

ATLANTIC ECHOES

by Mike Riggio

Mike Brun of Nimbus Films started his film career as a young man in the British film industry in 1959. At the time Rediffusion (Britain's first independent television, a competitor for the BBC) was just starting; its mandate was to provide a large amount of film material per week.

Brun was hired as a trainee film humper. "Now, would you believe it? You had to train to hump (carry) film."

After a short stint with the British Navy, still a film trainee, Brun was accepted as a trainee film editor - a three-year apprenticeship course in the editing room. But one was also given opportunities to go out on location, for further job training. "This was an apprenticeship in the film industry that you signed to. You couldn't leave, but you could get fired."

After his three years as a trainee, the young Brun was promoted to an assembly film editor. As an assembly film editor he was given twenty-minute programs to edit. "I was at that for one year and then I was promoted to full film editor; then I went on to the Inter Tel series, and did four drama series. All for Rediffusion."

In 1965 Mike Brun went freelancing in Britain, worked with the BBC, did Beatles' promotions, film clips, pop documentaries with the Spencer Davies Group, and the occasional drama. "In Britain I had an opportunity to work with Charlie Squires and David Lean, which was the best thing that could have happened to me. I started to learn how to become a director. But this was after my apprenticeship. Never, never would you say 'I want to become a director.' You just didn't do that. You served your apprenticeship first and then you were promoted."

After eight years in the British industry, Mike Brun was anxious to direct and edit. Then, in 1967, Crawley Films brought Brun to Canada. Brun did some ten films with Crawley, then went to the National Film Board and did four or five for the Board (*Count Down to '76, People Like You, Where Have all the Farms Gone?* ...).

By 1970, feeling that he knew enough about the Canadian and American film industry, Brun started Nimbus Films in Ontario. Nimbus grew and, at one point, had a staff of fifteen. Today, Nimbus is down to a full-time staff of three, using freelancers, needed, on a project by project basis.

In Britain, Brun had done a lot of work at sea. This was naturally carried over in Canada. In 1970, Nimbus started a series of films about sea survival, rescue at sea, etc.

By 1974, Nimbus was specializing in films on the sea - and that led to the 1980 move from Ontario to the Maritimes.

"When we decided to move to Nova Scotia, it wasn't to become part of the Nova Scotian film industry. I have always considered myself as part of the Canadian film industry and I think it is irrelevant where I work. I live right on the ocean and love it. It also enables me to perfect new equipment for filming at sea. So that's why I'm here - not to develop the Nova Scotian film industry. But I think the development comes anyway... with our being here."

Although Mike Brun is supportive of developing a local industry, he feels that at present there are certain things that the local film community cannot provide.

"On many of our productions at sea, we must rely on people with experience in working at sea. We have neither the time nor the funds to have people make mistakes because of the environment."

Brun did a survey of the local freelance film community and came to the conclusion that the necessary people were not available.

"This unfortunately doesn't give local people a chance to work on our productions during the location phases. But I don't feel it's my job as an independent producer to train people for the industry. That job should be, I feel, with the people who gave it to me - large govern-

ment funded organizations such as the NFB and the CBC. These two agencies in particular should be training the future filmmakers of Canada. There should be a tough-line policy on how trainees enter the NFB and CBC system."

Brun explains further: "Today's present systems allow young would-be filmmakers to obtain grants through co-ops and societies to go out and do their thing. Some succeed and go on to a film career. Most fail - it wasn't what they thought."

"This system is too easy - to be handed the incredible gift of a grant to make a film. And if one fails, it doesn't matter. This policy has harmed more potential filmmakers than it has helped."

Brun feels strongly that funds for grants should be placed with institutions such as NFB and CBC for the training of future editors, cameramen, directors, mixers, etc. "Let young potentials go through the film courses at college. Those who excel and receive good grades should then take an entrance exam to fight for a traineeship in the industry."

Brun himself taught film for a while at the University of Ottawa. "Out of a start class of 45, I had five finish. Out of these five, I felt three stood a good chance of becoming apprentices in our industry and our future filmmakers."

"This system will eventually produce good creative people and at the same time teach them to fight for what they want and, of course, this (fighting for what you want) is the main asset needed to survive in our industry."

Rose and Pearson back to script
Bring home winner for CTV

TORONTO - "We did something rather radical: we started with a script as opposed to a deal," said director Les Rose about his latest project, *The Life And Times of Edwin Alonzo Boyd*, a \$250,000 feature-length narrative drama produced for the Canadian Television Network.

The film made its world premiere September 18 at the Festival of Festivals in Toronto.

Boyd is produced by Barry Pearson, and written by Pearson and Rose. The project marks the first time that the duo, who collaborated on the screenplay for the 1973 Canadian feature *Paperback Hero*, have written, produced, and directed a film together.

The project began in the mid-seventies when Pearson tracked down Eddie Boyd, who had been paroled and was living in Western Canada under a new identity, and recorded eight hours of interviews with the former bank robber and gang leader. Though a 1977 feature film project fell through, a book appeared, *The Boyd Gang*, by Pearson and Marjorie Lamb.

Then last year, Rose thought of doing the project for television, using a single actor as both narrator and the Boyd character. Rose and Pearson convinced veteran Canadian actor Gordon Pinsent to accept the role, and the three brought the project to CTV president

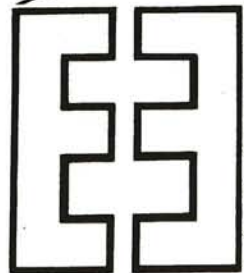
Murray Chercover.

The script was begun January 3, 1982, and finished January 15, according to Rose. An 18-day shooting schedule began February 8, interrupted when cinematographer Ed Higginson had another commitment, and finished March 15. The picture was edited in April and delivered to CTV May 30. "And quite frankly, we weren't rushed," said Rose.

Because of the current state of the industry, Rose, who directed the big-budget features *Hog Wild* and *Gas* during the tax shelter boom, now believes filmmakers should "do films that make economic sense. This picture costs \$200,000 below the line, which means CTV can break even after one run."

Rose said the tax shelter films were so concerned with production values that often the story was lost in the process. "This (*Boyd*) is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a theatrical release, it is a made-for-TV movie," he admits, "but it has a good story. It all goes back to doing your homework on the script."

Rose also had high praise for Pinsent's performance. "We were extremely worried that anyone couldn't hold the screen for ninety minutes," he said. "But Gordon was absolutely brilliant."

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