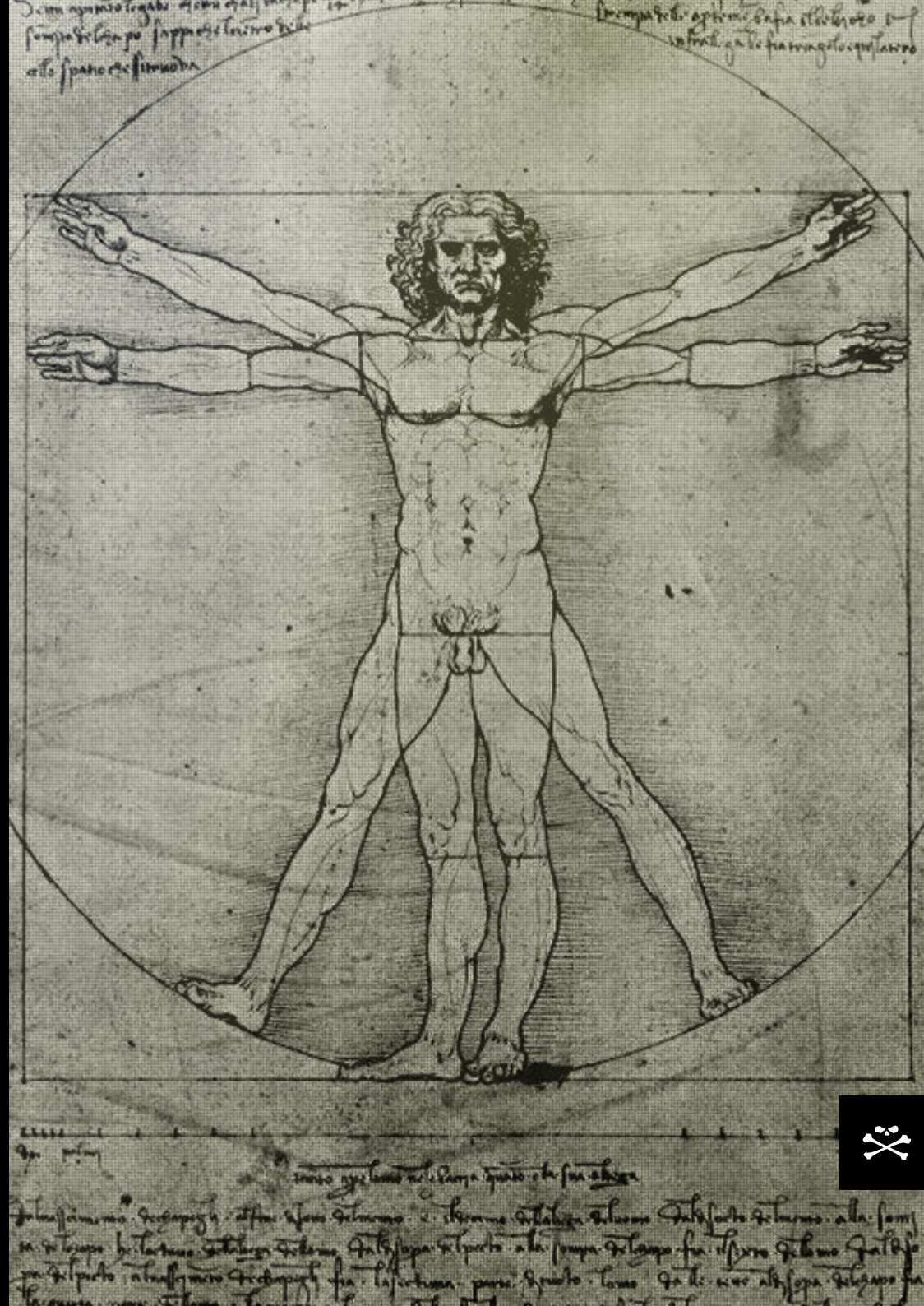


EXCELLENCE IN ALL THINGS

"In front of excellence," said the ancient Greek poet Hesiod, "the immortal Gods have put sweat, and long and steep is the way to it." Anyone who has ever striven to make something of excellence will understand the truth of these words. The highest achievements begin with excellence of thought and concept, are followed by excellence in planning and execution, and lastly are remembered for their excellence of effect. Excellence is the standard that will protect you and your brand from all competitors, immunise you against recession, and allow you to personally and professionally profit.



TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

“And it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.” Integrity in business is surprisingly uncommon. If you’ve ever worked for any large organisation this news will not surprise you. There are always the climbers, the graspers, the fawners, the egotists. There is only one defence against these people, and that is to speak and act clearly and honestly at every opportunity. If a thing is wrong, say that it is wrong. Don’t surrender to expediency. Be authentic. You may be condemned by some, but you will also be loved and admired by many. “Most people are other people,” said Oscar Wilde. “Their thoughts are someone else’s opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.” Find your own voice - and then use it.



CHART YOUR COURSE

No competent Captain heads to sea without first charting their course, and if they did you would hardly want to sail with them. Because nine times out of ten, you will end up in the middle of nowhere. Know your destination, plan your route, and have a clear idea of what success will look and feel like when you get there. Nothing helps more with keeping morale and motivation high among your fellow travelers than a clear vision for where you are headed. Know who is in charge of what, when it is to be done by, and hold them accountable for it. This will prevent you from drifting, or worse - becoming moribund or becalmed.



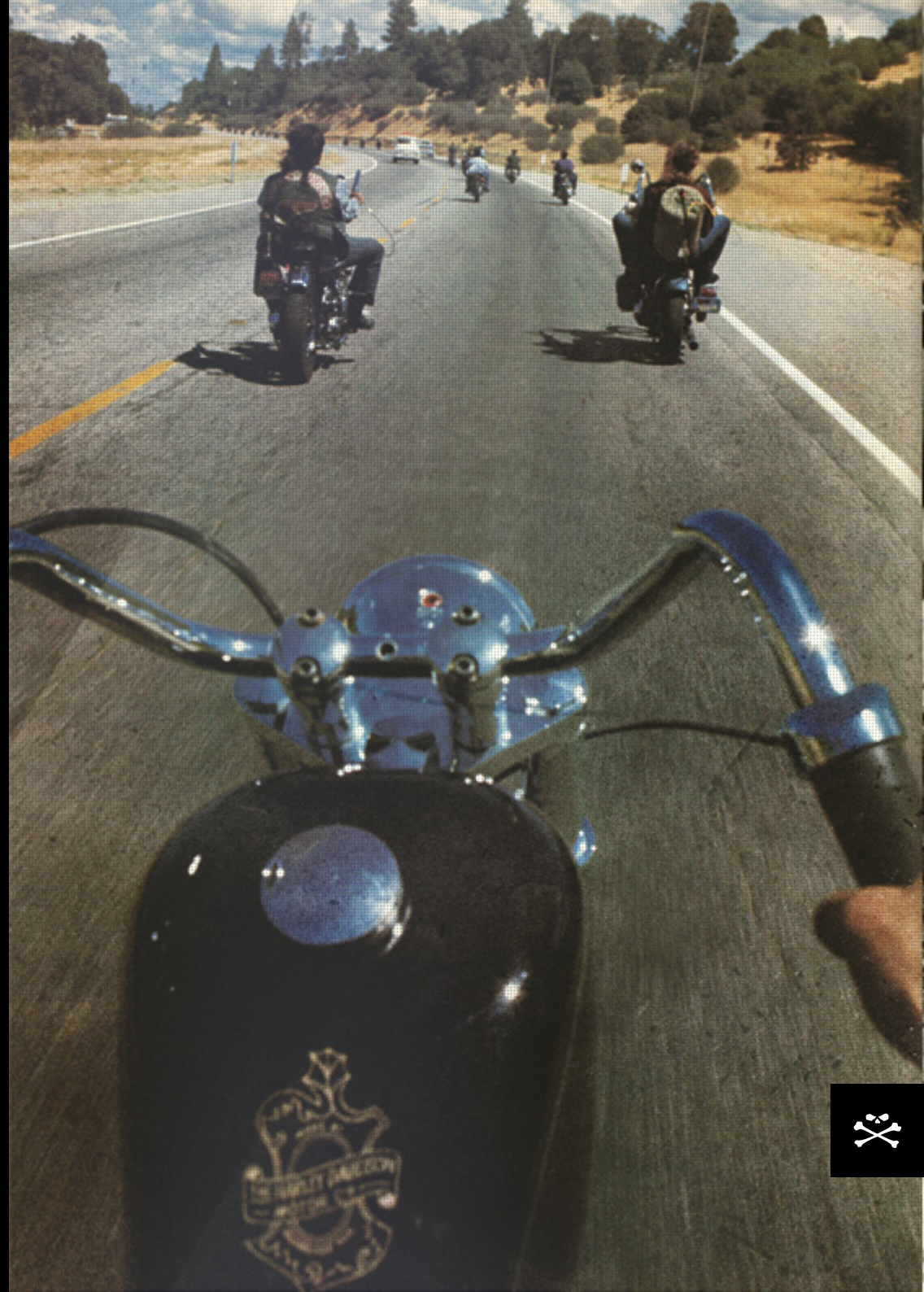
FIGHT FOR YOUR IDEAS

F. Scott Fitzgerald, in writing the Great Gatsby, filled an entire wall with rejection letters from potential publishers. Francis Ford Coppola almost lost everything making Apocalypse Now. The Beatles were told bands with guitars were on the way out. Did it stop them? All of history shows us that ideas that are profound or brilliant or disruptive must be vigorously fought for in order to survive. Become a champion of ideas, a fighter for free thinking, and a warrior for great work. Always strive towards originality and defend it when you find it. After all, you may only find it once or twice in your lifetime. Wouldn't you rather your name went down in history as the person that stood up for it?



THERE'S PLEASURE IN THE JOURNEY

Not everything has to be about the final destination. There is dignity, honour and enormous happiness that can be taken from the journey as well. The concepts of camaraderie and esprit de corps are critical to an enjoyable career. Try and work with good people, because the chances are you'll end up spending more time with them than your own family or friends. You'll know who they are because you'll probably spend a lot of time laughing together. If you start hating your work, then it's time for a new journey.



ATTACK THE ORTHODOXY

At its heart, the SKULL AND BONES is a metaphor for attacking orthodox thinking. It means work faster, better, and cleverer than the competition. Seek to achieve your results with ruthless efficiency and speed. Entertain a world view that recognises the importance of the misfitted and the disaffected, because they will challenge your thinking and help you to identify new opportunities more clearly. Constantly search for better ways of creating effect. As Martin Luther King said, "Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted." After all, if the orthodoxy is so great, then why isn't everything perfect?



TO EVERY MAN THEIR SHARE

And to every woman, or anyone else as the case may be. Some clients appear to almost resent their suppliers making a profit on their business. Yet they are mostly in business for the very same reason. Business is only fun when it's turning a profit, as anyone who's owned a losing proposition can tell you. This is not a prescription for unbridled greed, but an exhortation to make your budgets clear, and express them transparently. Because without profit, there can be no advancement of thought, of people, or brand. Clearly we want our clients to be profitable too, and that is why we work so hard for them. Then they can pay us more.



PICK YOUR BATTLES

Sometimes it's better to just keep your powder dry. Even amongst the constant endeavour for excellence, not everything is worth getting upset about. Some jobs just need to be turned around. In our experience, clients appreciate a genuinely helpful supplier. It also means they're more likely to listen the next time when we suggest there's a better and more intelligent way to do it. And let's face it - working with whiners is a battle all of its own.



NEVER DELEGATE COMMAND

The sense of this statement should be immediately apparent. While it's preferable that a leader's style is inclusive and not dictatorial, ultimately someone has to be empowered to make decisions and then answer for them. Many large organisations in particular are often paralysed by their inability to make, and then effect, decisions. Guard against political fiefdoms, as they invariably hinder rather than help the realisation of an organisation's vision. "Leadership is action, not position," said Donald McGannon, one of the fathers of modern broadcasting. Earn the mandate of your people - and then wield it.



LOYALTY ABOVE ALL

It might sound strange, coming as it does out of the mouths of pirates. But loyalty to us is made up of the four principles of trust, honesty, care and service. These are ideals that all organisations can benefit from. In the BONES we hold them true to our clients, our ideas, and each other. Loyalty is the faith in proper recognition for outstanding service. It's the freedom to express dissent without worry of repercussion. It's the personal kindnesses towards people that make life worth living and dignify our souls. And it's the honour of an ideal, of a higher and better way. Show it and demand it in turn, because it is the foundation stone upon which great things are built.





SKULL AND BONES
— FOR GOLD AND RUM —