



decision on tape is false. It's very easy to go back and make a revision with the new technology.

That's the thing that attracted me right away, this kind of immediacy. It's a big advantage in today's world where things have to happen faster. Television responds faster.

Cinema Canada: *The Motion Picture Institute of America did tests some time back which seemed to indicate that editing video was fully fifty per cent faster than editing film. Would you agree?*

Ted Rouse: My experience at Mobile Image would support that it's at least twice as fast on video. A normal ninety-minute television show or two-hour feature film should have a total post-production schedule of sixteen to eighteen weeks on film. We have clients who can normally get through that in six to eight weeks video editing – including sound.

Cinema Canada: *That was to translate into a financial advantage.*

Ted Rouse: Of course it does. The thing that immediately puts off any producer of film on his first TV project is that first glance at the rate sheet. He sees \$500 an hour and he just can't cope! Eight dollars a minute!

What he doesn't realize, of course, is that at that point the creative decisions have all been made in a cheaper cassette "off-line" edit. The edit decisions made in that session can be stored on a computer disk that will then carry the information needed to conform the master tapes. By the time you reach the \$500 per hour "on-line" machines you're working much faster.

Cinema Canada: *And you save in all the stages of lab costs.*

Ted Rouse: Exactly. You're saving stages all down the line. Instead of original negative, workprint, neg. cut, answer print and air print, you have only the cassette dubs of the original material, which produce the "off-line" edit cassette, and the original material itself which produces the edited master.

Cinema Canada: *Aside from the savings, television seems more secure than film.*

Ted Rouse: Television seems to work as far as financing is concerned. It seems to be more "up front" in the sense that you know more about what you're doing before you go in. You package all the money based on the project you want to do. You do it, you deliver it and you get paid. Ancillary rights are down the line.

Film is still a high-spec thing. The independent producer is still stuck with pulling together money from what are usually non-distribution sources. And

Goodbye film, hello video

An interview with Ted Rouse

Thinking back to my days in the CFDC, I remembered what Mike Spencer had always said – that the future in terms of Canadian production was in television because the distribution was there. The distribution for Canadian movies had never really been.

That was when I started to think about television. I had watched companies like Glenn Warren grow and become important. New television networks were opening up and there was a lot of talk about pay-TV. And I felt in my own mind that the Canadian film industry as such wasn't going to survive. And while the movies had their ups and downs, I noticed that there was always television. That was when I met Wilson Markle and became part of Mobile Image.

Cinema Canada: *Having made the move from film to tape, what would you say is the biggest difference between the two?*

Ted Rouse: Clearly the editing. Tape offers immediacy – the opportunity to watch a commercial or a show come together quickly.

Comparing this to the movie business, I think an awful lot of time is spent agonizing over decisions that don't mean anything in the end. That are not worth the effort.

In electronic editing, you have to make decisions very quickly – and very likely the first decision you make is going to be right no matter long you spend agonizing over it, as you would in the film business. And the idea that you're locked in once you've made a

by Julian Aynsley

A former head of the CFDC (now Telefilm Canada) in Toronto, Ted Rouse is a University of Saskatchewan graduate in theatre who moved east in 1965.

He first joined Robert Lawrence productions and worked in various capacities in the documentary and industrial film units beginning as assistant editor and finally working on a special feature for Expo '67 as production manager.

He became interested in the feature film industry in 1970-71, the year of Rowdyman and Face-off, and became part of a small group which developed an idea called "Last of the Big Guns" (which became Paperback Hero).

It was in 1972 that he went to the CFDC as co-ordinator of English language projects working with the Corporation's first executive director, Michael Spencer, during the period that produced Claude Jutra, David Cronenberg, André Forcier, Allan King, and many others.

After five years he went out on his own in a consulting practice, servicing brokerage houses and completion guarantees for producers during the boom in tax-shelter movies, during which he was also Canadian production manager on Murder By Decree.

He spent the following two years working freelance and with Media-vision, and in 1982 moved into the electronic side of the industry when he joined Mobile Image, a state-of-the-art video production and post-production facility in Toronto.

Cinema Canada: *Would you describe the factors that influenced your decision to move from film production into television?*

Ted Rouse: There were two things, really. The desperate financial state of the Canadian feature film industry and the incredible technological advances that were being made on the electronic side.

1981 had been the absolute bottom year for the film industry. And it was very disillusioning because all of us had worked so bloody hard to build up an industry. You'd think after ten years it would have had some kind of legs. It didn't. As soon as the tax shelter money started to abandon ship it was terrible.

At the same time I was hearing all about things like computerized editing. That sounded exciting to me. It sounded like the future. And it sounded like it was going to happen.

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that's tough, particularly for an independent just starting out.

Cinema Canada: *What about the difference in "look" between video and film - or is that still considered a big issue since the video image continues to improve?*

Ted Rouse: It's less of an issue all the time. A coming system will increase the number of lines in the N.T.S.C. signal and approximate 35 mm film on existing television sets. Mind you, I think that sometimes there is an over-emphasis on getting the absolute pure picture that looks like Kodak film on television.

It's true that the artistic gap between television and film is narrowing, but that's because of more than just the technical differences. It has to do with the attitude of the people involved, and how they approach the project. The "look" of tape, which everyone complains about, has more to do with the one who is lighting it and the one who is shooting it than it does with technical limitations.

For instance, too many TV lighting directors have come from the "light-every-corner-in-the-set" line of thinking - understandably since they have always been dealing with multi-camera shoots.

But you don't hire a lighting director when you're shooting film. You hire a D.O.P. He is ultimately responsible for the product and he hires the gaffers and electricians to help. Basically the cameraman is responsible for the look and he sets the light for every shot.

Now if you approach a tape shoot the way you approach a film shoot, you get a much better look. I can show you footage shot by film cameramen trained in video, and the look is entirely different.

Now, if you're obsessed with the film look in terms of electronic cinematography, there is still a way to go for video in some respects, particularly in the subtlety of the grey scales. It's very difficult to get the nice even shadow that you get on Kodak 35 millimeter film - particularly the new high-rated ASA. That spectrum of light to dark is still wider on film.

Cinema Canada: *And there are more lenses available for film cameras.*

Ted Rouse: I know what you mean, but that's changing too. Twenty years ago zoom lenses were introduced to television cameras and now practically every television camera in the world used for commercial or broadcast purposes uses zoom lenses. That technology has followed us into this new era of single-camera, single-tape shooting. And you can always spot the look of a television camera with a zoom lens.

Recently however, newer systems like the Panacam or the EC35 allow you the use of the wide angles and the prime lenses, and that really changes the "look" as well.

Cinema Canada: *Have you done any work with parallel systems of the sort that Francis Ford Coppola was developing - shooting film but editing on videotape?*

Ted Rouse: We're looking at a project now where the client wants to shoot on negative film but do the entire post-production on tape right down to the soundtrack. However, he wants to have the option of going back to his edited cassette and lifting off his edge code numbers to cut the negatives.

Now that assumes that there won't be any difference between the television and the theatrical products, which is an assumption that a lot of people, myself included, would disagree with.

That aside however, it is possible to shoot on 35 millimeter film and transfer it to tape in such a way that both the edge code numbers and the time codes will be stored. So when you go back to cut the negatives, the edge codes can be retrieved from the videotape.

Cinema Canada: *Do you think this kind of thing will become popular and that people will become versatile in terms of working in both worlds?*

Ted Rouse: A number of people can. With today's techniques of single-came-

ra, single-videotape recording methods most of the people involved with a shoot would feel comfortable in either mode. The director would, the cameraman, actor, writer, and probably most of the technicians involved as well. In terms of the producer, that's someone who probably could move back and forth, but with difficulty. Probably the single exception is the editor. He's got to commit himself one way or the other. If he wants to stay up to date, however, he'd probably choose tape - it's quicker.

Cinema Canada: *What about sound-mixing? That can be an awkward transition, can't it?*

Ted Rouse: Sound in video is quite different from film. This is the biggest drawback for a producer who can't give up his film habits and techniques. If a producer tries to relate his film sound experience to his video experience, he will get himself into deep trouble.

Those producers who try to do a film sound mix and get it back onto the one inch master often don't succeed the first time because the time code gets lost between the processes. That the key word, time-code. In the film business, you deal with sprocket holes. Their equivalent in video is the time code.

The best advice is to stick to an electronic mixdown from multitrack tape, which is done at a facility that has the ability to lock the video picture to the soundtrack.

Cinema Canada: *Do you think video will replace film?*

Ted Rouse: No. Motion picture will only get better, and television will get better. There's room for both markets.

Cinema Canada: *With television rapidly approaching the image quality of film, do you think that film will have to go the route of exaggerating what it still does best? I'm thinking of Spectacle, Imax and so forth.*

Ted Rouse: Oh yes, I firmly believe that. For one thing we'll get into more interesting sound in the theatres. I re-

member *Towering Inferno* with the rumbling in the theatre and *Apocalypse Now* with the multi-speaker effects. The potential for that is just fantastic.

"Some of that will filter down to television too, although it's not the same thing. I saw *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in the theatre and then at home and it still works best in the theatre."

Cinema Canada: *You have a grasp of both industries and both technologies. Would you consider going back to film?*

Ted Rouse: If I was living in L.A. perhaps. But in Canada, I don't view film as a way of earning a living.

As far as the film industry is concerned I definitely see Toronto, or even Canada as a whole, becoming more and more of a service industry to the American distributor. In other words, filming on location in Canada. Those who stay with film will probably spend more time doing service jobs than original production.

Look around you. I don't see too many original Canadian movies being made for theatrical distribution anymore...

Cinema Canada: *That's rather depressing.*

Ted Rouse: Only in terms of feature films. It simply means that the growth is in a different direction because I do see television production increasing.

Many of the creative people I know who used to work in film are now completely involved in television production.

Even if no one is counting very much on pay-TV anymore, there are other factors such as the Broadcast Fund which, by definition, is primarily for television. If you end up on the tube, you might as well start with it. That has been and will continue to be a big boost for electronic production.

When you consider that electronic facilities have doubled in Canada in the last couple of years, the outlook is really very optimistic. And I think that even the people currently in film will very shortly come to see that.

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