

OPINIONS

On Prostitution in Edmonton

by Jim Tustian CSC

The Agency called... they have a nice little commercial they'd like you to do for a client. They regret however that there isn't much time to get it done as it has to be on the air in three weeks. It's also somewhat regrettable that there isn't a great budget allotted, but you've done a great job before, so there's no problem with you *doing a great job* again. When you finally get the little masterpiece on the air, everyone's happy. You've done that great job and the commercial is getting all the response it was designed to.

You go out for a drink with a knowledgeable acquaintance and he tells you that the agency has just completed production on another commercial and it

looks great. Fortunately they had a proper budget to do the thing. The production house out of Vancouver did a great job. You were saved the problem of even quoting on the commercial; as a matter of fact you didn't know it was being done. You, the dependable, qualified *saviour* producer have been taken for another ride. Meanwhile, your commercial has just been given more airtime via more time-buying-bucks. One agency stated the reason as "Secrecy" when their campaign for a Politician/Mayoralty hopeful had his production done by an imported crew from Vancouver.

These incidents occur every day. It's not only the agencies, but television stations also insist on providing commercial production on a partial cost basis, writing their costs off in the time buying. Where is the commercial producer heading... and what can he do about it? I guess one of the best things is to take a convenient trip out of town when the client ain't got no bread or time... □

Credo in Fredericton

by Arthur Makosinski

My first films were "shot" on 35mm strips of notebook paper. The films consisted of still drawings and depicted my childhood heroes in various situations and adventures. To show them, I built my own projector, and had regular weekly shows.

That was back in Poland, when I was about 12 years old. A year later, shortly before we left Poland, I connected all my films together on one "reel". My grandmother, so proud of my efforts, took the reel to show to a neighbour. On the way back she stopped at the shed to feed our goats. That was the last I ever saw of the films. The roll somehow fell out of my grandma's apron, she did not notice it and the goats had a feast.

Ever since then I have been trying to remake them on 16mm. But it wasn't till we came to this continent, that I was able to afford cameras and film.

My first effort was a 16mm short **P.S.** The audio track was made by stretching out the Beatles' "Tomorrow never knows". The vid was made on a motorcycle. The film if anything, served as a showpiece and attracted some young people interested in filmmaking.

In 1968, in Fredericton, together with David Dawes, another filmmaker, we made the first film at University of New Brunswick. It was a 15 minute, 16mm,

colour and sound effort, called **Next Day**, of a day in the life of a student at UNB. The film wasn't all that bad and was widely shown locally.

At that time there really were no books about filmmaking available to me, and I still could not understand the sound sync process. The sound for **Next Day** was recorded directly on the mag stripe of the release print. And what a hassle that was: we didn't have a mag projector on the campus, so I bought a mag head for the B&H, and made my own recording electronics.

Later that year in conjunction with the NFB we organised a series of film seminars with guest speakers coming sometimes from Montreal and Halifax. But even they could not answer the practical questions about filmmaking; the editors weren't sure how the camera speeds were related to the mag recorder, the cameramen knew just about nothing about sound, and the directors, well, they just didn't know anything.

In 1969 I left Fredericton and enrolled at New York University's Film Production Certificate programme. There, all my questions were answered. I started making synced shorts, and worked for other producers on documentaries. I also worked as sound man on a feature detective story, and a pornographic-rock-bible feature called **Rock Sodom and Gommorah**. I could have continued, but the shootingtime-money-time philosophy of the commercial film business was too much for me. I came back to Canada, and I went straight to the NFB in Montreal, that great maple pie in the minds of Canadian filmmakers. I was really impressed by their facilities. There was an opening for me in the electronic workshop, but they weren't interested in seeing my films. I suppose a technician doesn't have built-in creativity in his balls like true artists. Anyway, it was a tossup between the job as a technician at the NFB, or returning to UNB as a technician. →

Of the above Opinions, the "Credo" was not sent for publication but rather as an introduction by Mr. Makosinski to the Editors. We wanted to share it with the readers as, together with "On Prostitution", it documents the trials and persistence common to independent Canadian producer-director-technicians. Ed.

I came back to beautiful Fredericton. Since I finished my degree in the States I was now making more money, and was ready to spend it on films.

I made more shorts. Better ones. But still could not afford a silent camera to do true sync. Finally, in August 74, I received a \$4,700 grant from the Canada Council, to make a 20 minute short called **What Comes First**. Things are now looking up. We are more than half way through making it at the time of writing. I am using my own Nagra SN and Eclair ACL.

It's sort of a fun struggle. People ask me after a show: "Wow, you didn't make this film." "O no, it came with the projector," I reply. "Are you fixing it?" "Yep". "Listen Art, I have this TV at home..."

Who says you can make money in filmmaking.

I believe in my ability to make a good short. I think

a short should be entertaining to a wide audience, and not just to a group of filmmakers who *understand*. Nevertheless a filmmaker should not be a slave of the viewers and make films to suit audiences or jump in the latest trend that happens to be going around. If a filmmaker can not present his subject or a story in an interesting way, he should quit. And for me what is interesting is that which is new. And "the new" is what is perhaps the hardest thing to create, a true measure of my kind of an artist.

Here in New Brunswick making a film can be like establishing a bordello; first no one really believes such things can exist here, secondly, seems no one wants to take part in it because it's immoral, and thirdly, it can never be as good as the ones that exist in Toronto anyway. □

Mr. Faulkner's Trojan Horse

by Stephen Chesley

On Tuesday, August 5th, The Honourable Hugh Faulkner, Secretary of State of this fair dominion, rode up to the assembled multitudes of the Canadian Film Industry on a perfect white steed – or he claimed that it was. In a long-overdue but magnanimous gesture, he offered it to the skeptical throng, announcing his intentions, in both English and French, to help them create a new world with the help of this magical horse. They reluctantly agreed and received it gracefully, mainly because it was all they would get, and they knew it. No little time later, they discovered that the Honourable had misled them again, or in his simplicity just made another error, and their industry floundered and was absorbed into an imitative, branch plant, just like the rest of Canadian industry. The Honourable didn't know or possibly didn't care that such a result had occurred, for he had, by this time, been accorded a higher honour, that of Royal Senator. The rest of the Governing Body did not notice, because they concerned themselves with far weightier conundrums than Culture, such as preventing eggs from turning into chickens or replacing lush fields with concrete runways. The Canadian Film Industry did not care, for they had long ago fled to foreign climes, where their ability had been received with open arms and where they achieved Fame and Fortune... back home.

By the time you read this, about two months will have passed since Mr. Faulkner's statement. The press has reacted, the industry has reacted, and even the theatre chains have reacted. Mr. Faulkner has been out of town. I don't mean to imply that he has run away, but he hasn't offered to explain his actions in public either. One must, therefore, assess his proposals on the basis of his past actions and by examining closely what, in fact, his statement says.

Basically, there are three areas in Mr. Faulkner's proposals. First, he says that the theatre chains have "agreed" (Why must they "agree"? They can also be

coerced by long-lasting legislation.) to provide four weeks per year per theatre – not per screen, thereby reducing the effect already – for Canadian features. That's only three months after Mr. Faulkner told the Commons Broadcasting Committee that his previous quota had not worked, and directly after he was advised by his top policy advisor that voluntary quotas don't work. He says he will monitor the new agreement, after admitting that the old one was not, and could not be, monitored properly.

Both chains have stated that they would play only commercially successful movies, and that unsuccessful ones would be pulled, thus almost confirming the danger of re-runs. Neither would they pull a winner to play a Canadian film; that's fine, but they could run a trailer for a Canadian film along with a huge success like **Jaws**.

Of course a voluntary quota suits the chains and Mr. Faulkner very well. It's much easier to let a voluntary agreement die than to repeal legislation. One cannot blame the chains; they achieved what they wanted. And to restrict the quota to a year allows ease in monitoring and great opportunity for quota evaluation; only one or two English-language features will be released this year.

Mr. Faulkner has reinforced a failed system.

The second aspect is the investment by the chains. The addition of Odeon is welcome: too long has Famous been flying solo. But \$1.7 million is only less than one per cent of the total box office gross, and less than five per cent of the dollars that leave Canada for foreign pockets. And putting the bite, even if one tooth is used, on the exhibitors, avoids completely the place where the real money falls: ten foreign distributors earn some forty per cent of total box office revenue.

Avoiding a levy, Mr. Faulkner's "agreement" also impedes the development of an industry, because instead of placing funds in producers' pockets directly, the income from a film can virtually disappear in distribution expenses, ad costs, house nuts, print costs, etc.

But it is when we enter into the definition of "Canadian" in the 100% deduction outline, that incredulity renders one, not speechless, but howling.

It is reported that one of the reasons the policy