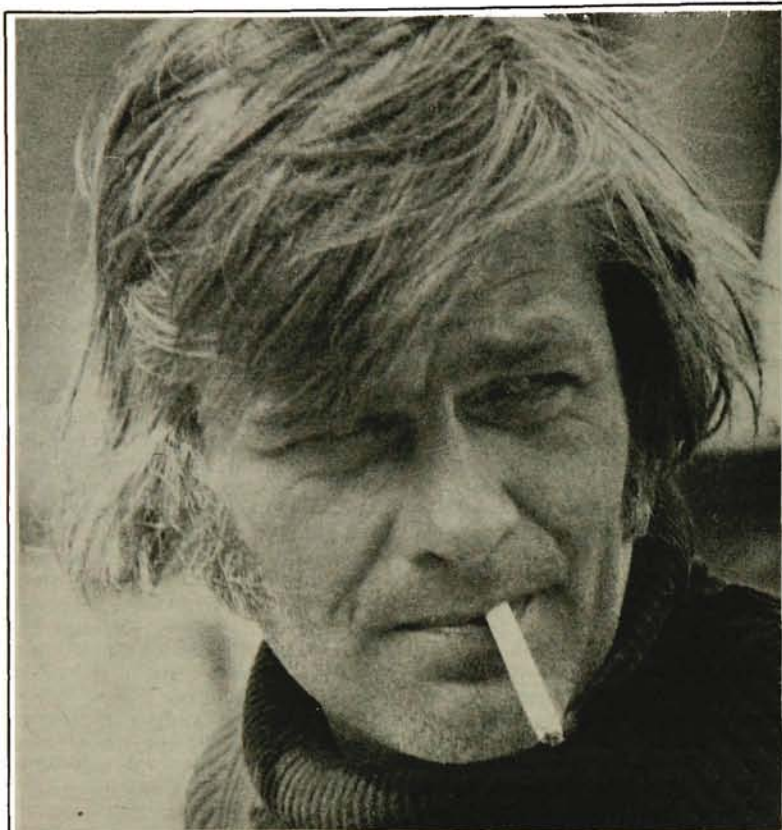


Peter Carter

1933-1982



What follows is a special tribute to Peter Carter prepared by his many friends. It is fitting I should be asked to write this introduction in my role as President of the Directors Guild of Canada, an organization Peter long supported and whose policies he from time to time shaped.

Peter and I worked together many times on television projects or shared committee duties for the Guild. His other friends will detail his personal graces and attest to his many talents. For my part and on behalf of his Guild I would like to say if you would know what we mean when we try to communicate to others what is contained in the complex accolade "Filmmaker", what we mean is Peter Carter.

Lew Lehman ●

It was with shock and consternation that his friends greeted the news of Peter Carter's death in June. He passed away in Los Angeles, having suffered a massive heart attack. Below, many of them remember "P.C.". The Directors Guild of Canada has established a trust fund in his memory, and those who wish to honor Carter are urged to contact the Guild.

Seventy-eight episodes in two years in the can and then on to the *Seaway*.

Only the most dedicated crew and talent could have survived. Thirty grueling one-hour productions, humping on ships tossed about from the Lakehead to the Saguenay. Who can ever forget P.C. overcoming a dock strike in Montreal on our first production, or freezing this butt off holding production together in fog, sleet, snow and bauxite, always nursing along everyone and everything from bruised egos and hangovers to panic in the St. Lawrence. Once again I was most fortunate to be supported by the very best talent and production skills ever brought together on a series—but knowing Peter was "on board" just made it seem easier and the massive production load lighter. He truly was a "mate" in the most positive way, and the list of producers, directors, camera, crew and artists whose careers were advanced by his knowledge and assistance reads like the "Who's Who of the Canadian Film Industry."

Although in later years our careers went down separate paths, there was

never a time I couldn't call on him for advice or help. He was a loyal friend, always there, generous to a fault with his time and support. He always said "You can do it LUV."

I overheard someone ask after he died, "What did he accomplish?" For those of us who worked with him, he left a legacy of professionalism and dedication to the film industry second to none. His ability to solve problems was not just confined to film production—he solved some major ones in his personal life as well. Because his films came in on time and on budget, his creativity was not always challenged or appreciated, but a retrospective of his prodigious work will most assuredly convince the most cynical about his enormous talent. It was snuffed out too soon.

Peter Carter loved life and people and left something special to everyone whose life he touched. He was an original whose mold may not be cast again.

We'll miss you, P.C. You were a LUV!

Maxine Samuels ●

Donald Carter, Peter Carter's father, moved to Canada in 1954 with his family to become head of production at Crawley Films Limited.

At the age of 29 Peter joined the production staff at Crawley's and for a three-year period worked on many documentary productions for such diverse sponsors as Seagrams, Molsons, McGraw Hill, Province of Saskatchewan, Imperial Oil, etc.

Peter came by his bent for film honestly, since Donald Carter had for years played a senior production role with the Rank Organization under John Davis.

In 1957-58 our 39 film series *R.C.M.P.* was going at full speed, and Carter showed his worth on the *R.C.M.P.* set as probably the best assistant director I have ever known.

The *R.C.M.P.* joint venture—Crawley/CBC/BBC—resulted in 39 half-hour documentaries (based upon *R.C.M.P.* files) which received wide distribution not only in England and Canada, but in the U.S.A. (NBC) and in Europe.

Peter teamed with special effects expert Eddie Fowlie (*Bridge on the River Kwai*), D.O.P. Stanley Brede, Producer Bernie Girard (Playhouse 90) and art director Harry Horner (*Separate Tables*, *They Shoot Horses*) to bring in the 39 film series under a total budget of \$1,365,000—\$35,000 per film!

As first A.D. Peter would stalk on set with his heavy cane (purely a prop) and at the top of his voice whip crew and cast on camera almost before the director could say "roll it." Despite his stentorian tones Peter was always good natured; liked and respected by cast and crew alike.

The cast in those days included names to become household words in Canada—Frannie Hyland, John Drainie, Don Francks, Gilles Pelletier, Murray Westgate, Martha Henry, Millie Hall, Bruno Gerussi, Larry Zahab (Dane), Jack Creley, Barbara Hamilton, and so on.

In addition to his duties on set, Peter had to deal with Indians from Maniwaki, props and make-up, and the maintenance of a team of huskies for almost a full year. Incidentally, it was in connection with the dog team and especially her own pet setter that Peter had to do with Betty Kennedy of Front Page Challenge fame.

Canoes and ice blocks in rapids, wolves and bear cubs, Eskimos at Great Whale on Hudson Bay; Carter took everything in his stride.

Young Carter learned much from R.C.M.P. to undergo his later directorial career first in Canada (*The Rowdyman*) and later based in Los Angeles in such epics as *A Man Called Intrepid*.

However, that story is for others to tell.

Peter Carter and his talented wife Linda Gersonson are friends and associates I shall always remember with respect and affection.

Budge Crawley ●

You didn't just meet Peter Carter – you experienced him, which is exactly what I did in the late '50s. Peter was working as a First Assistant Director for Crawley Films on the R.C.M.P. Series. I was an aspiring young actor, having signed on as a stand-in/double for one of the stars of the series. My immediate impression of Peter was that of a rambunctious, wide-eyed, Cockney leprechaun who gave new meaning to the word "energy". I believe we liked each other instantly.

He was supportive of me, then, when I made my debut as a full-fledged actor, as he was much later when I became a producer, and we embarked as partners in two motion picture ventures – *The Rowdyman* and *Rituals* – his first and second feature films as a director.

Most knew P.C. professionally. Many knew him personally. Few, I am sure, knew him intimately. He was in many ways a private person. If you cared enough to know him, you may have observed his tendency to 'take to' and become friendly with obviously sensitive types or outrageous and colourful characters – I think, somewhat, a reflection of himself.

Film was so much his life, I think it only appropriate somehow to reflect on him in screen images:

Scene One: CORRIDOR – HOLIDAY INN – CORNERBROOK, NEWFOUNDLAND

Peter standing outside of Gordon Pinsent's room, mischievously directing the after-hours recreational activities of THE ROWDYMAN crew as they brace Gordon's door closed with a two-by-four and rope – securing Gordon inside for the rest of the evening.

Scene two: RITUALS PRODUCTION OFFICE – TORONTO, ONTARIO

Peter and I sitting quietly, tears welling up in our eyes, coming to grips with the fact that we had to postpone the production of RITUALS in 1975.

Scene Three: DESOLATE AREA – OUTSIDE OF WAWA, ONTARIO

Peter scouting locations. He steps over a hill, and there it is – A DISUSED DAM – with water roaring through a gaping hole in the centre of the cement holding wall. The generator house – worn by time! It was as though an Art Director had created it exactly to Peter's specifications. The look on his face – a boyish glow, as if discovering a new toy.

Scene Four: NORTH WOODS – BATHAWANA BAY, ONTARIO

Peter trudging through the North Woods, setting up shots for the movie RITUALS! Then he haphazardly wades into a rushing river – showing the actors that if he could do it, they could.

Scene Five: PETER – AT HOME – KITCHEN

The only other place that gave him as much comfort as a movie set – indulging in his favourite therapeutic activity – cooking up his gourmet delights, often enjoyed by me.

And on... and on...

I know of no other director in this

country whose background and history in this business was so varied and rich with experience. He took great pride in being a "pro" – something ingrained in him over the years. His respect for the protocol of picture-making (i.e. his regard for the producer's function, the 1st A.D., the production manager, et al) and his commitment and faithful adherence to a budget and schedule was something to be admired and emulated. He was, for many novice directors, a definite and worthwhile part of their education.

I witnessed his growth over the years as a director, and it saddens me that his thrust to the greater heights I know he was capable of is no longer on his "shooting schedule". Maybe that's enough.

Lawrence Dane ●

I remember the first time I saw Peter. It was in the spring of 1963 and I had just left Young & Rubicam Advertising to go and work on this wonderful, mystical thing called a television series. I was in an office at 11 Yorkville and Maxine Samuels kept telling me about this incredible, knowledgeable, brilliant person coming from England. She talked so much about him that I thought I was going to meet a giant. And I did... but I didn't know it at first. Because P.C. didn't much like me... he didn't want me there, and I didn't know why.

The 'why' was easy. He had been told they had an experienced production secretary for him to work with and what they really had was this very green girl from the world of one-minute wonders. But we sorted all of that out very quickly. I told him I wanted to learn; and I couldn't have had a better teacher. P.C. knew it all. He had already been there and was eager to pass on all he had learned.

I think the thing that impressed me most at the time was that Peter allowed you to make mistakes... once! I was like the blank page in a book and he wrote on it. And he gave me a sense of worth and value and confidence. Confidence to the point that one day we stood in an office and screamed at each other. I was right...no, he was right, and we were both positive. Then he stopped yelling (and waving that famous stick he used to use) and said to me "you must be right, I taught you."

Well, P.C. did teach me. Not only about this crazed business we are in, but also about being a human being. A person who believes in what they are doing and always gives it the best shot they know how. I have so many vivid and marvellous pictures of Peter in my mind, and I can hear his voice. That unique, silly accent that he never lost and, more than that, which became a part of our own lives and vocabularies. I was fortunate to be a small part of his life and I will always cherish the names he gave me. To P.C. I was either Miss Haggard, or Auntie Karen, or Lady K. And I understood where each name came from and they made me special.

That was one of the things about Peter. He made all of us special. Because he was. And he shared himself so much. Knowing him made me better, and made me happy. I have a friend who wrote a song about his own father, but the words also seem to be for P.C. "His heart was as big as an old cook stove, and his feet were on the fly; And when he laughed I swear the sun never left the sky." Peter's sun will never leave the sky. A year ago Christmas I gave him a star. A

spot in the firmament that will always now be known as "P.C., Peter Carter". I'm not exactly sure where it is, but it will be easy to find. Just go out and look up. It's the bright one.

Karen Hazzard ●

Lyrics from: "Gypsy, Play My Song" used by permission of Ron Nigrini.

He was my first director and like all firsts he was unforgettable. I worked with him on three other films over the years. Those were official projects. Ones I got paid for. But there were other projects that fevered our imaginations for a while and then, for one reason or another, faded.

He loved to talk and argue and scheme and plot. But most of all, and this is what I will most remember him for, he loved to laugh. He had a zany, dry wit that bubbled with some of the most hilarious insights into some of the most arcane knowledge known to man. He was a wonderful story teller and it didn't matter if the story was based on a lot of truth, a little truth or just a grain of it, he had an intellectual generosity and the stories always had some meaning, some reason for being told. He loved to instruct and explain, and there was never any pomposity in his telling of things. He loved to explore and find out, to get to the bottom of things and his films were always sprinkled with truths and perceptions he uncovered as he moved through life.

He had a good life and it came through in his work and the way he treated his fellow man and they, in kind, treated him. When he lived here, his home was always filled with people, good cheer and good conversation. It was the same when he moved to California. His home was always open to his old friends.

He had a simple, uncomplicated courage that allowed him to deal with adversity straight on, and right away. He got things done, and always did what he said he would do because inside there was a tenacity and a real joy at being able to do things and make things happen. That is the trademark of any good director. But also what was wonderful was the way he transmitted this passion for doing things, surrounding those who worked with him in his cloak of confidence that made the impossible seem possible.

He lived hard, perhaps too hard sometimes, but well, and even in the bad times he had a rock-hard streak of decency that was bound to make many friends (and a few enemies). He moved through life demanding much of it, but giving much in return. Leaving himself open to its possibilities and wonder; and if in the end sometimes he didn't quite pull it off, he at least, by god, gave it one hell of a run for the money.

Ian Sutherland ●

It probably says something about our film history, but I wasn't sure we had one til Peter passed away.

I can't help feeling that when he went by, at least half the character of the film industry went with him. Talk about raw talent! To work with him or for him was to be strapped to a rocket which only he knew how to start and stop.

My very first sight of the man was one that I shall never forget. He was standing far enough off to be featureless – except that he was waving a stick – all alone,

and executing what I thought to be a remarkable imitation of a great bird. The sound that came from him shook other birds from trees and changed the course of planes. It sounded something like: "FAWWWWWK!" I later discovered that he used this to put films back on schedule.

There were two Peters at the very least. If you hadn't bothered to understand the outer one, then the inner one wasn't any of your business.

I think Peter had struggles within that even he did not have names for – but they were not small fights, if one knew the man at all. Each public advancement, for example, cost him a private wrench. Things were required of Peter that were not natural, that threatened his honesty in ways that were uncomfortable to watch.

As far as work was concerned... When you arrived at one of his sets – say on a cold autumn a.m. miles away in the country – you had better be filled with the same gas that that man had, but touching a chord in him at a rare defenseless moment, with a bit of acting that worked, was striking gold. Being the organization that was Peter Carter, one was not likely to surprise the man – but if one did, that wildflower opened up and it was rare to remember. I thank him for *Rowdyman*. He moved it like a flatcar, and we moved with it. The memory of that six-week burst of sunshine comes in handy during less productive and aimless times. Will Cole would say that he was 'Lovely, tell your mother!'

Again, when times are slow and I'm falling a bit out of love with the work, and it's all a bit of a "shambles," I'll think of Peter the man – tough as a walking bent nail – and feel like working again. Because the industry is a fact. With a bit of time and Peter's stick, we'll do 'er. Thank you mate!

Gordon Pinsent ●

I met P.C. on my first episodic film directing job – on Budge Crawley's R.C.M.P. series in the late '50s. P.C. was the first A.D., and we became instant friends. I so admired his intense energy and drive, coupled with his tremendous love for what he was doing, and a rather dare-devil attitude toward both his work and his life. He shared his cabin in the Gatineau, where I often stayed, with his stunning French-Canadian wife, Denise, and two runny-nosed, energetic baby girls – who have since become attractive young women.

In London, I used to drink with Peter at his favorite pub on Wardour St., the Intrepid Fox. Wherever he went everyone in film knew Peter – especially the girls. He was, at the time, often likened to James Dean, though in an competition for looks Peter would win hands down – his clear blue eyes, burning intensity, lightning-fast agility, shock of brown hair made him irresistible, though he was always very faithful to his mate. He had a large, ground floor apartment with Denise and the kids, and never stopped working; but somehow, I felt he longed to return to Canada.

The chance came when Maxine Samuels started her first series, *The Forest Rangers*. I suggested she call Peter. Even at that time, he was the best in the business. She did, and back he came. I would almost say it was Peter

Paul Almond ●

(cont. on p. 30)

that is never very far from the genesis of the conflict and the consciousness of those who struggle with it at their own pace in their own way.

At its best, Harvey Crossland's *Somewhere Between* begins to evoke this kind of synthesis. Sponsored by the Professional Native Women's Association with additional support from The Legal Services Society, The Secretary of State and the National Film Board, the film is an attack on the injustice of robbing native women of their Indian status for having married non-Indians. The argument is made largely through a series of interviews with native women who have been victimized by the legislation.

Like *Treaty 8 Country*, *Somewhere Between* is a lesson in watching and listening. The women's stories of arbitrary loss and separation are superb oral history. None of the women interviewed asks for our sympathy. Yet all of them earn it through their forthright renditions of the sexist bureaucratic nightmare that has plagued their lives.

The women's stories demolish the credibility of the few voices who speak for the status quo. But they also make pale the stock parliamentary footage of sympathetic M.P.'s raising the issue in the abstract. Indeed, the film's major shortcoming is its inability to clarify the current struggle in the context of the testimony presented. What are missing here are the smart lawyers and eloquent lobbyists who might be able to bridge the oral testimony and the bland, if sympathetic, parliamentary addresses. The film needs someone like the native lawyer in *Treaty 8 Country*, someone who can speak both languages.

It is just this question of speaking two languages that is examined in *Magic in the Sky*, an ambitious film by Peter Raymont. *Magic in the Sky* takes us from a eulogized image of Marshall McLuhan to the world's most isolated television station in its attempt to describe the genesis of native run northern television. Unlike the other two films, there is little in Raymont's production that forces us to observe or listen with a native sensitivity. Instead, the complex considerations presented here are brought to us with the fury of a mid-60's



● Inuit TV producers Mike Angalik (in headphones) and John Aulutjut (with videocamera)

media happening. At one point, Raymont's crew is filming an Inuit crew filming the filming of a network soap opera. At other moments, we are being given television-speed capsule descriptions of the nature of the medium, white/Inuit interface and the workings of communications satellites.

Understandably, the horde of information Raymont wishes to place before us represents 100 years' work for a native storyteller or a non-native filmmaker working to emulate his pace. Nevertheless, the many charming moments found in this film disappear far too quickly. A polar village debating the issues surrounding cultural interface, the relationships between Inuit student broadcasters and their white "trainers" and the interactions between CBC Headquarters and its most distant affiliate are more than sufficient subjects for individual films.

As is, the most promising moment of *Magic in the Sky* is its conclusion. Here, a slightly disoriented Francis Fox surrenders a tiny bit of broadcast time to some hunters and a former furnace

Erratum. Inadvertently, John Harkness's name was omitted from the film review of "Paradise" in issue No. 85. Our apologies to the author. Ed.

repairman, the staff of the new television network. Raymont's images assure us that the Inuit will carve up their freshly caught medium with political acuity and a sense of purpose - all in a manner that non-natives will never really understand.

Seth Feldman ●

MAGIC IN THE SKY d. sc. Peter Raymont d.o.p. Ian Elkin, Martin Duckworth ad. rec. Leon Johnson, Aerlyn Weissman, Claude Beaugrand ed. Michael Fuller asst. to p., research d. Nancy Worsfold initial research Marien Lewis, Beverley Straight camera asst. Frank Raven, Catherine Dorsey ad. ed. Bernie Bordeleau, Anne Whiteside re-rec. Jean-Pierre Joutel unit ad. Louise Clark narr. Michael Kane research consultant Kenneth G. O'Bryan Ph.D. p. Arthur Hammond, Peter Raymont assoc. p. Ted Riley p.c. : Investigative Productions/The National Film Board of Canada running time : 57 min., colour, 16mm. dist. N.F.B.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN d./ed. Harvey J. Crossland sc. Ric Beairsto/Crossland a.d. Beairsto cam. Paul Lieske/Beairsto ad. rec. Peg Campbell mus. Ken Hemmerick exec. p. Ric Beairsto, Peg Campbell, Harvey J. Crossland in association with Joy Hall p. Harvey J. Crossland p.c. Hy Perspectives Media Group running time : 50 min., b&w/colour, 16mm.

TREATY 8 COUNTRY d. Anne Cubitt, Hugh Brody cam. Jim Bizzocchi ed. Justine Dancy, Anne Cubitt running time : 44 min., 16mm colour.

Peter Carter

(cont. from p. 15)

who pulled that series into shape, and I loved working on it with him.

Peter and I stayed close friends and when, in the late '60s, I got my first feature film together, *Isabel*, it was of course Peter (with Joyce Cozy) that helped me set it up. He was everything from line producer down to third A.D., as well as props; but most of all, he was like a brother, and we shared that special adventure into my background on the Gaspé with a closeness I've found hard to match in film since.

When it came time to do *Act of the Heart* there was Peter again, helping me as associate producer. But once we got the thing rolling and were shooting he went back to Toronto to, at last, direct his first television film. That was in 1969, I believe.

A year or two later found us each submitting our own projects for a feature to the CFDC, which at that time was even more powerful than it is today. Once his own film was ready, with Gordy Pinsent and Larry Dane, he came to work with me preparing *Journey*. We sat together with the rest of the *Journey* crew, through that long afternoon in May 1971 while the CFDC deliberated on our fate. The meeting broke-up, but no one had the courtesy to pass on their decisions. So P.C. and I got on the phone, tracking down the CFDC members as they pub-crawled across town. We got the answer. P.C.'s *The Rowdyman* was on! But *Journey* was off! We were both torn between exaltation and despair. (But this story does have a happy ending. Within a week I got the CFDC to reverse their decision.) Now our only problem was to get a telegram to each other on the first day of shooting between the wilds of Newfoundland and Tadoussac on the rocky North Shore of Quebec.

In the late '70s, I lost a very happy refuge in Toronto where, on visits there, I spent a lot of time sharing Peter and Linda's circle of friends - they decided to move to Los Angeles. My wife Joan and I met them at the L.A. airport in a truck, and they stayed with us on the beach until they moved into their own art-deco house. Peter loved the birds which sang around his garden and he grew great roses and flowers, and continued to spread his influence on film down here. Funnily enough, we always used to say that in our old age we'd sit it out together in some old-age home, with no teeth, reminiscing over our lengthy past. We shared so many experiences, it would take a book to write them all. And now, I've lost a great friend.

Peter's story is the story of the beginnings of our new industry, from R.C.M.P. through *Forest Rangers*, *Seaway*, the early days of CBC-television films, on to our first features, and then to the first great wave of films. They were extraordinary years, and the whole industry is depleted by his unexpected death. I was going to say that they don't make them like that anymore - but then, there's his son Jason! If he decides on films, then I expect every door in the industry will open to him.

Paul Almond ●

Director of many television films and series. Peter Carter's feature films include *The Rowdyman* (1972), *Rituals* (1976), *High Ballin'* (1977), *Kavik the Wolf Dog* (1978) and *A Man called Intrepid* (1979).

● Braving the elements in *Somewhere Between*

