF: Olde City HE: Pase'
PF: Martha Stewart HE: Nasty
PF: Gabrielle Reece HE: Strong
PF: Mia Hamm HE: A winner
PF: Delaware Avenue HE: Needs Work
PF: Hillary Clinton HE: President
PF: Freddie Mitchell HE: Undisciplined
PF: Chickie's & Pete's HE: Fattening
PF: Atlantic City HE: Fun

PF: Name your picks; the top three Philly athletes of all time:

HE: Mike Schmidt, Julius Irving, Charles Barkley

PF: With what charities are you actively involved?

HE: Anything to do with education and kids especially interests me. I'm involved in a lot of charities, including Children's Hospital and Cystic Fibrosis. Among others, I'm also getting into Autism foundations, as my nephew has been diagnosed. Two programs I started were a Guns for Gear program and an Eagle's signed Harley Davidson auction signed by all the Eagles to raise money for the Katrina victims.

PF: Do you enjoy your 'King of Bling' nickname?

HE: The nickname I had was 'The King' which was because of the story that Channel 3 did on me in the 80's and the guy there called me 'the king of sports talkers'. I walked into the Phillie Clubhouse the next day and Pete Rose called me 'The King' and it stuck. Then when I got into this wearing fur coats to games and 'blinging' out a little bit with diamonds, I figured if I was going to go the road, I should go the whole road. Then someone called me the 'King of Bling' on air. It's an identity. It's fun and I do enjoy it.

PF: Which three main things/people would you attribute your great success to?

HE: My Mom, My Dad and Jim O'Brien.



Howard and Andy Reid

DiNubile *on* Eskin:

PF: How is Howard's demeanor regarding exercise and wellness?

ND: He's extremely focused and disciplined. Over the years, he has definitely experienced some yo-yo dieting and on again off again fitness kicks, but when he's focused, he's really focused. Over this past year, he has made some great strides that are sure to be long lasting. He's around tempting foods constantly; from the game suites to the Borghata, there's always sweets and gourmet at his disposal. He refrains now, aware that his choices should satisfy and affect more than just his taste-buds.

PF: Does he follow the program in your book "FrameWork - Your 7 Step Program for Healthy Muscles, Bones and Joints"?

ND: As he gets stronger and more fit, we adapt the program accordingly. The specific equipment and exercises may vary, but the general components are the same. He started to lose a lot of weight which was great for him, but he was only limiting calories and doing a lot of cardio. He looked drawn. I suggested he start doing some strength training to add some muscle mass to better support his frame and give him more energy as this would increase his metabolism even at rest and he could then increase his caloric intake a bit to ensure that he was fulfilling his body's nutrient requirement for optimal health. He took my advice and it really paid off for him. He looks terrific and he has tons of energy.

PF: Describe Howard's Personality.

ND: He's a great guy. I love him, really. He's raised the bar as far as broadcasting goes and gets the truth out there. He is completely entitled to his opinions, as strong as they may be. Howard does his homework and definitely deserves respect.

PF: In your opinion, what is the most special quality about Howard?

ND: His HIDDEN charm and generosity. Behind the scenes, he is extremely kind, generous and charitable. He's truly a great guy and a lot of people don't get the chance to truly appreciate that side of him. Also, he's committed and dependable.

PF: How did the two of you meet?

ND: Originally, through Pat Croce, but it took a while for us to really forge a friendship. I've been with the 76ers for upwards of ten years and Howard's always been there. He'd come to all the games, but he's also pitched in with all sorts of charity events, including Schwarzenegger's Inner City Games, which I was seriously involved with at the time.

PF: Could you ever see Howard doing Yoga and or Meditating and would you recommend it to him?

ND: Yes and Yes. People either love to cheer him or beat him up, and I'm sure, because underneath his celebrity persona, he is a very good person, he probably takes some of the bad stuff to heart. He's in a high stress environment. Any sort of mind-body stress reduction technique or practice such as yoga, meditation, tai chi would be great for him.

Dr. Nick DiNubile has advised (preventatively, correctively and for peak performance) professional and olympic athletes including Allen Iverson, Cal Ripkin, Jr. and Keith Hernandez, among many other celebrities including M.Knight Shamalayan, Arnold Schwarzenegger and William Hert as well as countless fitness enthusiasts looking to raise the bar. For an in-depth look at Howard Eskin's workouts & motivational tips received from Dr. Nick and/or to purchase FrameWork, go to www.DrNick.com.



Carmen Elizabeth Greger is a Freelance Journalist, lyricist and poet. She is the owner of Karma Culture and YogaAvalon, and is the Co-Director of MindYourBodyYoga. She is also the Founder/Co-Director of The ABC's Foundation. Carmen has been a teacher and practitioner of yoga for many years and is currently working on the completion of her first non-fiction book. She lives in Avalon, NJ with her loving husband, Stephen and their beautiful son, Remy. They are very excited to be expecting a new addition to their family in October, 2006! Contact Carmen at carmen@phillyfitmagazine.com.