

IN PROGRESS

Little Gloria... Happy at Last Flags and license plates

Little Gloria ... Happy at Last, a made-for-NBC television special, wrapped production in mid-July, after two months shooting on locations in Ottawa, Montreal, Brockville, Toronto, and Oshawa. The film was produced by Edgar J. Scherick and Associates from California with Justine Héroux's Montreal-based company Ciné Gloria. Despite the fact that three of the four producers were American, *Little Gloria* was officially classified by Canada's Department of Communications as a British/Canadian co-production.

Little Gloria is about the billionaire American family, the Vanderbilts, and the controversy and sorrow that marked their private lives, particularly those of the women. My impression was that it would be best if they made the film as much as possible like an *Archie* comic but I don't think that should be expected. Christopher Plummer said recently that his character, Reggie Vanderbilt, "was not a playboy, but there was a sadness, a loneliness about him and a sense of failure." This suggests that the Vanderbilts will be served straight up as serious emotional fare, spiced with the flavour and charm of the times. NBC's recipe of the Republic, *Eagle* soup - an ideological delight. In any case the merits of the project can be judged (or perhaps just consumed) sometime in October when *Little Gloria* will be broadcast as two 120-minute specials on NBC and CTV.

By Canadian standards, *Little Gloria* was a big-time production. There were scenes involving as many as 200 extras all dressed in the style of the '20s. The film travelled with a permanent complement of about 100 people, an abundance of motor homes and a cavalcade of trucks. Shooting took place only in Grade 'A' number one choice locations including the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa, the beautiful art deco restaurant at

Eaton's in Montreal, the gracious Fulford Estate in Brockville, and the opulent McLaughlin mansion in Oshawa. And the lifestyle of the wealthiest class of people is expensive to portray. *Little Gloria* was made on a \$7 million budget which, given the exchange difference, stretched to close to \$10 million in Canadian funds. As far as the economy was concerned *Little Gloria* was a mini boom in the film industry and, for those only interested in economics, the film was a happy venture. But for those concerned with culture a project like *Little Gloria* has few redeeming qualities.

Little Gloria was a "flags and license plates" picture, a type well known on the Canadian production scene in which a place like Toronto has to look like 'Philly' or Montreal like New York. But more than flags and license plates were imported; even the driver captain, the production secretary and the first two assistant directors were brought in. In addition most of the top creative jobs that were not held by Americans were held by British. That did not leave much room for Canadians who worked as technicians or had to be satisfied with assistant or assistant-to-the-assistant plus the ruck of support jobs needed on any film. Even the Canadian producer seemed to play a subservient role, acting chiefly as a publicist, public relations officer and labour arbitrator while her American colleagues ran the show.

While it pays the bills, as they say, such a situation can sour easily and there were tensions and grumbings in many different departments. There seemed to be a good deal of ill-feeling in the A.D. department but perhaps wardrobe was the worst afflicted. Within hours of the arrival of *Little Gloria* for the Canadian portion of the shoot, the Californian costume designer was demanding the firing of her Canadian costume mistress. The charge was that she had no taste. A sticky managerial decision was avoided, the Canadian's reputation reinstated, and her aggressor's attack ridiculed when the timely news arrived from New York that the Canadian's work on a previous picture had just been awarded an Emmy. The same costume designer also displayed a rather blunt insensitivity to French/English tensions when she shortly reprimanded a francophone costume mistress for speaking English in an



● The sheen of period costumes and customs makes a glossy production for American TV, thanks to a United Kingdom-Canada co-production treaty photos: Pirooska Mihalka

LITTLE GLORIA... HAPPY AT LAST
p.c. Cine-Gloria Inc. exec. p. Edgar J. Scherick, Scott Rudin p. David Nicksay, Justine Héroux d. Waris Hussein p. man. Micheline Garant ass't (to p. man. Robert Wertheimer prod. coord. Jacky Lavoie unit man. Josette Perrotta loc. man. Daniel Louis prod. acc. Muriel Lizé-Pothier prod. typlst/recept. Patricia Cahill prod. coord./U.S. Donna Smith acc. superv. Roy Baxter 1st a.d. Tom Kane a.d. François Guimel, Blair Roth a.d. (apprentice) Robert Ditchburn cont. France Lachapelle cast. (Mil.) Arden Rysphan cast. (Tor.) Stuart Aitkins/Canadian Casting cast. asst. Martha Laing d.o.p. Tony Imi cam. op. Allen Smith focus puller Robert Guertin clapper/loader Michel Girard cam. asst. Patti Morein stills Pirooska Mihalka second unit cam. Joel Bertomeu focus puller Luc Lussier s.d. Richard Lightstone boom Jimmy Thompson playback op. Susan Schneider ed. Malcolm Cooke asst. ed. Kerry Kohler. Chantal Bowen art dept. Stuart Wurtzel art d. Guy Comtois art dept. coord. Penny Hadfield 1st, 2nd, 3rd set dressers Enrico Campana, Maurice Leblanc, François Lamontagne props buyer Lise Pharand propman Gilles Aird propman asst. Marc Corriveau props asst. Renée Rousseau. François Leclerc draftsman Raymond Larose art dept./P.A. Hélène Hebert researcher Donna Noonan 1st, 2nd, 3rd make-up art. Ann Brodie, Suzanne Benoit, Joan Isaacson asst. make-up Marie-Josée Lafontaine 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th hairdressers Paul Leblanc, Bob Pritchett,

Richard Hansen, Andre Lafreniere ward. superv. Julie Weiss ward. mist. Delphine White extra ward mist. Suzanne Harel women's ward. drea. Ginette Magny men's ward drea. Mario Davignon men's drea. asst. Arthur ward. cont. Renee April. Fabienne April gaffer John Berrie gaffer (2nd unit) Jean-Paul Houle best boy Jean Courteau elect's Alex Amyot. Brian Baker, Pierre Davreux key grip François Dupéré grip Michel Periard, Andre Ouellet prod. asst. Michel Dubois driver capt. Michel Guay cast drivers Louis-Philippe Rochon, Joseph Sanchez, Neil Bibby, Andre Poulin, Andrew Ward asst. driver Jerry Shore Jr. unit minibus Paul Hotte motorhome dr. Ronald Vachon, Denis Normandeau PA/driver Jacques Bernier m/u/hair unit Richard Marsan craft serv. Ken Korral office PA Jean-Pierre Fritz honey wagon Danny Marionneaux wardrobe Rick Mercier l.p. Lucie Gutteridge, Angela Lansbury, Glynnis Johns, Maureen Stapleton, Jennifer Dundas, Rosalind Landor, Leueen Willoughby, Christopher Plummer, Bette Davis, John Hillerman, Michael Gross, Martin Balsam, Kirsten Bishopric, Charles Palmer, Ken Pogue, Danielle Schneider, Booth Savage, Jan Rubes, Terence Labrosse, Cec Linder, Joel Kenyon, Lyn Jackson, Phillip Craig, Dean Hagopian, Phillip Prettien, Joe Maher, Barnard Hughes, Philip Spencley, Steven Michaels, Frances Antle, Jeannine Beaubien, Kathleen Fee, Jesse Thompson, Merlee Shapiro, David Connor, Michael Rudder, Araby Lockhart, Terry Donald, Don Lamoureux, Ali Giron.

accent that she found difficult to understand.

French/English relations took another dive when on location in Montreal it was forbidden to speak French on the walkie-talkies. The atmosphere soured yet further over a disparity in the allocation of per diems between visitors and Canadians working on the production. The union representing Quebec's technicians lodged a formal grievance over the issue and there was also a 15-minute work stoppage in protest.

Perhaps then it is not surprising that a popular nickname for the film became *Little Gloria ... Finished at Last*. Nevertheless, from a certain perspective, there was something fascinating about the making of this film: the eddies of discontent swirling in the depths, momentarily billowing on the surface and the thundering ironies that threatened to crack the somnambulant present snoring through a repetitive history into an angry and resolved wakefulness. There is the Chateau Laurier, the most elegant 'Canadian National' hotel, standing in the shadow of the Peace Tower, absorbed by the Vanderbilt story and manifest as the Waldorf Astoria. There is also the Fulford Estate overlooking the Thousand Islands and the shores of New York State, owned by a weakening old man who once scandalized the town and split his family irreparably by marrying the upstairs maid - an efficient young woman who now maintains a firm body and hand on the affairs of the household. Her husband was also a liberal member of parliament in Mackenzie King's government during the transition years when King steered Canada triumphantly away from the grip of England directly into the grasp of the United States. This was the government whose film policy allowed the abuse of 'quota quickies' and also settled for a weakened Canadian Cooperation Agree-

ment with the Hollywood majors rather than fight for an independent feature film industry.

But most ironic of all perhaps is the use of the McLaughlin mansion. McLaughlin earned his wealth and status by designing and manufacturing automobiles. His company represented the only time in history when there was a Canadian car industry. It lasted until he sold out to General Motors. Now the house is a museum, a relic, and a film set for the Vanderbilts, a family that controlled many companies operating in Canada.

The ironies and contradictions of course are filtered out in the *Little Gloria* we will see on the screen. The film as glamorous commodity hides the real status of its production. The medium harnessed to serve a consumerist ideology, sapped of any cultural vitality. What *Little Gloria* represents is an opportunity missed to reinvent films like Fassbinder's *Beware of the Holy Whore* or Godard's *Le mépris* - the opportunity to make a film on a film whose appropriate form would perhaps blend *The Twilight Zone* with *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* with something of Peter Watkins to snap the time stretched tensions that were omnipresent during the production: British/American masters, French/English bitterness, Capital/Labour hostility, Continentalist/Nationalist antipathy.

But this film still has not been made - our Dr. Caligari has many faces (including the Canadian cabinet) and the somnambulant still sleep or dream and the American film producer in *Le mépris* sneers, "When I hear the word culture I reach for my wallet." All this is to say that in Canada neither money nor ideas are forthcoming to reinvent culture and lowest common denominator films hold sway.

Gavin O'Malley ●

Shocktrauma A major operation

For three weeks this August Studio 'B' at Magder has been converted into a medical research centre.

William Conrad is playing the leading role of a cardiac surgeon in charge of a medical research unit. This is Conrad's first time playing an M.D.

The script is taken from a true story about how Dr. R. Adams Cowley spent 15 years pioneering trauma medicine. Dr. Cowley is responsible for setting up a unit where victims in severe states of shock, following accidents, are given instant care. Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital has such a unit.

Producers Chris Dalton and Wayne Fenske are working with Glen-Warren Productions in this project. Fenske, Dick Atkins (executive producer) and Eric Till (director) spent three days with Dr. Cowley in his Baltimore hospital. They were invited to observe the operations and were introduced into the whole area of Cowley's medical unit.

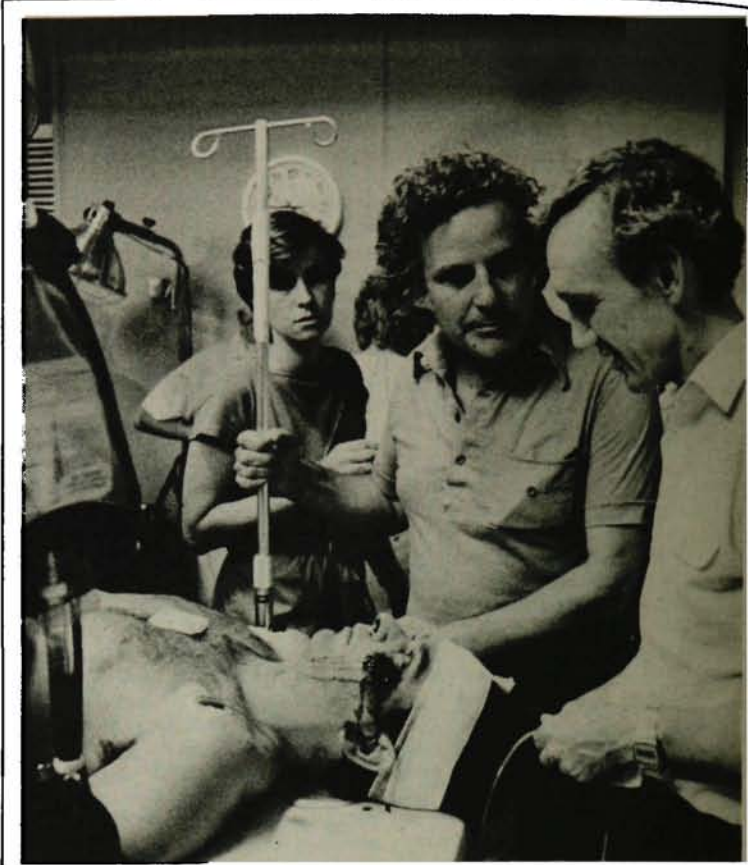
All those years pursuing Glen-Warren to get involved in the movie business has paid off. Fenske says. He feels *Shocktrauma* is a script that is topical and intelligent.

Conrad's supporting cast include such talents as Linda Sorensen, who plays his friend and head nurse of his unit. Kerrie Keane plays another nurse who meets with a tragic death. Chris Wiggins, Scott Hylands and Chuck Shamata are some of the doctors on Conrad's team. Les Carlson plays the hospital administrator. There is a long list of others playing interns, nurses, injured patients, family of the injured, state troopers, paramedics, and so on.

The first day I visited the set I walked through one of the largest cemeteries in Toronto. The crew was set up at a remote corner of Pine Hills, where Conrad pays a visit to Keane's grave. She was part of his medical unit and he is obviously yet to recover from her sudden death. Gord Robinson (PM/AD) was getting everyone wrapped and heading for the next set-up, which was back on Pharmacy Avenue next to Magder Studios. The crew was in good spirits even though they had four extremely hot hours of shooting in the sun. Being outside was a refreshing change from the 12-hour days they had spent in the studio for the past 14 days.

Back at Magder, Fenske was playing the role of director and of second unit, setting up a shot which consisted of a travelling sequence along Pharmacy Avenue. Crew and gear ready, he and Zale Magder (D.O.P.) tried to get into a comfortable position inside a station wagon that already held a TV monitor, a camera operator, the camera, and an assistant.

Rick Mason is finding this shoot a thrilling and challenging experience.



● Giving technical advice, Dr. Bill Nelson (r.) talks with director Eric Till as Jim Chad waits

Not only is it his first assignment as an operator of a major two-hour drama, but also his first in shooting with an Ikegami (EC35) TV camera. The adjustment of shooting from film to one-inch tape was minor as the EC35 has all the same technical aspects as a film camera. The addition of having a TV monitor close by to check a set-up was an added feature.

Mason signals to his driver Gord Robinson that camera is ready. They pull out slowly onto Pharmacy with Conrad and Sorensen following closely behind in another vehicle.

It's now the last day of shooting in the studio. I come-upon an area that looks like a hospital waiting room. It is empty. I walk further and find an operating room fully equipped but also empty of people. I hear Eric Till's voice giving out blocking directions and I try to locate the set by following the direction of his voice. I keep walking and Till's voice becomes stronger. I finally arrive at a reshuffled semi-private hospital room with empty made-up beds and Lili Fournier (continuity) sitting comfortably in an arm chair with TV monitor in front of her. In the adjoining room, I can see David (art director) Jaquest's set fully equipped with an ECG machine, scanners, intravenous and blood plasma placed next to the beds of the injured patients. A monitoring device is next to Beau Starr as he lies covered with bruises and bandages. Starr is playing a state trooper who, while on assignment, is injured in a gaspne explosion. Starr realizes his condition is serious and asks another state trooper to transport him to Conrad's medical unit in a chopper.

Lights, camera, cast and crew ready, Till calls 'action' and heads in our direction to watch the action on the TV monitor. Camera follows Conrad as he approaches Starr's bed. He has come to pay a social visit and thank Starr for

giving him the idea of using a chopper in an emergency case such as his. Starr, who appears to be resting comfortably one minute, has a relapse and his heart stops. Conrad responds immediately and calls for assistance.

Dr. Bill Nelson technical adviser from Sunnybrook Hospital - Trauma Unit) has been on set since day one to teach the cast how to use medical instruments. It's no wonder when Conrad asks for help from Sorensen and Hylands that the equipment and instruments are handled as if the actors were pros.

Till calls 'cut' and returns to the set giving instruction for another take. When all is ready again, he rejoins us to watch the action on the TV monitor.

Fenske reports that this made-for-TV movie is already pre-sold to over 100 major markets in the States. It has been sold to network affiliates (a first venture for U.S.), pre-empting network shows. First air date is October 1982 in the U.S. A Canadian deal will be negotiated and the film will be shown on CBC or CTV at a later date.

Alice Dwornik ●

SHOCKTRAUMA d. Eric Till exec. p. Dick Atkins, Michael Lepiner p. Wayne Fenske, Chris Dalton sc. Stephen Kandel p. man. Gord Robinson 2nd a.d. Fred Feldman 3rd a.d. John Newton cont. Lili Fournier unit man. Rick Watts p. sec. Shalheveth Goldhar p.a. Donna McCormick, Addison Duncan art d. David Jaquest asst. art d. David Charles, Andree Brodeur props. Butch Rose asst. props. Ken Lee Coontz sp. eff. Marty Malivoir painter Gunther Bartlik const. man. Gord Brudie tech. ad. Joanne Pummell d.o.p. Zale Magder cam. Rick Mason focus. Neil Sealr eng. Read Robertson vtr op. Mike Palmer grip Norm Smith 2nd grip Brian Daniels sd. rec. Karl Scherret boom Gordon Chacra gaff. Frank Merino best boy Martin Harrison make-up Sandi Duncan asst. make-up Michelle Burke hair Tom DiPasquale wardrobe des. Patti Unger asst. wardrobe Kal Moyer cast. Karen Hazzard sup. ed. Eric Wrate ed. Kelly Smith Lp. William Conrad. Linda Sorensen Kerrie Keane, Chris Wiggins, Scott Hylands, Chuck Shamata, Les Carlson, Lawrence Dane, Bruce Tubbe, Barbara Williams, Patricia Idlette, Bob Hannah, George Hevenor pub. Janice Kaye p.c. Glen Warren Telecom Entertainment Inc.