

### [ THE FAMOUS WHO CLAIM US ]



#### GEORGE CLOONEY

### Would you buy life insurance from this man?

**S**ure! And maybe the Brooklyn Bridge and an outdoor ice sculpture in Saudi Arabia! Still, megastar George Clooney once told Larry King that he was a “horrible insurance salesman.” His micro-career in the field happened just before his big break on “ER,” as he was auditioning and hustling acting jobs in L.A.

After not quite making it at the Cincinnati Reds’ tryout, Clooney left his native Kentucky when his cousin Miguel Ferrer, son of his aunt, the late singer Rosemary Clooney, got him a small film role. Clooney drove to Tinseltown in his battered ’76 Monte Carlo with \$300 in his pocket. He bunked in a friend’s walk-in closet, worked construction, drew caricatures in malls, and sold lemonade from a stall.

More in tune with his real talents, he also sold insurance door to door. But why did he think himself bad at it? “The selling part I could do,” he told King, “but then they (the insurance company) wanted you to always tack on a little something extra. We’d take it from a whole life insurance to term life insurance and put some money away in an annuity for them or in an IRA. And then maybe you could use a little other insurance as well. And I couldn’t do that because you felt like you were pulling their leg.”

A useful principle for later days when Clooney sought funding to produce “Michael Clayton,” a film about a lawyer who gets uncomfortable while working for corporate clients. Ordinarily that would be a hard one to pitch, but, said the film’s director Tony Gilroy on opening night, “He’s George Clooney!...He was the security blanket for this film all the way through. He was the insurance policy.” Said Clooney: “That’s me. An insurance policy.”

Yeah, we’ll buy that.

—Louise Lague