



ooo Ringier  
In-house journal  
March 2016

The big interview with  
CEO Marc Walder: a wake-up call

**«I expect everyone to have  
a steep learning curve.»**



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A portrait of Marc Walder, a middle-aged man with a bald head and light skin, wearing a light blue dress shirt and a dark blue tie. He is standing with his arms crossed, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a wall covered in many small, rectangular, framed pictures or photographs, creating a pattern of light and dark squares. The lighting is soft and even.

# «Ringier needs to become a technology company»

Marc Walder has a clear goal. He sees Ringier among Europe's top five biggest media enterprises. That is why he is forging strong partnerships and looking for keen and committed employees.

Text: Hannes Britschgi, Photos: Gian Marco Castelberg



**Marc Walder, first you diversified our publishing house, then you pushed digitalization. What's next?**

**Marc Walder:** Technology and data. I won't beat about the bush: Ringier needs to become a technology-based enterprise, in fact, a technology company. We have already become that in many of our business areas. Many people won't like hearing this, but journalism on the digital platforms is increasingly being turned into a technology-driven business model. Distribution and advertising, two of the cornerstones of any publishing house, have become more and more equivalent with technology and data. Fewer and fewer people tend to get their information through a brand's homepage. A growing proportion of our content reaches our readers via a third party through technology-driven platforms like Facebook, Google, YouTube and Twitter.

**What about advertising?**

If you can't deliver data about your users you will soon be out of advertising.

**That said, what do you expect of journalists?**

I expect them to adapt to the steep learning curve we have all been on for quite some time now. They should think about what they need to learn day by day. Those who don't

not part of this new world. I'm inviting everybody: Look at this new media world! Experiment with it. **Ringier regularly organizes encounters with top-notch experts.** You're referring to our events for employees. First-rate speakers from all over Europe come to Zurich and explain the new media business - but when I look at the list of people who register for these events I always get upset about the lack of interest. On the other hand, there are those who are continually making progress; those who want to learn.

**As you were saying, there are people with a steep learning curve - the first movers.**

That's right, and the the future belongs to them.

**Everybody is looking for a sustainable business model for digital journalism.**

**Are you confident that we will find it?**

At the end of January, Michael Ringier, Uli Sigg, Claudio Cisullo and I went to San Francisco and Silicon Valley: to Palo Alto, Mountain View, Menlo Park, Cupertino. We visited Facebook, Google, Uber, Airbnb, Apple, Firefox and RocketSpace. Their primary concern is not the business model. These companies keep asking themselves - and this is not stupid marketing drivel: How do we make the lives of our customers, our users, our buyers a little easier,

more interesting, more efficient? How can we make their lives more enjoyable, how can we better anticipate what they want? Only then do these

companies ask themselves: can we derive a business model from that? They call that user-centric. We may be inclined to laugh about this but we shouldn't. We should learn from it.

**Can you give me an example?**

Right now, Uber is thinking about how to better anticipate where we want to drive. Based on an algorithm that knows: Today is Monday. Walder is in Zumikon. He will not want to drive to the Kaufleuten club but more likely to his office at the Pressehaus.

**How optimistic are you with respect to digital journalism?**

So far, we have not figured out how the digital journalism business model works in a sustainable manner. Will we be able to finance ourselves through advertising to the extent that we were hoping? The evidence



Silicon Valley, one of the most important locations worldwide for IT and high-tech industries; seen here as a model in the title sequence of the HBO series «Silicon Valley»

is not conclusive. Will we be able to finance ourselves through our readers - with a subscriptions model or via micropayments? Again, the evidence is not conclusive. If we're honest we'll have to admit that we just don't know. All we know is that Ringier, thanks to our diversification, is ready to go down this road. Many other publishing houses will no longer have what it takes.

**You frequently travel to New York, San Francisco and Silicon Valley. How do you go about that?**

We plan our priorities; social media, video, technology, distribution, culture, advertising market, etc. Then we look for suitable partners to discuss these issues with. The rest is writing note after note. And, processing them one by one, point for point, upon returning home.

**For technology and data, you have appointed Chinese-born Xiaoqun Clever to the group management.**

Although she is still young, Xiaoqun has already had a fascinating career. But even a person of her caliber won't be able to make a lot of changes as an individual. We all have to succeed in taking the entire company, every employee, along on that road, so everybody will develop an understanding of how important technology is as a basis, and how important data is as a competitive advantage.

**What is Clever's job?**

It's divided into three stages: Firstly, understanding what Ringier is and what Ringier could become. Then, defining the technologies that will be the basis for the optimal application of data. And finally: implementation. The entire process is complex and requires teamwork. We produce journalism, we do classifieds, we do e-commerce, we do radio, ticketing ...

**Will the joint ventures be included?**

Certainly. The joint ventures make many things easier, but entail more complexity, of course. In her job interview Xiaoqun Clever told Michael



Ringer and myself: «I want you to be aware that this is going to be a marathon, not a sprint.»

**Ringier increasingly feels like a holding company. For loyal Ringier stalwarts that is not easy to bear.**

I sometimes hear that too. I can't understand it, though. These joint ventures provide us with a decisive advantage. For years now our motto has been: We work with the best! With Axel Springer - one of the most innovative media companies; CTS Eventim - Europe's biggest ticketing enterprise; Energy - a huge radio network; Tamedia - a very successful media company, Infront - one of the world's leading sports marketing companies and with KKR - one of the most renowned financial investors. What a privilege!

**The message is clear!**

Let us put this to the test. Name a company.

**RASMAG - Ringier Axel Springer Media AG.**

We had a very successful newspaper and magazine business together in Eastern Europe. Today, we are the most modern media company there. On the EBITDA level, we are at 63 percent digital business. Four years ago we were at zero. We can check that one off.

**Interjection: Romania really should be part of this joint venture. When will this be the case?**

We have been through all kinds of things in Romania. The other day

Michael Ringier said: At one time we made a loss there that was bigger than our entire turnover. Crazy. Ringier Romania has managed a complete turnaround and is now a truly profitable enterprise in an exciting - and large - country. We are happy that it is part of Ringier.

**In these countries Ringier is a journalistic force and therefore a political force. What does that mean in Hungary and Poland, where nationalist leaders like Viktor Orbán and Jarosław Kaczyński are in charge?**

The nationalist parties want to increase their control over companies with journalistic activities. In Poland we have seen that the ministry of justice has practically incorporated the public prosecutor's office and that they aim to and will eventually control the media regulated by public law. In Hungary they've created new taxes to be imposed on media investors. That does not make our life any easier. But neither in Poland nor in Hungary has our business suffered any substantial problems so far.

**What about our journalism?**

That is an equally important question. The independence of media - and that really matters in these countries - is guaranteed precisely because foreign companies like Ringier and Axel Springer can produce their publications in these countries completely independently.

**Should we address China at this point?**

In China we don't have any classical journalistic products that have an impact on political and economical debates.

**Let's get back to putting things to the test: Ticketcorner AG.**

Since our acquisition we have doubled their profit. In technological terms we're first rate. We can check that one off.

**Scout24 Switzerland AG, the online marketplace network.**

Some two years ago we were able to bring KKR in as a co-shareholder. Since then the company's performance has exceeded all our expectations.

**JobCloud.**

We bought jobs.ch jointly with Tamedia for 390 million francs. That is a lot of money. In the meantime, we have substantially increased its profit year by year. The EBITDA margin is well over fifty percent.

**We need to talk about Energy!**

We have developed a quaint local radio station into a proper entertainment group: three radio channels and great events. This joint venture idea has clearly worked out.

**A love brand like Energy is a perfect example of how strong brands can proliferate like plants in a greenhouse.** True enough. But like with sports: We need to train even harder, be more ingenious, clever and anticipating. We need to muster even more willpower to get better.

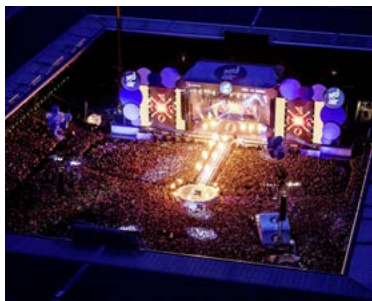
**Now I'm going to get you riled again. ►**

Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian Prime Minister (top), Jarosław Kaczyński, Leader of the Polish PiS party



Photo: Getty Images (2), Handout





Energy Air 2015, at the Stade de Suisse in Bern with 40,000 concertgoers, featuring 18 national and international acts

► Looking at the organizational chart of the Ringier und Axel Springer Switzerland magazine joint venture, Ringier seems to have gotten the short end of the stick. Where are our people?

What an absurd assertion! Urs Heller manages the big magazines and Daniel Pillard the French-speaking region. All the publishing services are performed entirely by Ringier. And I'm the chairman of the board. But be that as it may: Springer Switzerland has contributed some great executives. In addition, the shareholder agreement regulates this co-operation. After all, this isn't just some gymnastics club.

**When the original idea was to appoint a Ringier man as CEO, and suddenly Ralph Büchi from Springer, as delegate of the board of directors, has assumed the role of CEO to all intents and purposes, it's understandable that employees are taken aback.**

I'm not out to accommodate everyone in this interview: We appoint the best people for the right jobs. Springer Switzerland has excellent people, Ringier has excellent people, and now they're all sitting together in the management. Ralph Büchi is in the top league of European publishing executives. I don't have time for this kind of whining.

**Do you see yourself as an «active» chairman of the board?**

Of course.

**The «Medienpark» on Flurstrasse 55 in Zurich will be set up in a great building. Will the joint marketing venture Ringier-SSR SRG-Swisscom also move in there?**

I hope so. We're working on it. Editorial desks and marketing belong together.

**You're creating a new power place for media.**

We are talking about a rather large media company. So we are investing a lot of money in its location. It will be a state-of-the-art media center. The Americans have long been aware of how much good working conditions matter to employees.

**Some people like to smile about your ►**

Xiaoqun Clever, Chief Technology and Data Officer of the Ringier Group



Photo: Gian Marco Castelberg/13Photo, Adrian Bretscher

# The Marathon Woman

Xiaoqun Clever had a choice: She chose Ringier because this family enterprise grants her a lot of autonomy and time. Her job: building the technological basis for data application.

**H**er eyes and her smile exude gentle power. Xiaoqun Clever, a petite woman, appears to bring a pleasant counterpoint to the wired atmosphere pervading this vibrant media company.

However, by the time the new Chief Technology and Data Officer calmly and firmly announces: «We're in for a marathon, not a sprint,» every Ringier employee has realized that this new member of the Group Executive Board has a tough agenda and she means business. She is not interested in dazzling people, stirring things up and quickly moving on. No, this is someone who is buckling down to work and intends to make long-term changes in this company. CEO Mark Walder had to fight hard for this IT expert. Following her stellar career at the German software giant SAP Clever had gone over to the media business in 2014 and led the push for digitalization at the listed German media enterprise ProSiebenSat.1-Gruppe Media SE as their Chief Technology Officer: «I am fascinated by how radically the digital revolution is turning the media business upside down. I want to have a hand in that process.»

Ringier has a lot to offer that she can turn her hand to. Clever will be given plenty of autonomy in the areas of technology and data. «We can do a jump-start. We have no legacy, no baggage to deal with. I can begin unburdened and I don't need to fight my way through many levels of hierarchy. This family enterprise will give me the time I need to build a solid technological foundation.»

At her first presentation to the staff in Zurich she uses the example of Netflix, the global film and video distributor, to explain why tech and data are so essential to any modern media enterprise. Netflix, she says, is incredibly meticulous when it comes to studying its customers, employing hundreds of engineers to analyze

not only what viewers are watching but how they are consuming movies and videos: What settings for color, contrast, format and sound they use. How long they watch for. Precisely which sequences they choose to interrupt or stop the program. No detail is too trivial to be examined and evaluated. Thanks to this aggregate knowledge Netflix is able to present each and every individual customer with the most seductive recommendations for further videos and movies. Customers don't need to look elsewhere for new suggestions. That is why 70 percent of viewing time is based on Netflix proposals. These pinpointed individual suggestions alone require the work of 300 techies.

Asked how Ringier could possibly keep up with this, Xiaoqun Clever replies: «Netflix puts a lot of its knowledge about its technology platform at the disposal of the public. So we can use it and fine-tune it for our own purposes. All I need is some stout-hearted allies who will get to grips with it.» She went on to rave about the range of Ringier's activities and the mountains of data accruing as a result: «Let's look at our own portfolio. We know what kind of apartment people are looking for, what car they drive, we know their job preferences, their taste in music and what they like to read. All we need to do is connect this data intelligently.» That is still miles away, which is why Clever is talking about a marathon.

On weekends Xiaoqun Clever goes to Karlsruhe, Germany, to spend time with her two sons, who live with their father during the week. Xiaoqun Sun, as she was called by her maiden name, grew up in southern China near Shanghai. Until she was six years old she lived on an industrial site where her parents, both academics, worked at a factory, as the Cultural Revolution intended.

In 1989 Xiaoqun (pronounced Chao-choon), then a young student, took part in the protests on Tiananmen Square (the «Square of Heavenly Peace»). «I wasn't a leader, just a

hanger-on,» she freely admits. Just as well for her.

Her sentence was «merely» 50 days in a re-education camp. This brainwashing experience, however, opened her eyes: «When I talked on the phone to fellow students who were in the United States they were aghast to hear me suddenly refer to myself as a terrorist. That's when I realized that I would only be able to live in freedom if I went abroad.» It took her a whole year of running from one authority to another until she had all the required stamps and approvals to leave.

She travelled to Germany to stay with her father in Göttingen, where he was working as a scientist in an exchange program. She would go on to get her degree at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, famed for its excellent computer science department. Having quickly risen through the ranks at SAP, Clever shouldered the responsibility of opening up the market in China and took charge of innovation development in Germany, USA, Korea, India and China. Eventually, however, Clever realized that titles and the number of employees did not matter as much to her as autonomy and the freedom to shape things according to her own ideas. On January 4th she began her marathon at Ringier. What were her thoughts and feelings as she entered this race? «I'm hoping for open doors. Apart from tech and data what I require is skill sets and mindsets. I'm expecting people to be open-minded. I can't achieve anything on my own. I want us to base the decisions in our everyday work not on a gut feeling but on tech and data.»

Xiaoqun Clever is very much aware that head, heart and gut belong together: «Our work is always about people: About their excitement, their emotions. People are not zeroes and ones but the chains of zeroes and ones of our digital instruments help us to do more justice to people's needs.»



► **enthusiasm for American standards. Is there some misunderstanding?**

There is no misunderstanding. I am an enthusiastic person. You can't transform an enterprise if you are a skeptic, always sitting on the fence. I like people who can get enthusiastic about things; it doesn't matter what, be it soccer, art, wine, a beautiful hike. Enthusiasm is key.

**The latest joint venture – Ringier, Swisscom, SRG SSR – was a real zinger.**

The journalistic fireworks that have been blasted off against this initiative do not speak well of Swiss journalism. Obviously, there was a lot of corporate journalism involved here.

**How about a brief retort?**

For one thing, this is an innovative entrepreneurial project. Nobody knows whether it will turn out well. All we know is what will happen if we don't do anything. The advertising and reader markets are radically changing. We are trying to respond to that. I am optimistic.

**And for another thing?**

People always act as if Swisscom were a state-owned enterprise. Swisscom is listed on the stock exchange, with a majority investor ...

**... the Swiss state ...**

... holding 50.6 percent of the shares. Swisscom as a telecommunications enterprise in a highly competitive market is expected to move forward into the future. Their business is undergoing sea changes. I'll give you an example: Text messages used to be really big, and then WhatsApp came along.

**The other day WhatsApp said they now had one billion users.**

So Swisscom has to evolve. They do so by launching entrepreneurial projects and taking risks. The Swiss Broadcasting Corporation SRG SSR, in turn, as a provider of public broadcast content, will have to be on its toes because TV viewing habits have changed over the past five to ten years, and also because advertising is radically changing. The other Swiss publishing companies can now decide: Should they continue on their own? Will they build alliances amongst themselves? Or do they want to be part of our joint venture? They all have non-discriminatory access to the data and to our business model. That is quite fair.

**How will they decide?**

A year from today many companies who are now shouting «Don't authorize this!» will be part of our marke-



Medienpark on Flurstrasse 55, in Zurich: ready for occupancy in January 2017

ting organization because it's the best solution for them.

**Back to Ringier: Who will remain at the Pressehaus?**

Our centerpiece, the Blick Group with its newsroom, will remain here at the Pressehaus. As will the main Ringier management and the Energy Group.

**Blick is a great brand, but it's under a lot of pressure in print form. There is a new management in place for it now, Wolfgang Büchner and his crew. What are your expectations?**

We could spend nights on end discussing this. So let me put it in a nutshell. They have yet to arrive at the editorial course that the publisher and I expect: relevance. Today – the day we are doing this interview – five clowns from the Lucerne carnival are featured on Blick's front page saying: We will protect our women from harassment. This borders on satire. In the United States the presidential election campaign has reached the competition stage within the parties. In Switzerland, travel agent Kuoni is up for sale. UBS just presented its latest results – they're good. Hundreds of thousands of refugees are being channeled through Europe. There is no want for topics.

**What would your course be?**

Play out the big stories that matter

The Blick front page on February third, 2016



to the world, to Switzerland. Period. Those five men at the Lucerne carnival are not it.

**Whenever there is a discussion about Blick, people mean the print edition.**

**Why don't we talk about Blick online more often?**

That's an interesting question. We tend to talk about the print product. Print is more sustainable than digital, which is volatile. That's why we can have an argument about a print headline two months after the fact.

**You have never pushed a Blick story on Twitter. Have you never found one that would have been worth it?**

I try to tweet interesting facts about the media industry, about digitalization, innovation, and the fourth industrial revolution. Things like studies, statistics and good ideas. It's not so much about journalistic content or stories.

**Ringier is letting Cicero and Monopol go. Why is that?**

Monopol and Cicero are two wonderful publications, but they are niche products. Ringier, on the other hand, is a mass media company; big publications and platforms. We didn't manage to produce these publications at a profit. We tried everything. This is painful. At the end of the day, the management buyout by Schwennicke and Marguier was the best of all possible solutions.

**Robin Lingg – also a new member of the Group Executive Board – represents the sixth Ringier generation to be actively involved.**

Robin runs Asia and Africa. At the same time, he is a member of the next generation of owners. A change of generations in family-run businesses is a fundamentally important as well as complex and sensitive affair. It is no easy thing to be involved in operations while trying to grow into that other responsibility. Robin is doing a fantastic job, though. He's not just playing the future shareholder but working extremely hard and consistently as an executive. His is not the easiest of jobs.

**How are things going in Africa?**

Africa is our biggest wager. We are investing a lot of capital in business models in several countries, not knowing whether it will be worth it in the end. Certain aspects are difficult to influence, such as the development of purchasing power. The average household income in these countries is around 100, 150 or 180 dollars a month. How much of that money will be left over for the eco-



Photos: Thomas Buchwalder, Handout

systems of our digital business models? We shall see.

**Can we learn anything from African markets?**

Good question. So far we have been duplicating the business of our

to learn how to apply technology in journalism.

**At Dreamlab in Krakow, for example.**

And in Africa we are learning how to use SEO (Search Engine Optimization) or SEM (Search Engine Marketing). Robin has put together an excellent digital team. Our goal is to pool our know-

**«I am a fighter – and an optimist.»**

Marc Walder

home market in the new markets. I used to travel a lot with Silvia Lepiarczyk, explaining to people in Eastern Europe how to do celebrity journalism – and I don't mean to be condescending. Those days are over. Today, we are going to Poland

how between Switzerland, Africa and Eastern Europe consistently and to combine it with the know-how from Springer or the other shareholders.

**In Asia we have just started operations in Myanmar.**



Robin Lingg, CEO Ringier Africa & Asia

With duwun.com.mm we have a news portal that is showing impressive growth. Within three months of its launch Duwun has become the country's biggest online news platform with 1.7 million users. Its growth has exceeded our expectations by far, which does not surprise me. Myanmar is a country with new distribution for information. Everything is mobile. The three big telcos have rolled out strong networks. This is a good time for us to get involved with minor investments.

**You are travelling from country to country, spurring on our company, while sitting on various boards of directors. How are you doing as CEO?**

I am a fighter – and an optimist. It's a privilege to be given this job. I have a wife who has worked in the media, among others at Ringier. She knows the business and she is very sympathetic. She's my sparring partner in all matters concerning Ringier. And then there's this family, who are shareholders of this enterprise and run it with a lot of foresight. Over the past years they have invested more than 1.6 billion francs. What's more, they are intelligent, sophisticated and witty people. All of us are extremely lucky to have this family.

**The power to move and shape is stimulating; responsibility can be a burden. Are you on a rollercoaster between your mind and your gut?**

I couldn't have put it better.

**You have been running Ringier for seven years. Where do you want to lead us?**

Ringier can become one of the most relevant and diversified media companies in Europe. That is where we are heading. We could be players in the league of Europe's five or six largest media enterprises. That is our goal. As CEO Mathias Döpfner has clearly stated, Springer aims to become a leading global digital media enterprise. We have the possibility to do that on a European scale. And we will achieve this. 🌐





# Modern tabloid journalism

Wolfgang Büchner plans to turn Blick into a «cool brand» by the end of this year. At Spiegel Online he proved his expertise in digital journalism.

**W**olfgang Büchner, the new CEO of the Blick Group, has brought a lot of experience with him that will now benefit Blick. For the first five years of Spiegel Online Büchner was the managing editor of the German news magazine's digital edition. He would read every article, edit all of them, come up with the headline and finally compose the site: Lead stories one, two and three. «I have found that even supposedly heavy and relevant topics work extremely well if you handle them the right way. Of course

entertainment should be part of the mix, but the first three or four lead stories out of eight need to be hard news. Hard, relevant news.»

The Blick desk's new management now has a boss with a lot of journalism experience. That can be a big help, even though some people may feel a bit put out that the top dog is sitting in the middle of the newsroom and really knows his stuff: «The cover story about those five clowns at the Lucerne carnival vowing to protect

their wives against sexual harassment was a horror. I decided to put my foot down. That is precisely the kind of thing that we should not stand for.» Büchner is quick to defend his team, however, because he knows that his brush-up of the newsroom was first of all intended as a structural reform, and journalistic discussions were somewhat neglected as the other matters took precedence. «We have not been talking enough about journalism these past months. The Americans have a nice motto: Content is

In the middle: CEO of the Blick Group, Wolfgang Büchner, with editors-in-chief Peter Röthlisberger and Iris Mayer

king, but distribution is queen and she runs the household. When we talk about digitalization we mustn't forget the first part.»

In Germany Wolfgang Büchner is considered one of the top experts in digital journalism. When he states that, for him, journalism always comes first, he is to be believed. Büchner is a newsman with heart and soul even if he has now assumed a management position with all the responsibility that being CEO of the Blick Group entails. This new job will provide the former editor-in-chief of Der

Spiegel with a fresh opportunity to show his professional mettle. Back in Hamburg, Der Spiegel's more conservative journalists and co-proprietors did not want him to stick around and prove himself. Asked what this experience has taught him, Büchner takes a moment to ponder. His answer: «One needs to take all the time in the world to explain to people why digitalization will not destroy journalism. Digitalization and transformation are not ends in themselves but constitute possibilities for making the most of journalism and making good money as a result.»

To make this happen, the editorial offices will need to ramp up their skills and the Blick brand will need to beef up its relevance. Büchner is not worried about the current staff of the editorial offices. He can see «fantastic investigations and stories» but sometimes feels that they are sold short. Readers and users casually skimming the newspaper's front page or the website's first screen fail to see how many good stories lie beyond its surface. The front page mistakenly creates the impression that Blick only has fun and entertainment to offer.

«When it comes to major issues, Blick's readers and users should be able to discuss them on a par with readers of more prestigious dailies like Neue Zürcher Zeitung and Tages-Anzeiger.» The goal has now been stated but the road is a long one. The new structure of the Blick Group is meant to help the process, but so far the newly appointed managers are wearing their key positions like ill-fitting suits. Büchner asks for patience. «They have yet to find their place. The editors-in-chief set the topics, the pace and the editorial course for the newspaper or online platform. The person responsible for the channel is welcome to differ, but the editor-in-chief has the last word.»

Wolfgang Büchner has his reasons for sitting in the middle of the newsroom. He wants to see what is going on, feel the editorial staff and listen to them. So far, things are grating so audibly that he does not need to prick up his ears. Still, in all his years at Der Spiegel and the German Press Agency dpa Büchner has learned that change processes are a challenge for everyone involved. And there's one more thing, he says with a grin: «Quality is also born from continuity.» For Büchner, Ringier's Pressehaus in Zurich is more than a stopover. 🌐



... with editor-in-chief of Blick Sport, Felix Bingesser, and Ringier CEO Marc Walder



... with Head of Marketing Blick Group, Nicolas Pernet, and Head of Product Management, Ina Bauspiess



... with Head of Video Development, Sebastian Pfoth



... with the Digital Operations team: Florian Scholl, Juan Baron (CDO Ringier Publishing), Thomas Enderle and Björn Beth



# «Re-inventing yourself»

Ralph Büchi, head of operations, exudes the spirit of optimism. The joint venture Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz promises new prospects for employees and customers.

**Ralph Büchi, within a year more than 600 people will be working here. Any idea who, how, where and what?**

**Ralph Büchi:** We're in the middle of the planning stage, together with the department heads and editors-in-chief. When you move in together in a new place you can re-invent yourself. That is an opportunity we mean to take.

**The joint venture Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz will be the anchor tenant. Will the new jointly operated marketing organization of Ringier, Swisscom and the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation SRG SSR soon be joining you?**

We very much hope so. The marketing teams should be very close to those who are making the journalistic products. This will become even more important in the future. Here we can work hand in glove under one roof and in a cutting-edge environment.

**What will be growing together here?**

You're asking about our strategy. We will create topical fields of expertise, such as the people, women, life-style and fashion department, the business department, or the advice department. We intend to be market leaders in each of these clusters. And let's not forget our colleagues in Romandy, with whom we want to collaborate more closely than ever.

**This joint venture will bring together some of the greatest brands in Swiss media.**

**That'll give people ideas.**

Now you're deliberately turning up the pressure (laughs). Recent developments in the media markets oblige us to bundle our offers in the user and advertising markets. Size really matters. It also means that we can work more cost-effectively: we don't need to operate services like IT, accounting and HR separately in two companies. This will improve our chances of markedly prolonging the financially successful lifespans of print products while jointly launching new digital offerings.

**You are Board Delegate of the joint venture Ringier Axel Springer Media AG. What does it take to make a joint venture work?**

Firstly: Ringier and Axel Springer are kindred spirits. They are both enterprises that are run by journalists. Journalism is the core of our activities. We will do everything we can to give journalism a future in the digital world. Secondly: We are both internationally operating media enterprises. We have learned to find our way in international markets, to struggle through and adapt. In the past five years we have jointly succeeded in this in Eastern Europe. Thirdly: The people involved know each other well. That is why we can allow ourselves to be optimistic about our joint venture in Switzerland.

**What have your first experiences been like?**

Employees and customers have understood what we are doing here and they now

have faith in this project. The employees are primarily interested in the venture's business prospects. Unlike some other media companies, maybe, we are promoting a spirit of optimism.

**You have a reputation as a hands-on boss who believes in a rather traditional top-down culture.**

I've also heard the opposite, that I'm a micromanager who likes to concern himself with details.

**I've heard that, too.**

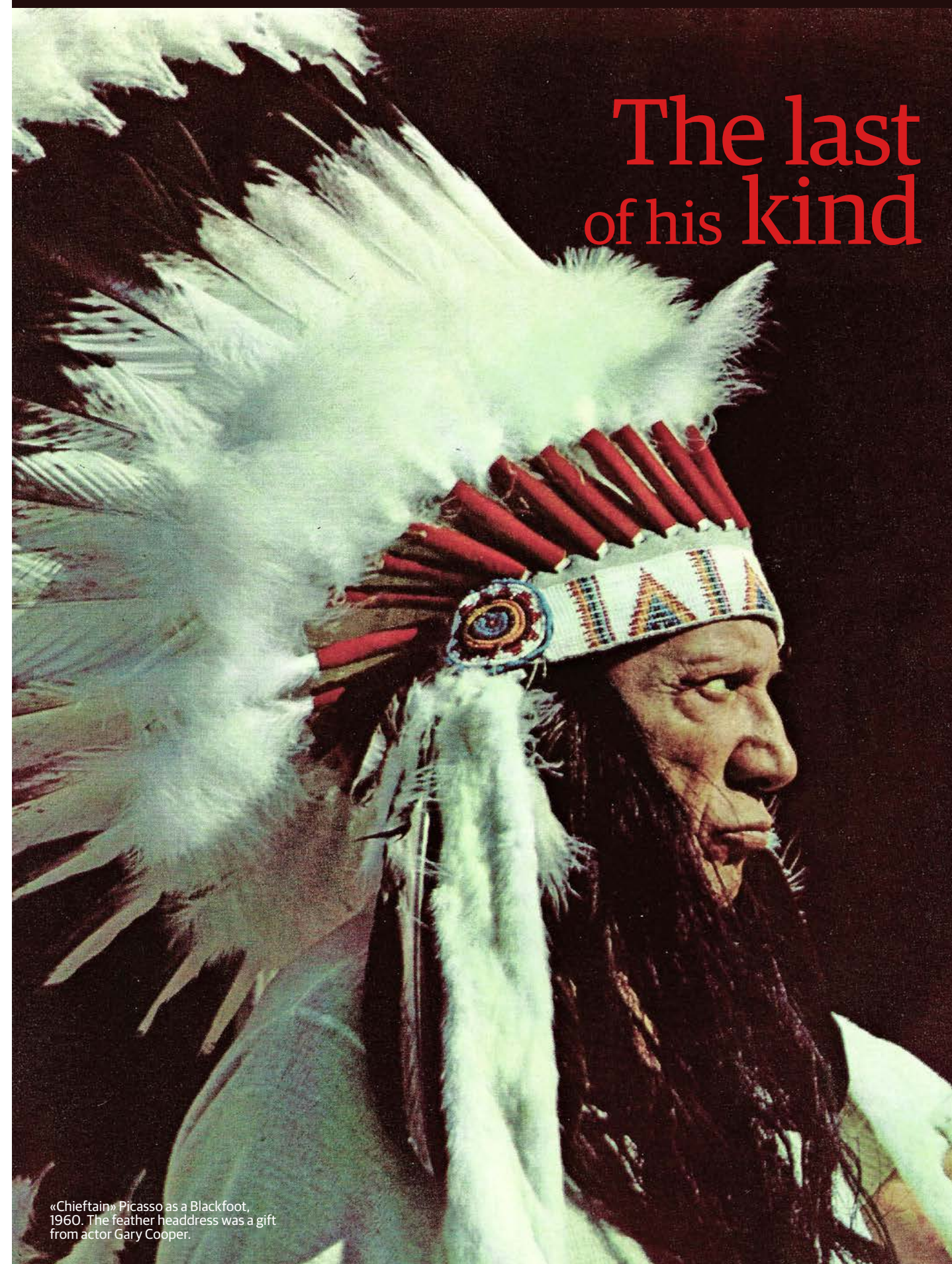
I'm sure there's some truth to both of these views. Regarding the top-down element: I firmly believe in delegating. My many international duties require that I delegate actively and deliberately. I want my employees on every level to think for themselves, to be innovative and creative, people I can trust and to whom I can delegate responsibility without having to get involved every day. But sometimes you have to give clear directions.

**What do Ringier employees need to know about you in order to work with you?**

I like to communicate and I'm looking forward to meeting people in our enterprise personally and speaking with them one-to-one - openly, if possible. That goes for ideas as well as suggestions and criticism. Straight talk, friendly interaction, no fear of approaching a superior - and most of all: no in-house politicking. I consider myself an entrepreneur, not a politician. 🌐

Photo: Gian Marco Castelberg / 13Photo

## The last of his kind



«Chieftain» Picasso as a Blackfoot, 1960. The feather headdress was a gift from actor Gary Cooper.

A photographer's journey through a century of world history: David Douglas Duncan celebrated his 100th birthday in 2016. This American, renowned as one of the most daring war photographers, also spent seventeen years observing Picasso through his lens.

Text: Bettina Bono





**1** David Douglas Duncan in Palestine in 1946. He wore his legendary watchband made out of antique Greek coins on all of his assignments  
**2** Giants of the camera and the canvas: Until the early 1960s, David Douglas Duncan (at left) was Pablo Picasso's favored photographer  
**3** On his 98th birthday: David Douglas Duncan at his home in Castellaras le Vieux, France, with his Norwich Terrier Duzi

«An interview with David Douglas Duncan? Sure, just give him a call.» That was the answer I got from Ashley, the New Yorker publicist of Duncan's latest book, «My 20th Century». So, two weeks before David Duncan's 100th birthday, I dialed his number for the first time. A few minutes later I was still nonplussed, staring at the receiver in my hand. «I'm on the road, dear. Call me in the afternoon.» So that's what a 99-year-old sounds like. American author John Gunther once described the former Marine Corps officer as frank, shy, friendly, indefatigable and full of iron willpower and energy. If any of that had abated in the course of time, there certainly was no sign of it. Except that David Duncan does not like to speak for more than a quarter of an hour at a time. After that, his voice gets tired. And so I called David Douglas Duncan at regular intervals to talk again and again - about photography, Picasso and life.

**Mr. Duncan, when did you last take a picture before this conversation?**

**David Duncan:** Just before your call. I take photographs all the time. I can't move very far anymore. I just photograph around the house, my wife and my dog, my Norwich Terrier Duzi.

**In 1956, Leica developed a camera for you, the Leica M3Ds (D for Duncan). What camera do you use now?**

I use a very cheap digital camera, a Nikon S620 Coolpix. At first, the digital world seemed rather unreal to me because I come from Kodachrome and black-and-white film.

**Do you also take pictures with your cellphone?**

No, never. I don't know how to use it. I know that people are using their cellphones to take pictures everywhere; they're taking selfies all the time.

**Roughly 1.9 billion pictures per day are uploaded and shared via social networks.**

**What is a single photograph worth anymore these days?**

Hopefully a lot to the person uploading the picture. Everybody is a photographer now. That's terrific.

**You got your first camera from your sister on your 18th birthday and you have been a photographer ever since. What did you want your pictures to achieve?**

I photographed what I saw, what I felt - that's what I wanted the people to see and feel too. I always hoped to get the proper shot of what I feel. You try to show the faces, reactions to what happened that moment.

**Looking back on almost 100 years of photography - what has NOT changed?**

The most important thing for a photographer is the vision. What you see. What you feel. How quickly you can react. My type of photography is speed, vision, and sensitivity. The difference between a good and a very good photographer is the result. That's a matter of planning and luck.

**So you're saying you've been very lucky?**

It's true. I became a close friend of one of the 20th century's most famous artists, Pablo Picasso. I survived World War II, Korea and Vietnam. But I have often wondered about it. I've been the oldest guy there, and the youngest guy has been killed right next to me. How can this be? This young, innocent kid is killed, and I'm still standing here with all my failings. It's irrational.»

**You spent more than a decade taking pictures for LIFE magazine in its heyday. LIFE no longer exists. What magazine or medium would you like to work for today?**

LIFE was the best magazine in the world for my type of work. We were 50 photographers at the time. Everybody was an expert; take for example the Swiss photographer Werner Bischof. Today, only Paris Match! Look at it, every week it's a great magazine. It's dramatic. Look

what they did when Charlie Hebdo happened. Paris Match is number one.

**You took more than 20,000 pictures of Picasso. How would you describe your relationship?**

Two men who liked each other. I wrote eight books on him and Jacqueline. That was my relationship with him.

**Apparently you never exchanged more than 50 words per day.**

It's true, we never talked much. He was painting and I was photographing. We were both in our own work. He did his work and I did mine. It didn't require conversation. Conversation would have been too intrusive.

**Did Picasso ever reject one of your pictures?**

Never. Not once. Contact prints of all my 20,000 pictures. No complaints, nothing.

**You called him «Maestro». He called you «Ismael». Why?**

He always called me Ismael. And I don't know why. I never asked him. «Pablo» was too familiar - to me he was a maestro of living, generosity. A maestro of everything.

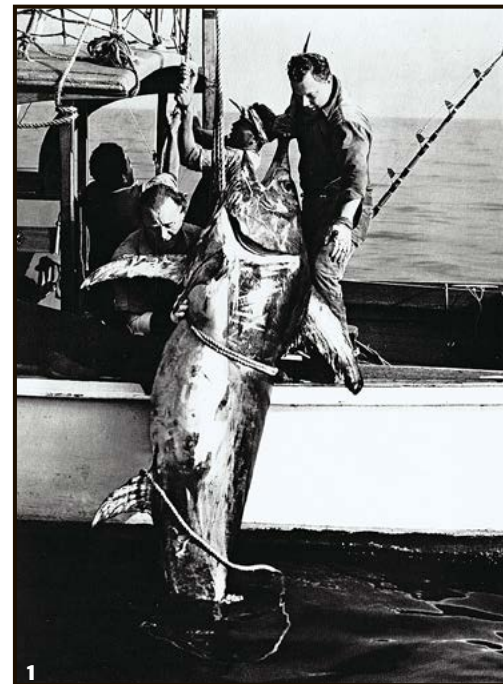
**What is your favorite memory of him?**

As a gentleman, a very nice and quiet man. Most of all generous. The most generous guy you can imagine. He gave me at least 50 different kinds of pictures. Including our wedding present. (Duncan has been married to his wife, Sheila, for 54 years)

**If you could call Picasso today, what would you want to tell him?**

«Maestro, I miss you!» I miss him. 🌍

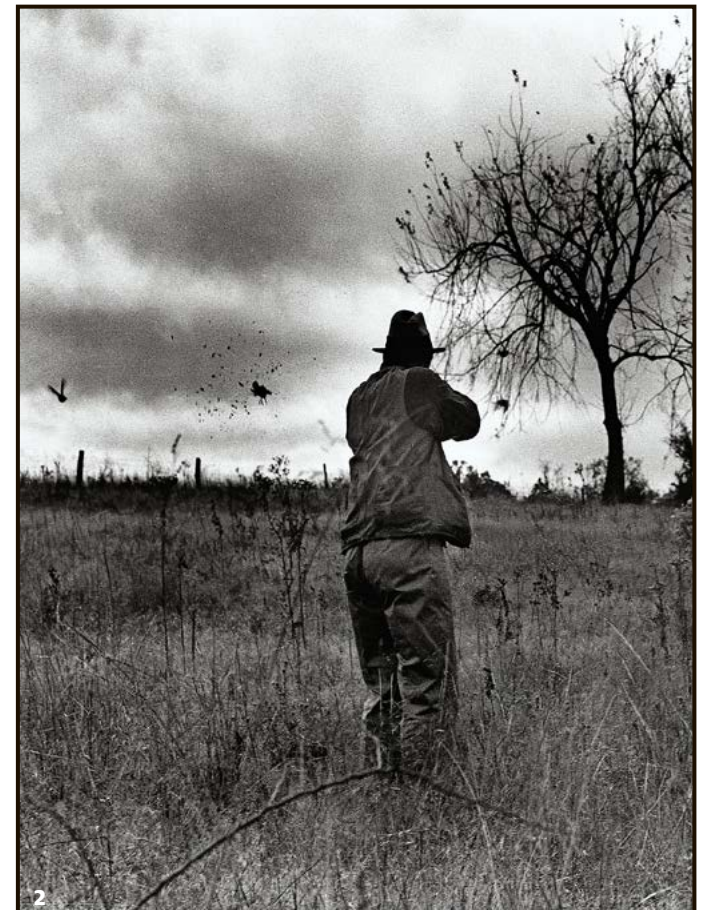
*On January 23rd, 2016, David Douglas Duncan celebrated his 100th birthday in his home in the south of France. I sent him my good wishes and asked whether after one hundred years on this planet he had seen enough. He replied: «Thank you, dear. I'd like to have another hundred years - damn right!»*



**1** On expedition with the Lerner-American Museum of Natural History, at Cabo Blanco, Peru, 1939

**2** The first picture Duncan sold to LIFE Magazine: quail shooting in Missouri, 1939

**3** With this photograph Duncan won second place at the third Annual National Newspaper Snapshot Awards in 1937. He used the prize money of 250 US dollars to buy new camera equipment and returned to Mexico.



Photos: David Douglas Duncan/The LIFE Picture Library by Getty Images, Handout (2)





August 10th, 1945, during an American napalm attack on Mindanao, Philippines: In the picture, a Japanese officer is on duty for the Americans at the moment the co-pilot announces from the cockpit that Russia has declared war on Japan.

Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors arriving at the port of Haifa, Palestine, in 1946



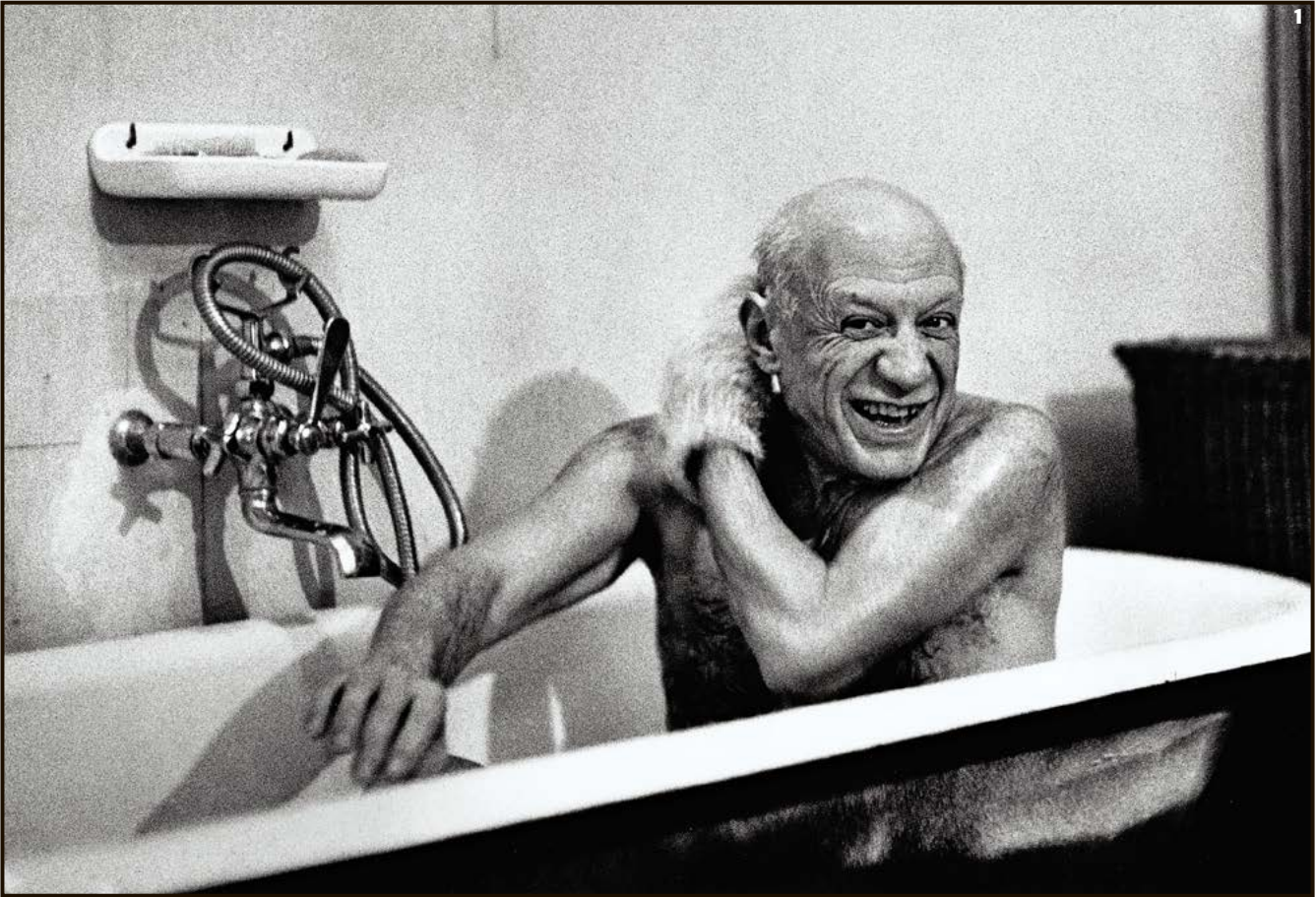
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in conversation with Louis Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India, in New Delhi, 1947. Both men would eventually be assassinated.



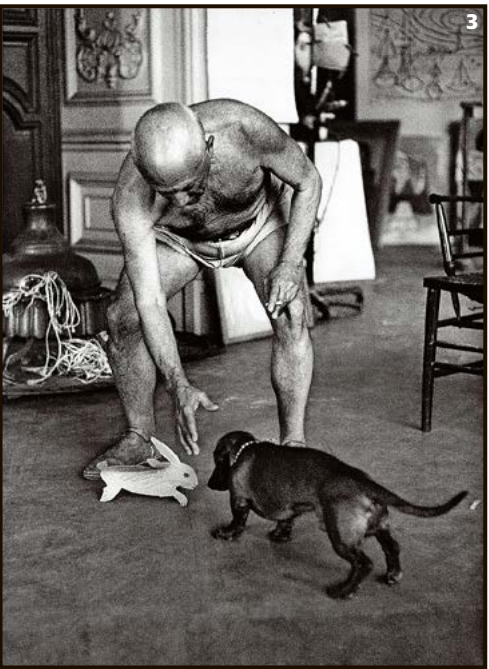
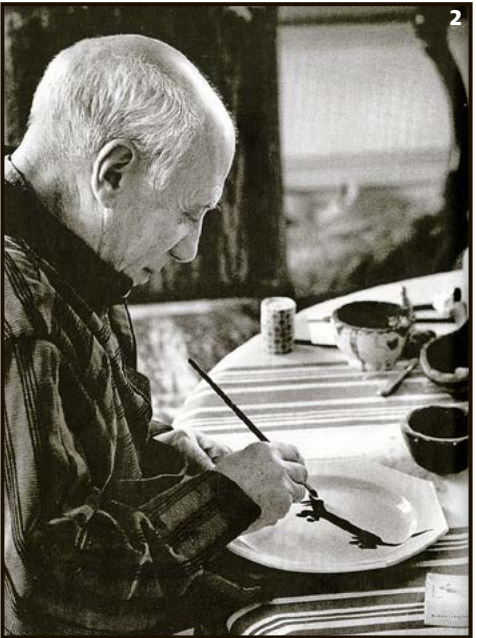
**1** The first Saudi Arabian king, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud in Dhahran, 1947  
**2** In Manchuria, on the Siberian border: an American soldier at temperatures around minus 40° Fahrenheit, 1950



The birth of the Iron Curtain, Germany, 1952



Sharpshooters working in teams of three: (from left to right) Lance Corporal Albert Miranda, 19, Lance Corporal David Burdwell, 20, and Platoon Lieutenant Alec Bodenwiser in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, 1968



**1** Duncan's first photograph of Pablo Picasso: at the Villa La Californie, Cannes, France, on February 8th, 1956

Picasso and Lump: Lump was David Douglas Duncan's dachshund – until one spring morning in 1957 he met Picasso. Duncan: «With Picasso, Lumpi found his Shangri-La and stayed.»

**2** Picasso: «Does Lump have his own plate?» Duncan: «No.» Picasso: «Tell him to wait a moment.»

**3** Picasso: «Has Lump ever seen a rabbit?» Duncan: «No.» Picasso made a paper rabbit. Lump attacked it, carried it outside to Jacqueline on the patio and ate it.





# «I don't want to be a hostage forever»

Journalist and author Michael Scott Moore was held hostage by Somali pirates for 977 days. In his interview with DOMO he talks about how he has learned to forgive, and how writing helped him not to lose his mind.

Text: Adrian Meyer



In January 2012 German-American journalist Michael Scott Moore, 46, was investigating piracy at sea in Somalia, when he was abducted by pirates. They demanded a ransom of 20 million dollars. Moore remained their prisoner for 977 days. After long and difficult negotiations the pirates finally released him on September 22, 2014, having received a ransom of 1.6 million dollars. The operation actually lost the pirates money. They had spent about two million dollars on Moore's confinement.

**Mr. Moore, you were held hostage by Somali pirates for 977 days. How do you remember this time?**

**Michael Scott Moore:** Of course, I am bitter and sad about the lost time out of my life. But mostly, I am deeply grateful to be free. Towards the end of my captivity I did not believe I would ever be released.

**Are you angry?**

Very much so, but not every day. What infuriates me most is the pirates' obstinacy. They wanted 20 million dollars for me, which is far too much. They were not particularly intelligent, they were sloppy and drew the whole thing out.

**What were your days like?**

I always woke up at five, at the first call of the muezzin. I was never able to sleep well, although sleep was the most beautiful thing I had. At night, I slept in chains for a year and a half. You really don't want to wake up with chains on your feet in a dark room where there is nothing but concrete. In order to get out of the chains as quickly as possible, I'd ask to go to the bathroom. I would also listen to the radio. Most of the time I could only get the BBC or Radio Vatican on short wave. Sometimes it was pop music from the Sultanate of Oman.

**Were you allowed to move around?**

I was always locked into one room and was only allowed to go outside to go to the bathroom. That ►

«Happiness is that way»: This picture by photographer Cynthia Wood became a symbol for Michael Scott Moore's friends, who campaigned unceasingly for his release.

Photos: Cynthia E. Woods, Christian Jungblodt/LaifHandout





► weakened me considerably. After my release I could no longer walk. A normal day felt like a soccer game. My knees and ankles were swollen for weeks. My muscles simply weren’t strong enough.

**What was in that room?**  
Nothing. Just bare, dirty concrete. I was camping on concrete.

**You were condemned to idleness?**  
I worked every day. Before being taken hostage I had been working on a novel. Every morning I’d spend two hours editing it in my mind. I’d continue writing on unfinished passages. I’d invent new passages and dialog and memorize them.

**You wrote your book in your head?**

«Writing helped me not to lose my mind.»

For one and a half years I had no news, no radio, no paper. From time to time I was able to write down a few sentences, although they kept taking my notebooks away. They let me keep a few, though. When I was released, I immediately typed everything into my computer. Writing helped me not to lose my mind.

**What did you do during the remainder of the day?**  
I drew on my old life, leafing through beautiful memories. And I thought not-so beautiful thoughts about the pirates (laughs). Sometimes I even had friendly conversations with my

captors. You cannot be angry twenty-four hours a day.

**Did you have nightmares?**  
No, I always had beautiful dreams, of home - in Germany and California. Waking up was the nightmare.

**Which kind of food were you given?**  
Almost exclusively beans. And not enough of them. I was hungry every day. I lost forty-four pounds. Occasionally, I would go on hunger strike to gain some leverage over the pirates. That did not help my health, of course. My immune system collapsed.

**Do you still like beans?**  
I hate them and never want to eat them again.

What does a hunger strike feel like?

My longest hunger strike lasted for a week. At some point the body no longer knows where it can get nourishment from.

When you’re on the brink of starvation you panic. I was not prepared for that.

**How has this ordeal changed you?**  
I hope it has made me stronger.

**What was the most terrible thing about your captivity?**  
The day my fellow inmate, my friend Rolly Tambara from the Seychelles, was hung from a tree and the pirates beat the bare soles of his feet with a stick. They tortured him right in front of me.

**How did the kidnappers treat you?**  
Like cattle. They felt it was morally correct to treat us that way. They even justified their actions with

Somali pirates held Michael Scott Moore hostage for two and a half years.

Journalist and author Michael Scott Moore was born in California and has been living in Berlin since 2005. The German-American wrote a well-received book on the history of surfing («Sweetness and Blood») as well as a novel («Too Much of Nothing»). His articles have appeared in Spiegel Online, SF Weekly, The Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, Slate, the Los Angeles Times and other publications. He is currently writing his memoirs.



the Koran; that it was okay to steal from infidels.

**Have you forgiven them?**  
Without forgiveness I would not have survived, because I would have taken one of the Kalashnikovs and tried to shoot as many pirates as possible. That would have been suicide.

**Did you consider suicide?**  
During the last months of my captivity I did indeed entertain the idea every day.

**What helped you survive?**  
Writing my novel and getting lost in thoughts about my former life. And yoga. I had a mat. A few of my guards even joined me. After all, they were not allowed to leave the room either. I was my kidnappers’ yoga teacher (laughs)!

**Did you often ask yourself - why me?**  
Of course. The logical answer to that is - why not me?

**You had accepted your fate?**  
Never completely, but to the point that I never got violent. It was a constant struggle to keep myself from going outside and shooting someone.

**Did your hope for freedom help you persevere?**  
No, I had given up hope. When the pirates told me I was free I didn’t believe it. I was skeptical until the very end. When they put me in a car, I thought they were selling me on. Only when I was able to talk to one of the negotiators on the phone and heard my mother’s voice did I believe it.

**How do you get used to freedom?**  
I had to relearn many things, like making decisions. In addition, I was incapable of meeting with several

Photos: Handout

people at the same time. I was overwhelmed. I was unable to understand interpersonal signals.

**Are you physically fit again?**  
Since last summer I have been back at 90 percent. I had to rebuild my physical strength over six months. I am a surfer and wanted to go back to surfing as soon as possible. I was able to do so in the fall of 2014. That was crucial.

**Do you still trust other people?**  
Yes, I do now. I had to gradually relearn that.

**Can you take everyday worries seriously after all the suffering you went through?**  
It is an entirely different world. It’s like returning from war.

**Did being held hostage teach you anything?**  
That I had the strength to survive this. That I could learn to forgive and - how awful human beings can be (laughs)!

**Has your idea of humanity been destroyed?**  
Quite the opposite. When you’re facing death, you realize you have not loved enough.

**You are currently writing your memoirs. A cathartic exercise?**  
Yes. But I don’t just want to talk about my captivity in my book. There has to be more than that. I don’t want to be a hostage forever.

**Are you happy?**  
I go up and down all the time. Right now everything is about the book. Focusing on writing helps me enormously. When I was released an FBI man with war experience told me: «If you tell your story a hundred times you will heal some day.» 🌍



Most of the time Michael Moore was hidden in the city of Gaalkacyo (population: 60,000), in the interior of the country.

Journalists in peril.

As of March 2016:

Press Freedom Barometer 2015:					
64	6	18	159	14	162
Journalists killed	Media assistants killed	Netizens and citizen journalists killed	Journalists imprisoned	Media assistants imprisoned	Netizens and citizen journalists imprisoned

Press Freedom Barometer 2016:					
11	0	0	152	14	163
Journalists killed	Media assistants killed	Netizens and citizen journalists killed	Journalists imprisoned	Media assistants imprisoned	Netizens and citizen journalists imprisoned

In 2015, more than 100 journalists were killed worldwide – about 65 were targeted and murdered or died while doing their job. In the rest of the cases the motive was not clearly determined. In addition, eighteen bloggers died. The aid organization «Reporters Without Borders» released this information in their annual report on press freedom in 2015. The most dangerous countries for journalists to work in are Iraq, Syria, Yemen – and France. The majority of journalists killed did not die in bombardments: Two thirds were murdered outside war zones because of their investigations into organized crime and politics or because of caricatures critical of Islam, as in the case of the assault on the editorial offices of Charlie Hebdo. This attack made France one of the countries in which the highest numbers of journalists were killed last year. Only in Iraq (9) and Syria (9) did more reporters die. Other dangerous places for reporters include Yemen, South Sudan, India, Mexico, the Philippines and Honduras. In addition, four bloggers were murdered within one year in Bangladesh. Since 2005, according to Reporters Without Borders, at least 787 journalists have been killed as a result of their profession.

Abductions of journalists have also increased in number. In 2015, 54 kidnappings were registered, 30 percent more than in the previous year. All of these abductions took place in four areas of conflict: Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya. Especially in Syria, IS terrorists use kidnapping as a means of implementing their reign of terror. Finally, at the end of 2015, 153 journalists and 162 netizens and bloggers were in prison – most of them in China, Iran, Egypt and Eritrea.

www.rsf.org



# A world without money

The future belongs to bitcoin & co.! Internet currencies have definitely arrived in the real world. Even bankers believe that cash will soon be obsolete. Is the digital revolution about to hit the financial services industry?

Text: René Haenig

Of all people it was the CEO of Deutsche Bank, John Cryan, 55, who recently made a bold prediction that got everyone to sit up and take notice. Cryan was on a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where the world's rich and powerful met at the end of January and announced that cash would probably disappear within the next ten years. «Cash is incredibly expensive and inefficient,» maintained Cryan. He went on to express that cash nowadays mostly helped criminals to conceal their activities. Unlike other people, however, the Deutsche Bank boss does not put much stock in the future of bitcoin, the crypto-currency. He also is rather critical of the associated block-chain technology. And yet, the Internet currency has long been on the way to real life: Specialized exchanges buy and sell bitcoins while various online merchants and shops accept bitcoins as payment. The fact that this digital currency is neither controlled by governments nor by banks holds a special attraction for many people.

## Bitcoin gold rush?

Some people are already talking about a bitcoin gold rush. That said, bitcoin is only the most well known of a whole range of digital currencies, including peercoin, litecoin, ripple and more. Money you can't touch and which is not printed and supplied by issuing banks. Instead, these currencies are encrypted formulae, generated and distributed on computers. They can be used to shop on online



Obstinate, small & quirky – that's the Isle of Man! This 221-square-mile island acknowledges Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state but it is not part of the United Kingdom. The government in the capital city, Douglas, intends to make the island into the leading bitcoin center of the world.

platforms like «Bitpremier». This luxury portal, founded in 2013, even offers its customers their own island: Satoshi in Micronesia is for sale for just over 1,087 bitcoins (approximately 432,000 dollars).

## Developed like the Internet

Bitcoin was conceived in the middle of the 2008 financial crisis. When the developer, Satoshi Nakamoto, publicly announced the concept of a new virtual currency, it was dismissed as a crazy idea that would only appeal to tech geeks and crooks. Rather like the Internet, when it emerged a quarter of a century before. Who in the early 1990s could have imagined sending messages from one computer to another around the world within seconds? Nowadays, everybody carries a smartphone, uses free Wi-Fi and conducts banking transactions with a few swipes of their fingers. Nakamoto had developed a highly complex program that allowed him to generate bitcoins on a computer. This process, so-called mining, is growing more and more complex. The more bitcoins are «mined», the bigger the computer power required – until at last it becomes virtually impossible. Nakamoto determined that there would never be more than twenty-one million bitcoins in his system. Bitcoins can be transferred cheaply and anonymously from one computer to another. Abuses cannot be entirely excluded. The latest instance: The Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center in Los Angeles, hit by a ransomware attack, paid to regain its IT



Mysterious! For a long time the inventor of the bitcoin was considered to be a phantom. «Newsweek» claims to have unveiled the secret in early 2014, when the weekly identified Dorian Prentice Satoshi Nakamoto (below) as the creator of the Internet currency. Japanese-born Nakamoto has consistently denied this and even enlisted lawyers to fight these allegations. In late 2015 «Wired» and «Gizmodo» simultaneously announced having found the true bitcoin inventor: Australian Craig Wright (top), holder of several PhDs and university degrees, founder of several companies dealing in bitcoins. He claims to have had American computer expert Dave Kleiman present – who was in a wheelchair following a motorcycle accident – when bitcoin was launched. Kleiman died in 2013.

system in mid-February 2016; the ransom was 40 bitcoins, the equivalent of 15,000 euros. According to the Medical Center's director, Allen Stefanek, this was done «in the best interest of restoring normal operations» of their IT department.

## Bitcoin terminal in the province

The Internet currency has reached the center of the financial world, as well. In Frankfurt, London and New York major banks have formed a group called R3 to research how they might use the bitcoin software block chain for their purposes. The stock-exchange operators New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq are investing in bitcoin platforms, and the International Monetary Fund recently published a survey describing the bitcoin system as efficient. China's central bank is even striving to create its own Internet currency. Cashless payment transactions are the future. In Switzerland's province, in St. Gallen, there even is a bitcoin terminal installed by the Zug company Bitcoin Suisse AG. Ringier Africa in Kenya does not bet on bitcoins, but their customers' main method of payment is the cashless M-Pesa system. This allows customers to shop on the rupee.co.ke platform and pay directly via smartphone upon delivery.



## BITCOIN FACTS

- ▶ Bitcoins are digital coins that are transferred via the Internet – without using banks as relay stations
- ▶ To use bitcoins you need to install a «wallet» on your computer or smartphone
- ▶ A bitcoin limit is supposed to prevent the money multiplying randomly or depreciating in value
- ▶ At this time, one bitcoin is worth approximately 380 euros or 423 U.S. dollars
- ▶ Since eBay has shown an interest in bitcoin, the digital currency has grown considerably



# Cheek by jowl with Leo

He has just won an Oscar. In January, Leonardo DiCaprio visited Davos. He talked to the rich and powerful about the state of the world, was patted on the shoulder by US Vice President Joe Biden and demanded that crude oil remain in the ground.

Text: Peter Hossli

Leo is coming. This news electrified many people - especially members of our editorial team. Leonardo DiCaprio, 41, will travel to Davos to discuss the state of the world with the wealthy and mighty at the World Economic Forum. One of my female colleagues wants an autograph, while another suggests an interview. «Take a selfie,» one colleague suggests over lunch. «He is only coming to the WEF to launch his Oscar campaign,» the local cynic quips.

### Honoring his commitment

DiCaprio, who currently stars in the movie «The Revenant» as a trapper out for revenge in the American West, was to receive the Crystal Award in Davos - a prize Hilde Schwab annually bestows upon artists actively engaged in social issues. The award is a welcome excuse for the WEF to bring some glamour to Davos and the Landwasser valley. My assignment from Zurich is crystal clear: «Bring back something from Leo.»

It is a Tuesday evening in January, shortly after 6 p.m., at the Davos conference center. The WEF attendees in their elegant attire are seated in the big auditorium. The lights go out. Along one of the walls men with earpieces, broad shoulders and sunglasses are moving in. They are US Vice President Joe Biden's bodyguards. He is participating at the WEF.

Walking right behind them is Leo, his hair gelled back, his beard a few days old, his blue suit a perfect fit. Even dispassionate bankers pull out their cellphones to take pictures of the Hollywood star and tweet «Leo

is here!» What they're actually saying is: they are where Leo is.

But, what about Leo? He is acting like a politician, not a star, accepting the Crystal Award from Hilde Schwab's hands and stepping up to the rostrum. His sober and matter-of-fact speech galvanizes politicians and bankers alike. «We're fighting for the survival of our planet,» he says. The agreement at the Paris Convention on Climate Change in December 2015 was «an important first step», but now everybody would have to make an effort «to avert the crisis we face,» says the star of hit movies like «The Great Gatsby», «The Wolf of Wall Street» and «Blood Diamond». He singles out one industry for contempt: «We can simply not afford to allow the corporate greed of the coal, gas and oil industries to determine the future of humanity.» We must leave fossil fuels where they belong: «in the ground.»

The crowd's applause is tepid. Many of the people in this auditorium earn their living from the very industries that their screen idol is tearing down. Harmony is restored - as is so often the case - by art. American cellist Yo-Yo Ma, 60, gives a concert; in the front row Joe Biden and the Schwabs sit beside Leo. As soon as he last note has faded away, DiCaprio rises and claps wholeheartedly.

### Closer than the photographers

Almost simultaneously I get up from my own seat, not in order to applaud but to fulfill my assignment: Bring back something from Leo. I squeeze past other WEF guests until I reach the front row. Like a motionless fly on the wall I stand watching Leo



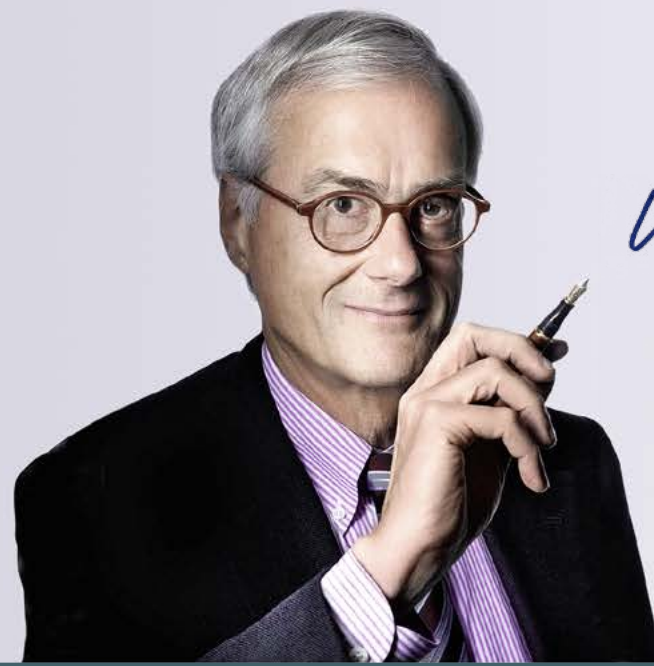
Up close and personal: At the Davos conference center our writer, Peter Hossli, suddenly found himself standing face to face with Hollywood and Washington D.C. - Leo DiCaprio and Joe Biden meeting for a serious conversation.

going to join Joe. Or is it Joe joining Leo? DiCaprio and Biden are standing right in front of me, their shining faces turned my way. Behind them, their bodyguards are lurking. I, however, get an unobstructed view of the pair. They chat for minutes, laughing, sometimes getting serious. Time and again the politician pats the actor's right shoulder, as would a father. Don't move, I tell myself, or one of the bodyguards will pounce. I pull out my iPhone, take pictures and film them. A photographer in the distance watches, champing at the bit. He's too far away to get the double head shot that everybody wants: DiCaprio with Biden.

The Schwabs invite everybody to an Italian buffet with prosciutto, Parmesan, risotto and tiramisu. DiCaprio und Biden have long vanished into the night. I send the pictures and videos to Zurich. Minutes later they're online. The following day the photograph hits the newspaper and an e-mail from Zurich comes in. It's from our switchboard operator. «I had a few callers this morning who did not want to e-mail but asked me to forward their questions.» She sums up their inquiries into one question. «All those VIPs talking about protecting the environment in Davos - did they drive up in electric cars?» Smart readers. Are the WEF's guests, who have to sit out endless traffic jams in Davos, just as smart? But what result did Leo's visit achieve? For him it was part of his Oscar campaign. As for the rest of us: «Whenever stars turn up at Davos, a new crisis is sure to follow,» a WEF regular warns. «When Angelina Jolie was there the next thing to come along was the financial crisis.»

Photo: Thomas Kierok/Laif





*Where is the journalism of outrage now?*

**R**oger Köppel is the owner and editor-in-chief of the Swiss weekly news magazine «Weltwoche». Last year, he was elected to the National Council as a representative of the right-wing conservative party SVP. He got more votes than any other politician before him. Apart from his admiration for SVP mastermind Christoph Blocher, Köppel also has kind words for the politics of Viktor Orban and Vladimir Putin, and for him, fallen FIFA boss Sepp Blatter is the Swiss Man of the Year. Thanks to his first editorial of this year we know even more: He also appreciates Hermann Göring, one of the ghastliest figures of the last century.

One lone sentence about a criminal nation, mountains of dead bodies and a continent bombed to bits is set off against several paragraphs of rather admiring and kind adjectives referring to Göring as a person. How did Swiss journalists react to this? Apart from one article in a local newspaper and a comment by a theater director in a Sunday paper, hardly anyone bothered to mention it.

Never mind that this is the heyday of the journalism of outrage. Hundreds of articles were pounded out when a juvenile delinquent received expensive special treatment including lessons in Thai boxing. When a politician from the Green party sent out nude selfies from his workplace, the guardians of Swiss democracy poured their outrage into more than a thousand articles. When the current President of the National Council allowed herself to be tricked by a lobbyist, this outstanding politician was caught up in a storm of journalistic disapproval.

But expressing nice sympathetic words about a Nazi; about the founder of the Gestapo; about the butcher of the opposition; about the man who shared responsibility for building the first concentration camps; what's that as compared to a picture of a politician's penis or 30,000 francs a month spent on a special treatment for a delinquent? Roger Köppel rationalizes this in his own editorial: «One must never underestimate the factor of incompetence in politics.» Apparently the same goes for journalism.

P.S. A few years ago one of our editors-in-chief wrote some overly friendly lines about a probable war criminal. The result, he was fired posthaste.

*Michael Ringier*

# Employee questions



Please send your questions to:  
**domo@ringier.com**



Leonard Stiegeler,  
General Manager  
Ringier Africa

«Our goal in Africa is to secure continuous growth and long-term market leadership.»



Edi Estermann,  
Chief Communications  
Officer Ringier AG

«The personal, direct exchange between Ringier management people from all over the world is important to us.»



Alexandra Delvenakiotis,  
Head of Corporate  
Communications  
Ringier Axel Springer  
Media AG and Director  
Digital Media Campus

«The first training course will start in March and end in September 2016.»



Florent de Rocca-Serra,  
General Manager  
Ringier Asia Pacific

« This year, we will continue our ongoing digital efforts.»

**«Ringier Africa has reorganized its management as per 2016. What will change – and what are the challenges this division currently faces?»**

Ringier spent the first few years learning to understand the African markets and the opportunities this continent presents. Subsequently, our focus shifted to those topics and countries that offer the biggest potential. With more than 250 employees on the continent our current goal is to turn this focus consistently into continuous growth and securing our market leadership in the long term in the strategic as well as all digital business units. The appointments of Jessica List as CFO Ringier Africa and Jessica Stiles as CMO Ringier Africa/Asia as well as establishing teams of experts in each of our business areas – including business, marketing and technology managers – will allow us to propagate «best practices» throughout Africa. Our advantage is that we are focused on businesses in which Ringier has already acquired a lot of experience and know-how: digital content, marketplace and e-commerce platforms attract millions of visitors in five markets and the digital marketing service helps many companies to appeal to the African target audience.

**The next Ringier Management Conference will take place in Zurich from May 9th to May 11th. What's on the agenda? Who will be able to attend?**

As in previous years, there will be a conference for Ringier's international top-level management this year. The main reason for this is that the three-day format of the past conferences proved to be such a good experience. In addition, in this fast-changing world of media, we want an intense exchange of views on our own experiences and exciting cases, both in-house and outside. The motto of this year's conference is «(How To) Drive Change» – so it's about change, its diverse characteristics and challenges. We've managed to secure first-rate and interesting speakers, who will actively involve the participants in the discussions. An attractive and densely packed program is guaranteed. It is essential that all the international management people who are travelling here from all of Ringier's countries get plenty of time for individual and personal exchanges. The invitation list, which we put together with a view to each of the conference topics, is therefore deliberately restricted to approximately 120 people.

**There is a new institution, the Digital Media Campus of Ringier Axel Springer Media AG – what is it and who is it meant for?**

The Digital Media Campus is an in-service scheme for further training designed for young journalists from every unit and market of Ringier Axel Springer Media AG in Eastern Europe. Ringier Axel Springer Media aims to train young journalists in every area of contemporary and digital editorial work through the Digital Media Campus. Renowned coaches and journalists will teach small groups of no more than 30 gifted journalists per country in intensive courses. Regarding content, the courses offer training in the techniques of investigating and writing, page design, social media, producing videos and mobile content, as well as media law and ethics. The first training course will start in March and end in September 2016. The two-day international module, which is planned for June 2016, will also be open to a small group of young Swiss journalists from Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland AG. Requirements for attendance will be communicated in due course.

**«Ringier Asia Pacific has reorganized its management as per 2016: What is different or new – and what are the challenges at this time?»**

In 2015, our main priority has been restructuring our portfolio to focus our efforts on our core business, in line with our group expertise, to facilitate support and synergies. By adopting a digital-first approach we have started modernizing our operations by accelerating the digitization of our print assets into leading digital platforms. As technology has become such an important part of our business, it is crucial that as an international media company we manage to internalize these new competencies, while at the same time structuring ourselves to redistribute them better. This year, we will continue our ongoing digital efforts while leveraging the group's technological development and expertise. Access to great technology coupled with strong local execution will fuel the future expansion of Ringier Asia Pacific.



# A shutterbug on the go

He has been shooting photos for «Blick» for 25 years: **Philippe Rossier**. Whether the subjects are VIPs like Prince Charles or the Dalai Lama, a tragedy like the mass suicide of the Order of the Solar Temple or the trial against Swiss serial killer Werner Ferrari – this motorbike aficionado always arrives on the scene in time to get the picture.

Photos: Geri Born; private

**P**hilippe Rossier, 51, has always loved speed and adventure. Growing up in Lausanne, he was in a hurry to leave school behind him. «I flunked out of school, or rather, I chose to drop out.» Studying was not his cup of tea, but he followed one piece of advice from his mother: «Learn German while you're still young.» After a commercial apprenticeship he decided to go to the German-speaking part of Switzerland. But which city should it be? Solothurn? Too close for his taste. Chur? Too far away. Zurich – perfect. His first wages often went towards paying off speeding tickets. A motorbike fan, he often drove too fast. At lunch-time he would escape from the office, take his bike and ride it over the Albis Pass near Zurich. Chatting with another biker at a red light caused Rossier's professional career to take a different turn. His new acquaintance with a press photographer led him to become a messenger, taking films from the St. Moritz bobsleigh races to the lab in Zurich as quickly as possible. «I did it in record time.» Exactly how he did it, Ros-



**Ready for his next assignment: Philippe Rossier at Ringier headquarters in Zurich. In the background: snow-covered Uetliberg mountain.**

si likes to keep to himself. One day, when a sports photographer didn't show up, someone slung a camera around Rossi's neck. He was to help a colleague take pictures of a soccer game. Rossier was quick: He got two goals on film.

He was freelancing for the Roman-dy daily «Le Matin» in 1991 when he was told by a colleague at the Ringier restaurant «Inside» that there was an opening for a photographer. Rossier ran upstairs to the «Blick» desk shouting: «I'm your man!» His first pictures for «Blick» were published on June 4th with an article under the heading: «Working in a vertical shaft: Family father falls and drowns in ground water.» Since that day Rossier has submitted countless pictures to the daily. Recently he visited Chernobyl, and he was in Paris after the attack on Charlie Hebdo. Once he even took current Ringier CEO Marc Walder along on the back seat of his bike and raced to cover the «Affoltern inferno» after a train exploded in a train station in a suburb of Zurich. He has also been making videos and 360-degree panoramic photographs for quite some time. Rossier still is quite fast, but as a father of two sons he has calmed down a bit. Asked what he considers his best picture, he quips: «The one I'll shoot tomorrow.» **RH**



## Editor's Choice

by Marc Walder

Are you familiar with these titles? Marc Walder tells you which books he's reading and why they fascinate him.

Grant McCracken

### CHIEF CULTURE OFFICER

Nowadays markets and brands tend to cater to desires rather than needs.

For companies, understanding the whys and the wherefores of these desires as soon as possible is a matter of survival. Grant McCracken convincingly lays out his argument that an enterprise can only attain success in the market by remaining agile to quickly respond to trends and fashions. With this in mind, McCracken invites us to make an addition to the roster of Chief Officers, that of the CCO – the Chief Culture Officer. The CCO needs to be on the lookout for upcoming trends while simultaneously having a clear sense of contemporary culture. In addition, the CCO must possess empathy, an analytical mind and an enduring sense of curiosity – and be ready to admit to cluelessness as well as have the courage to ask naïve questions. While nobody can profess to expertise in that, without cultural expertise businesses will not be viable in the future.

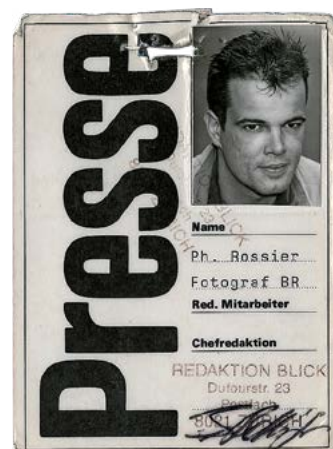
ISBN: 978-0-465-02204-5  
Publisher: The Perseus Books Group

Bertrand Piccard

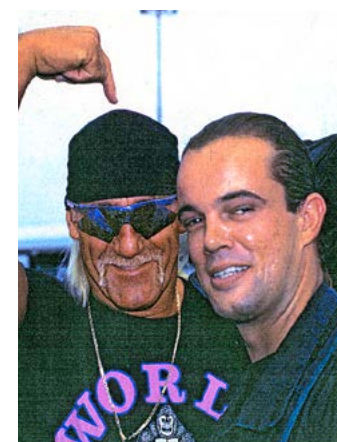
### DIE RICHTIGE FLUGHÖHE / (CHANGING ALTITUDE)

(In French and German only)  
With his circumnavigation of the world in a balloon and numerous other aerial experiments Bertrand Piccard was an inspiration to everyone. In this book he draws a fascinating connecting line from flying and his work as a psychiatrist to big issues like the meaning of life, handling crises and death. After all, life has a lot in common with ballooning: In order to change altitude, you need to get rid of excess ballast and sometimes be ready to let go of the controls. The adventure of life begins where control ends.

ISBN: 978-3-492-05701-1  
Publisher: Piper



**Short hair, long hair. «Blick» was not the only thing to change in twenty-five years. So did photo reporter Philippe Rossier. His first press card; the first selfie while rock-climbing; with wrestling legend Hulk Hogan.**



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