

# Canada's Oscar nominees

## Like a kiss from God

by Steve Lucas & Louise Clark

This year at the 56th Annual Academy Awards Ceremony in Los Angeles, three Canadian entries are among those vying for an Oscar: for best achievement in documentary features, *The Profession of Arms*, a National Film Board production, Michael Bryans and Tina Viljoen, producers; for best achievement in documentary short subjects, *Flamenco at 5:15*, also an NFB production, Cynthia Scott and Adam Symansky, producers; and, for best achievement in live action short films, *Boys and Girls*, an Atlantis Film Ltd. of Toronto production, Michael MacMillan, Janice Platt, and Seaton McLean, producers. How have these filmmakers been feeling the past few weeks? What are they planning to wear? What if they blow their acceptance speeches? What if they don't get to make them? Are their lives about to be significantly altered? Is there any gold at the end of this rainbow? Are they coming back to Canada or likely to stay in Los Angeles forever?

To learn what this year's Oscar nominees have to look forward to, Steve Lucas and Toronto production manager Louise Clark, herself an Oscar ceremony veteran, spoke with last year's nominees about their experiences.

Here is what they had to say.

### EDWARD LELORRAIN

Producer, *If You Love This Planet*, a 30-minute documentary about the medical consequences of nuclear war. National Film Board of Canada production. Academy Award Winner for Best Achievement in Documentary Short Subjects.

Staff film editor ("I've only been producing the last couple of years. I like it but I feel more like an editor than a producer.") with the NFB's Studio "D" in Montreal, 53, married, has a daughter and a grandson. Born in Sumatra, Indonesia, to a British father and a Dutch mother. Interned in a Japanese concentration camp in Indonesia for three and a half years during WW II. Told by the British paratroopers who liberated him in 1945 that his life and those of his fellow prisoners had been saved by the dropping of an atom bomb on Hiroshima. (Food in the camp was running out and the Japanese, had they not surrendered first, would likely

have been forced to kill all the prisoners.) Diagnosed in 1976 as suffering survivor's syndrome, guilt and depression for having survived when so many others did not. Understands only too well the irony of winning an Oscar for producing a film that argues forcefully against the weaponry that saved his own life.

Went to Holland after the war. Dropped out of high school to begin his film career. Worked for small companies in Amsterdam as a general assistant. Made a film in the Middle East with cameraman Billy Williams (who won an Oscar last year for *Gandhi*) before joining BBC London as an editor in 1956. Came to Canada to join the Film Board in 1967. Has worked in the film business for 33 years and been involved in hundreds of films. How did he get involved in *If You Love This Planet*? "Terri and I were already sharing an office. It was her first major film. I think she was quite happy to work with someone who had been in films for a long time. I gave her a crash course in editing and let her go. For me, it was probably the most enjoyable film I ever worked on - despite the subject. There were just no snags."

### The Nomination

"I was in the theatre working on a rough mix of the Nicaraguan film (*Dream of a Free Country*, a 60-minute documentary about Nicaraguan women and the revolution). Terri came in halfway through and told us (about the nomination). It was quite hard to keep my mind on the pods after that. I was very pleased but I don't think I quite realized the implications, Los Angeles and all that.

"It was quite a crazy time. Talking to people. A lot of phone calls. It was difficult to concentrate on other work. (The Academy) weren't going to accept Terri. We made a mistake not putting her name down as co-producer on the credits. I went to the (film board brass), hoping they could do something about it by writing directly. They said they weren't going to do too much about it. So I sent a telex to the Academy asking them to reconsider their point of view. I said I would stand down, not accept the nomination, if Terri was not nominated, too. A few days later, I got a telegram from the Academy saying they would accept her. It was kind of nice the way it worked out..."

### Hollywood

"I enjoyed it. It's so unreal that you kind

of enjoy it on that level. We had great fun.

"We stayed at the Hilton. What'd I do the day of the awards? I went for a haircut... with Reagan's barber. I got dressed. That was fun. The tuxedo was rented. What else did I do? Not much..."

### Awards Night

"I was okay on the limo ride up. There was so many of us in the car, it didn't really sink in.

"Terri and I had been talking about it. She felt quite positive about it, that the possibility we would win was quite great. If I had been on my own, I would have been terrified. But with somebody else, particularly with Terri, who can always talk, it was kind of a safe feeling, not having to be in the forefront..."

"When I accepted the award, I said 'Oscar for peace.' I had mentioned it to Terri a couple of days earlier. She liked it. So I kept it. I was glad I did. I also tried to thank the Academy but that didn't come out too good, I think..."

"It was nice when we went backstage, to meet up with Billy Williams, who was there holding his Oscar. That was really a nice moment. And we both looked 30 years older..."

"We got back in the limo, opened the sun roof, popped the cork (of the champagne) through it. We all put our Oscars through the sun roof. The public had no idea who was in the limo so they were all screaming... At the Hilton, we did it again. Again there was screaming... It was nice getting to the hotel..."

### Aftermath

"Financially it hasn't made any difference to me. I haven't done much since, aside from finishing off the Nicaraguan film. It's been difficult to finish, being in another language. I found it very hard, working on that one. But at least now we have a test print..."

"I'm now involved in producing a film on the children of the survivors (of WW II). We went to Germany to interview children of Nazis, and to Israel to talk to the children of concentration camp survivors. It's a co-production. The film board is only providing part of the funding. It has taken a long time to find the rest.

"I'm still at Studio D. I plan to stay there. At my age, I don't think Hollywood or anything is for me.

"In retrospect, it was kind of ironic winning an Oscar for this film in a capacity as producer. I've suffered much

more on other films. In terms of suffering, it didn't seem right. It was too easy. A matter of luck. The fact that I still consider myself an editor, getting the award for another craft - I would have preferred probably not having the Oscar but being appreciated more for what I have done for other films. But it's nice, I'm not taking that away, nice for the Film Board, for Studio D, for Terri. Just personally, I wish that filmmakers appreciated editors more. It's a tough job, editing. You don't get much of the glamour."

### TERRI NASH

Director-editor-archival film researcher, *If You Love This Planet*.

Independent filmmaker, now working mainly with the NFB's Studio D in Montreal, 34, single. Born in Nanaimo, B.C. Educated at Simon Fraser University, B.A., M.A., and McGill, Ph.D. Communications. Dabbled in film for more than a decade but had made only one-minute animation film before *If You Love This Planet*. Why this film? "I had to make it. It's the most important subject facing humankind at the moment."

### The Nomination

"I was in the hallway at the Film Board when they announced it over the p.a. system. My knees went weak. I was much more nervous hearing the nomination than I was getting the award.

"If anybody said anything memorable, I don't remember it.

"The six weeks leading up to the awards were absolutely crazy. Three days (after the nomination was announced) the film was banned by the (U.S.) Justice Department. Now that was memorable. The Justice Department thing gave me enormous coverage. That's a big thing to cope with. Just to get interviewed on TV. It's a whole thing you have to learn how to do.

### Hollywood

"I enjoyed it. I thought if I'm gonna go through this, I'm gonna have fun... otherwise, send somebody else.

"I stayed at the Hilton. What'd I do the day of the awards? I waited. I felt really nervous. I got my hair done and all that sort of thing. Spent about three hours in a bubbly bath - got all wrinkly, that was kind of embarrassing. Ordered break-

fast. Read the paper. Read they thought I'd win.

## Awards Night

"I wore a silk black Japanese kimono. The NFB wouldn't pay for it. They'd only paid for Eddie's tuxedo. They said they'd only pay for me if I rented something – as if women can rent their clothes..."

I wasn't nervous at all once we got in the limousine. It amazes me how calm I was. I think it's 'cuz I figured I'd win. I would have been shocked to hear someone else's name. That sounds arrogant, though, doesn't it? And they sat me on the aisle (expected winners are seated on aisle row seats to speed their walk to the podium).

"I loved making the speech ('For their tremendous help in promoting this film, I'd like to thank the U.S. Department of Justice') 'cuz it got a lot of laughs, 'cuz I didn't forget it and I didn't trip on the way up there.

"There were lots of telegrams. I'd never gotten a telegram in my life. Everyone was thrilled. I found success agreed with me. God, I sound superficial..."

## Aftermath

"I got a prize from SFU for being their outstanding alumni, a prize for getting a prize. Anyway, they flew me out..."

"I did a job for six months working on a cable project, looking at the possibility of putting NFB archival films on cable TV. I'm glad it wasn't a film... I needed a breather and the cable project was good for me.

"In September, I started work on a documentary film with Bonnie Klein (the director of *Not A Love Story*). It's called *Women, Peace, and Power*. It's got a Canadian focus. I'm co-directing. The film looks at ways of solving social conflict without violence, at peace as more than the mere absence of war, but as a way of being. It's the next step, a really positive film and much more philosophical: It's looking at alternatives to war, saying there are alternatives and here they are.

"There's a certain degree of pressure. People constantly say to you, don't you feel pressure? I say I guess I should. I'm really glad I'm into another film now. The awards feel like six years ago. You have to pretend winning doesn't matter, because you're not going to do it every time. You can't be expected to do that every single film. I don't have 15 years' experience. Now I'm trying to get it. Having a co-director takes a lot of the pressure off. Besides, she can share the blame if it doesn't work..."

"In 1983, I made \$5000 in earned income and \$10,000 more in scholarships from McGill. Income prospects look better this year. I'm getting an income. But for freelancers, the insecurity is built-in.

"My advice for this year's entries? Don't take yourself too seriously..."

"I love watching the Academy Awards. Maybe I'll watch them in Moscow this year. With the KGB."

## JOHN ZARITSKY

*Producer-director-writer, Just Another Missing Kid, a 90-minute documentary about a family's desperate search for a missing son and their determined efforts to bring his murderers justice. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation production, Academy Award Winner for Best Achievement in Documentary Features.*

*Independent Toronto-based filmmaker, 40, married, no children. Born in St. Catharines, Ontario. Educated at the University of Toronto, Trinity College '65, B.A. English. Spent seven years as a newspaperman with the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail, and Agence France-Presse in Paris. Won a National Newspaper Award in 1973. Started at the CBC the same year. ("Peter Herrndorf thought the way to improve film journalism at the CBC was to bring in trained journalists and teach them about film. I was part of that experiment.") Worked for Up Canada ("a hidden footnote in Canadian television history") for two years before joining the Fifth Estate in 1975. Spent three years producing items for them, including the 45-minute murder mystery item that first broke what had been a set three-items-an-hour format. In 1978, took a leave of absence and went to Europe to write a novel ("a political thriller, unpublished and sitting in the basement – I learned about limitations that year"). Came back to Canada and got married the following year. Started Missing Kid in 1980. Why this subject? "I've been a working journalist for 18 years. I've had a number of really good stories. Even in the newspaper business, I had a reputation for being a big story guy. I knew from the beginning this was going to be a great story – I just didn't know how. When you get a big story, you just don't blow it. They don't come along every day. When they do come along, you gotta really go for it. I knew very early on, after I met the Wilsons (the family in the film) and the private investigator, Conway – I knew. The more time went on, the bigger and the better it became. Not only did I believe in it, everybody believed in it. It was a case of a crew coming together. It was everybody's dream. We just lived the film."*

## The Nomination

"The morning I was nominated, I had a documentary project cancelled by the CBC because of a budgetary problem. It was a project my wife (Virginia Storrington) and I had worked hard on. I was extremely disappointed. After learning the news, I slunk out of the CBC building and came home. About an hour later the phone rang. I picked it up and a different CBC executive inquired, with cheer in his voice, whether I'd heard the news. My reply to him was unprintable. It took us about 15 minutes to straighten out that *Just Another Missing Kid* had been nominated for an Oscar. The ups and downs of the business were never so clear to me – and unfortunately it rarely has to do with whether or not you're any good or whether what you're doing is worthwhile. Good people unemployed. Good projects not funded. That's a capsule summary of the film business, both here and south of the border.

"The six weeks prior to the awards? We were busy. I don't remember anything. Endless parties. Endless phone calls. It was worse than waiting for any Christmas as a kid. By the time the hallowed day arrived, I just wanted it to end.

## Hollywood

"I hated it. It's the cliché: Deep down, it's really superficial. I'm almost embarrassed to say it because everybody has said it for years, and I hate to sound like that, and I have friends there, and I may even end up working in Hollywood some day – but I don't want to live there.

That's be the last thing I want to do. It's not like I'm St. Thomas Aquinas and have an aversion to pleasures of the flesh or anything. I'd just rather live in Toronto. There are people here who are loyal friends, who have been with me for years through all kinds of times. Whether through my inadequacies or the inadequacies of the place, I'm just not comfortable in Hollywood.

"We were staying at the Century Plaza, which was kind of lucky because it wasn't the Hilton, not the center of hype. You could almost forget (the awards) were happening. My cameraman (John Griffin) and his wife, and my editor (Gord McLellan) and his wife were there. We just basically lolled around the pool. We just had fun.

## Awards Night

"It was just like a funeral. It was like dying in your death bed. Everyone was there, trying to keep me calm. Everyone saying, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter.

"Ginny (John's wife) wore her lucky dress and I had my 20-year-old tuxedo on. We'd worn them to the ACTRA Awards and we'd won that night so we wore them again.

"(In the limo) I tried to be relaxed but I was really scared, too. Once I got there, I was terrified. The mind was focused on one thing – the envelope. I don't really remember the show. I gather I saw a bunch of stars.

"(When I won) I really can't remember how I felt. Total euphoria. No amount of drugs or alcohol can induce that. It was a pure moment. When they sat us four nominees in, I thought the lady on the aisle had won. The dealing with defeat had already begun – when suddenly you're plucked out... Later that night, a gorgeous old babe came up to me. She said, 'Do you realize how many people have worked in this city for 40 years to get what you've got?' She leaned forward and whispered in my ear, 'It's like a kiss from God.' It sounds religious, mystical, I know, but it is such an event..."

"I was prepared to make a speech. I didn't want to sound like a lot of other people I had seen on the awards. I was quite determined that I would try to act with grace and class. I knew it wasn't just my achievement and I wanted to set the record straight. The guys I mentioned became heroes in their hometowns. The associate producer, the cameraman, the lighting man – he's 59 years old and he's been at the CBC for 32 years. The night of the awards he was working on another film. When somebody told him one of his films had won an Oscar, he cried. For so many of the guys who made the film, it was a moment we could all share. For CBC people, the technicians, it operated as a tremendous morale booster, that they can do it. They went out and did their jobs and more, and made it. And it was nice that Gordie and Johnny were actually there. It made up for a lot of bad days..."

## Aftermath

"We all kinda bathed in it briefly. It was nice. Sharing the experience of winning the Oscar has just cemented bonds. We're all back together working on a new film. It's developed a closer team. I guess if there's been a chief benefit, it's been to work with the people I've worked with before. That wasn't going to happen and it's happening now, because of the Oscar.

"I now also have the opportunity of working with new and exciting people, people I've admired from afar – John Hunter, for exemple.

"What has happened since? I have a documentary on arthritis that will be aired in September as a CBC special. I'm doing a drama about unruly, unmanageable kids for CBC's For The Record series that will go on in the spring of '85. I'm doing a series for The Journal on poverty that will run for four or five nights in the fall, and I have a couple of documentary proposals making the rounds in the States.

"I'm hoping that I'll continue to work in Canada – but working in Canada is not under my control. I will go where the opportunities are to do the work I want to do. Right now those opportunities exist in Canada.

"(The Oscar) has increased my fees, doubled what I was getting. (But) I don't want to create the impression that I'm being deluged with resources, bigger budgets – I'm not.

"It certainly was the most incredible event, the most incredible year of my entire life. It took a long time to recover but it's a very pleasant moment to reflect on when times get bad, when I get down. It places everything in question. All your values. The temptations are many and enormous. For me, it led to a lot of soul-searching. It didn't help to be turning 40 at the same time.

"I don't envy this year's winner. I hope he'll have a lot of pleasure but I'm sure he'll have a few tough moments in the year ahead. And nobody's going to feel sorry for him. Nobody feels sorry for an Oscar winner – and why should they?"

"This year we're going to watch the Awards here at the house. Gordie McLellan and John Griffin and their wives and girlfriends are gonna come over and we're just gonna have a really good time... without the pressure."

## STURLA GUNNARSSON

*Producer-director, After the Axe, a 60-minute docudrama about a middle-aged fired executive's struggle to find another job. A National Film Board production, Academy Award nomination, Best Achievement in Documentary Features.*

*Independent producer-director, Toronto-based, 32, single. Born in Reykjavik, Iceland. Raised in Vancouver, B.C. Educated at UBC, B.A. in English Literature, and post-graduate studies in film production. After university, went to Europe for two years, travelled and did odd jobs. Started making films in 1977. Won the Norman MacLaren Award for the best student film in Canada the following year. Moved to Toronto in 1979. Had made three films before After the Axe. Why this subject? "You (Lucas) got fired, so that made two of us unemployed. We looked into it and discovered there was a new growth industry built around terminations... After a little preliminary research, we found that it was a new enough industry and the people involved were close enough to the wheels that turned within corporations that if we took a look at relocation counselling we could probably make a film that would give the viewing audience an insight into the way business works..."*

## The Nomination

"I was in the Toronto Film Board office picking up some introduction letters from James de B. Domville (then NFB commissioner) which I needed for my

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research trip to Latin America when Sonya (the receptionist) picked up the phone, squealed, and said, Don't go. When she told me the news, I went a bit numb. It didn't really sink in for a couple of hours.

"I was completely out of sync with the whole thing, heading away from the film industry into never-never land. I was on my way out of town and I didn't return for six months. So, as far as reaction from friends and colleagues is concerned, I guess you could say I missed it.

"I had serious misgivings about leaving. Through a fluke, on my way through New York, I met Arthur Penn. I spent an afternoon with him, asked him what he would do in my shoes. He asked me about the project I was working on. I told him about him. He said if it were him, he'd just keep working on it. He advised me not to let the nomination interfere with my plans. That was what I wanted to hear because I was pretty excited about the project I was working on. So that's what I did.

"I went to Mexico, started doing the research. The nomination had some impact there. Whether it was with the Canadian Embassy staff, members of the Salvadoran Liberation Front, or executives at Mexican film studios, the Oscar opened doors. It made James Domville's letters of introduction unnecessary.

## Hollywood

"The week before I went, it was holy week in Mexico. The whole country came to a standstill. It was impossible to pretend that the Oscars weren't important anymore. So I thought about it. In my heart of hearts, I thought about what

it might be like to win but I did everything I could to not even consider the possibility.

"My reaction to L.A. was that it was absolutely incredible to be 31 years-old, coming from Mexico and arriving in the entertainment capital of the world to be treated like a celebrity. It's a bizarre feeling.

"I stayed at the Hilton. The day of the awards I went and bought a pair of shoes. I went for a swim. I pitched a story that morning - who'd we pitch that thing to, anyway? I think it might have been, what's his name, he's a packager in New York now, god, what's his name? (Norbert Auerbach).

"Anyway, I got dressed about an hour early, which I've never done in my entire life. In retrospect, I'd have to say I was nervous wreck but at the time, I thought I was quite cool and in control. I wore a tuxedo that was made for me in Mexico by Adrian of Polanco. Yeah, Judy (Koonar, Sturla's fiancée, art-directed *After The Axe*) liked it.

## Awards Night

"On the limo ride up, I was okay until I heard the roar of the crowd. It just sort of turned the screws a bit. I feel the same way talking about it now as I did then. And all the rationalizations that it didn't really matter whether or not we won were flying in lockstep with the nervousness.

"It was all over for me when Charlton Heston missed a film cue and they had to stretch it out. I peaked emotionally about three categories before ours. I had been worried that I'd go up there and make a fool of myself, but by the time our category came up, I was feeling quite numb.

"I felt nothing when they read Zaritsky's name. I had done a very good job of convincing myself that we weren't going to win and that it didn't matter if we did. I had been walking around L.A. parties telling people that it was just nice to be there and I guess I believed it - anyways, it was enough to carry me through the night...

## Aftermath

"I got depressed about three days later. It lasted a couple of days. Judy and I went to Mexico and had a wonderful time on the beach. It was the first time I had been able to talk to her since we got nominated. So that was a wonderful time.

"I'm making an hour-long drama for the CBC about the church and the peace movement. I'm making an hour-long documentary for the NFB about the auto industry. And I've been asked to do some other stuff. The Latin American project? Yeah, there's that, too...

"I'm still working with the same people, with Mattiussi on the CBC drama (Toronto editor Roger Mattiussi cut *After the Axe*) and with soundman Brian Day on the NFB film. I feel a pretty strong emotional connection with the people who worked on *After the Axe* and there isn't one of them I wouldn't want involved in my next project...

"Personally, I suppose I have more confidence but what Arthur Penn said is right: you've got to keep going, keep doing what you do. I'm still finding my way. If you get that kind of award, or even that kind of nomination, you can pretty well do what you want. So the onus is on you. I'm still discovering what it is I want to do.

"The weirdest offer I got? To do *Magnum P.I.* No, I'm not sorry I turned it down.

"(As for staying in Canada) filmmaking is an international pursuit. I'd like to be an international filmmaker. I don't think you have to do live in Los Angeles to do that. You have to go there to build relationships but I don't think you need to live there - which is not to say that Toronto's climate has anything to recommend it.

"I think the Oscars epitomize the fickle nature of the film business - the way your life can be changed overnight. That's what the Oscars are about. The best advice is to enjoy it. That's my advice to anybody who's going down there."

## STEVE LUCAS

*Producer-writer, After the Axe.*

*Toronto-based, independent writer-producer, 31, single. Born in Vancouver, B.C. Educated at UBC (two years) and the University of Toronto, B.A., General Arts. Travelled, went back to the land, and held a number of odd jobs as a mill worker, farm worker, seaman, camp cook and ship's steward before working as a copywriter for a couple of Toronto advertising agencies in the late '70s. Apart from a pair of 30-second spots, After the Axe was his first film. Why this subject? "Essentially my reasons were the same as Gunnarson's, with one key difference: I wanted to come to terms with what being fired had done to me personally."*

● The night before the fateful day: Sturla Gunnarson, Steve Lucas, Terri Nash, John Zaritsky and Edward LeLorrain at the Canadian Consul General of Canada's home in Los Angeles



## The Nomination

"I was in a meeting with a couple of clients for whom Atlantis Films, Gunnarsson, Mattiussi and I had just done a sponsored film. One guy arrived late and said he'd heard on his car radio that *After the Axe* and *Tootsie* had just been nominated for something. He hadn't heard what. He asked me if I knew what it might be. I said that the Oscars were coming up but that it couldn't be that - and I put the whole thing out of my mind until Gunnarsson called me at home later that afternoon. He said, I guess you've heard the news. I said, I guess I have..."

"I remember Louise Morit Sugu, who's an editor at Partners, saying she thought it was a good movie, but not that good. I kind of agreed with her, but I didn't feel all that unworthy, either, I must admit. I called everyone back home and got a lot of phone calls from all over. The telephone was a lot of fun those first few weeks.

"But the timing really couldn't have been much worse. It had taken a year to get NFB approval for the Latin American project, six more months to get the money, and nine months after that for Gunnarsson and I to finish the individual and joint projects we had lined up in the meantime. Then, the day he left, we got the nomination. He considered turning back and I was half-hoping he would. But we didn't really have another project in our back pocket. We had no idea what the nomination meant, if anything. And Arthur Penn was saying, go to work, boys. So we did.

"The day I left for Mexico - Sunday, March 6 - I cried like a baby. Louise (Clark) literally had to lead me to the cab

and bundle me inside. I hadn't really been out of the country in more than a decade. I was heading into the unknown and it scared me. That was the big thing, I guess, but the Oscars certainly added to the confusion..."

## Hollywood

"I thought I'd hate it. I was fully expecting a Woody Allen movie. But I'm from the West Coast and though I'd never been to L.A. before, it reminded me of home. It was tense but fun.

## Awards Night

"We stayed at the Hilton. On the day of the awards, I needed a trim and Eddie recommended Reagan's barber. I forget the guy's name, Sam somebody or other. His barbershop is located behind a men's clothing store on Wilshire Boulevard, a few blocks east of the Hilton. In the reception area, there's a picture of him at work on Reagan's hair. Are you - ? I asked. For forty years, he said. I don't have much time, I told him, I just want a trim. I'll give you my invisible haircut, he said, the same one I gave Gary Cooper for a picture he was in in 1935. He cut my hair in 15 snips. It looked pretty good. The manicurist - she had a beehive hairdo and an Arlene Dahl beauty mark, - it was like being on a *Honeymooners* set - kept asking me if my family was in the business, you're just a kid, she kept saying, just a kid. All of them wished me luck and said they'd be rooting for me that night.

"The tuxedo was made-to-measure - Adrian of Polanco again - but my shoes killed me all night. I tried to be calm in the limo and I think I more or less succeeded. When we finally got to the

pavilion and the white-gloved attendants opened the Continental's doors and we walked down the red carpet behind Cher, I remember thinking to myself, this is pretty interesting... It was easy to blend in. We looked like we might be anybody else.

"We sat 12 rows from the stage on the right hand side of the theatre, four sets of nominees in. I remember seeing the two women who made *In Our Water* sitting in the aisle row seats. Because of that, and because I had seen and liked their film, I assumed they were going to be the winners.

"I was still pretty devastated when we lost. It lasted about 20 minutes, then I sat back and enjoyed the show the way everybody had told me to do. It really is a wonderful show when you see it mounted live. I was afraid to look at Gunnarsson. I assumed that if I felt badly, he must feel worse..."

"We had champagne on the limo ride back to the hotel, sat with Marg Champion during dinner, and Louise and I danced into the wee hours, to tunes provided by what must be the oldest bunch of jobbing musicians in the Western World. Then I discovered I'd lost my wallet, which kind of put a damper on things. But Harold, our chauffeur - our chauffeur, see how easy this whole thing is - brought my wallet 'round to the hotel the next day.

## Aftermath

"Gunnarsson and I spent three more months in Mexico researching the film and two weeks in Los Angeles getting 'interest' in it before coming back to Toronto in July. Getting the outline right took a long time, as did writing a research-

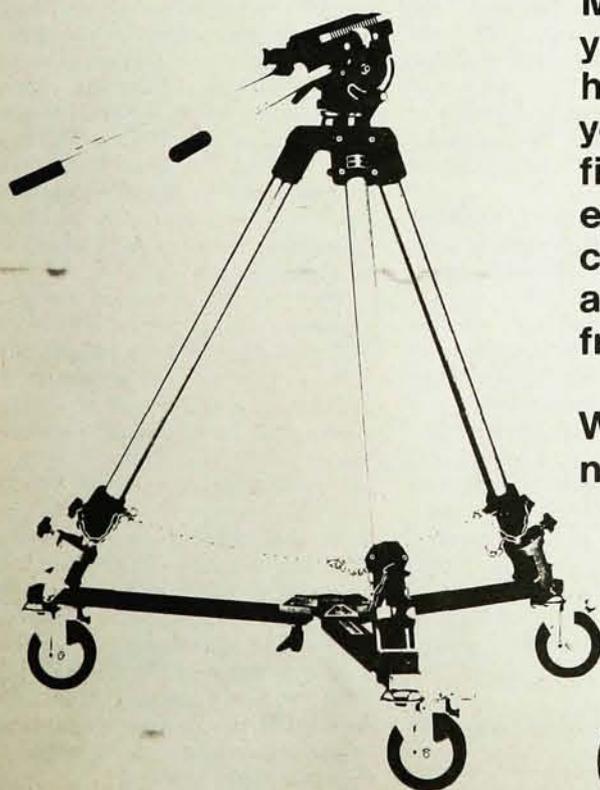
related article for Saturday Night magazine, but eventually I finished both things. We've bought the rights to the Latin American film back from the Film Board (who are moving out of low-budget feature-film co-productions in a big way, which is a shame for those of us who are moving it). The CFDC have made a solid investment in the first-draft screenplay and the Saturday Night article will come out in June. At the moment, I'm doing one of the eight half-hours Atlantis is co-producing with the Board. The story I'm adapting was written by Morley Callaghan. The film will be directed by Don McBrearty, whose *Boys and Girls*, wouldn't you know it, is up for an Oscar this year..."

"As far as I can see, the nomination hasn't led directly to any work, but it hasn't hurt me, either. Financially I'm headed for a pretty good year. The problem is trying to write award-winning material every time out. You can't really expect to do that. All you can do is your best. I went through quite a long period after the awards of feeling that my best wasn't good enough, but I think I'm more or less over that now..."

"At the moment, Canada looks better to me than it has in some time. Maybe it's circumstances maybe it's me, but I'm cautiously optimistic about being able to do the things I want to do here. There's a sense of community among the film people I know here, and a lot of talented people coming up, giving it a go. I don't know if anything will come of what we're doing, but I do know we're all trying..."

"I want to wish this year's nominees the best of luck. My advice is have a wonderful time. I'm sure they all will." ●

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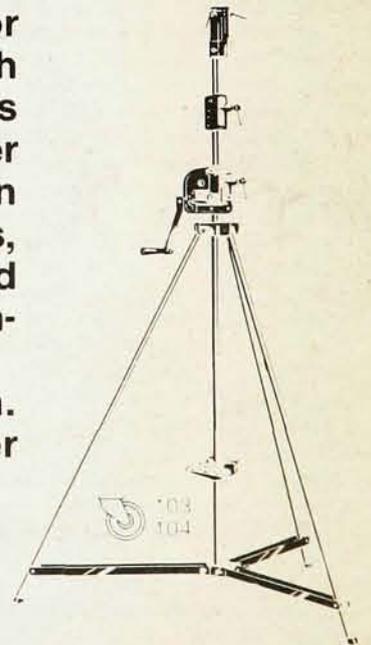


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