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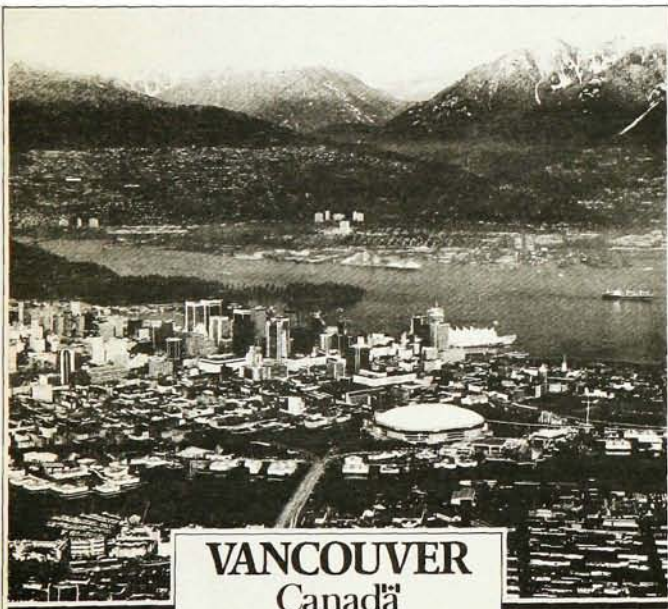
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*Shoot Alberta*

**LINDA EARL & CHARLES MANDEL**



**THE FOURTH WAR**

**C**ALGARY - Luckily my hair was the right length, above the collar of U.S. army uniforms, and I got six days work as one of the four token office W. A. C.'s on *The Fourth War*. The \$1.4 million John Frankenheimer action-drama to be released in early 1990, possibly with a name change, wrapped April 20th after eight weeks of a snowy, cold shoot in the Bragg Creek area, 20 minutes west of Calgary.

The plot of *The Fourth War* capitalizes on the international splash that *glasnost* is making, and from my perspective seemed to add some warmth to east-west Canadian crew relations. Roy Scheider stars as U.S. Army Colonel Jack Knowles, Jurgen Prochnow (*Das Boot* fame) as Russian Colonel N. A. Valachev: two tough military men posted to the West German/Czechoslovakian border who can't quite get used to the changing times and the idea that their new roles are more that of amicable public relations men than cunning aggressors.

At times the script called for 100 extras mobilized as Russian and American combat soldiers and then later on scaled down to form a 30-member U.S. camp core. Putting us through our paces was retired U.S. Marine Captain Dale Dye, contracted to play the Master Sergeant as well as the film's technical advisor, ensuring that our "covers" were creased just-so and our attitude fit our military rank. (The charismatic vet knows his stuff; he was also the military consultant on *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*.) Like the army hierarchy which Dye imposed there was also a visible crew hierarchy with Alberta members on the third rung jumping to commands from Toronto seconds who in turn took their orders from the handpicked international firsts. And so it goes in the world of off-shore productions - an observation, not a criticism. If anything the outside features create a positive melting pot where Alberta production crews gain valuable experience, make those all important cross-country contacts and begin to feel like they belong to a Canadian industry. Frankenheimer had nothing but praise for the Canadian crews' refreshing attitude and physical fortitude when braving -30 degree Celsius temperatures during the long February night shoots.

The only minor irritant was the fact that no one got paid for the 20-minute trip to the Bragg Creek base camp. IATSE, ACTRA and the DGC have agreed to include Bragg Creek within the city boundary so there is no compensation for mileage. The concession means production savings and repeat business. *The Fourth War* is the third feature that Hollywood producer Bob Rosen has brought to the area. He discovered Alberta's great backdrops in 1970 when he shot *Little Big Man* on the Morley Reserve and then last May and June he brought Frankenheimer in to direct *Dead Bang* with the Calgary area posing as Oklahoma.

**MOVE OVER HOLLYWOOD... the Japanese are Coming**

In August Haruki Kadokawa Films Inc. of Tokyo will be on location west of Calgary on the Morley Flats shooting the major battle scenes in the 15th-century Japanese historical drama, *Heaven and Earth*. Doug McLeod, the Canadian production supervisor, is already busy in preliminary development and research for the epic feature which will have the largest cast, specifically dressed for camera, possibly ever. The extravagant battle scenes call for two thousand extras and over 500 horses. As McLeod says, it also calls for new organizational methods. "We're pioneering new data bases to cope with the huge inventory and crews. A long prep period means fewer headaches and greater savings down the road."

McLeod estimates that he'll need 50 on-camera production assistants who are willing to work long hours for the basic wage but for a very important film credit. This is good news for Calgary film students who are encouraged to drop off their resumes at the Kadokawa Films office based at the International Hotel. Interviews will begin late this month.

*Heaven and Earth* is a \$40 million picture starring two of Japan's most celebrated actors, Ken Watanabe and Masahiko Tsugawa. The 30-day Calgary shoot starting August 8 - September 6th means an expenditure of about 10-15 per cent of the overall budget. Momentum Manufacturing Ltd. of Edmonton has the contract for the huge extra wardrobe. You don't have to look oriental to be cast because the detailed costumes will take care of the foreground and background looks.

**NOT TO BE OVERSHADOWED...**

Calgary independent producer Wendy Hill-Tout laments the fact that she is a hostage to provincial and federal grants in order to finance her first feature film, *Midnite Cafe*. "We're forced into this situation because they have taken away the capital cost allowance and we haven't got the perks to approach private investors."

The 30ish writer/director and now co-producer has been in development for two years on *Midnite Cafe*, a \$1.2 million comedy about women and relationships. Like many scripts, *Midnite Cafe* grew out of a conversation in a bar between Hill-Tout and her best friend and now co-writer, Lynda Shorten. The two writers were fantasizing about the search for the perfect man. Four drafts later the bleak pessimistic view turned funny. After awhile, says Hill-Tout, "you have to have a sense of humor when dealing with relationships."

The search is now on for the right comedic actress to play Melissa, a would-be visual artist and one of the film's five principal characters. In this simple telling it may sound like *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* but, says Hill-Tout, "that's where any similarity stops."

*Cafe* will be shot on location in an undisguised Calgary this coming August "even if I have to shoot it on 16mm and defer some of the salaries," says a determined Hill-Tout. "Making it can't be as hard as writing it."

AMPDC, NFB, Telefilm and SOGIC are all part of *Cafe's* production package. The co-producer is **Bernadette Payeur** from ACPAV, an independent cooperative in Montreal which is currently shooting *Le Party*. Hill-Tout and Payeur met at the Montreal Film Festival two years ago and discovered a common interest in making films about women's lives and social issues.

**EDMONTON CLIPS**

EDMONTON - The Economic Development department of the Alberta government is conducting an internal study, looking at what other provinces have done since the loss of the federal Capital Cost Allowance. Ontario and Quebec have already instituted tax shelters or rebates, while B. C. filmmakers are demanding similar programs from their own provincial government. In Alberta, Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association president **George Christoff** has called for a program similar to Ontario's or Quebec's. And both Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation executive **Gary Toth** and **Bill Marsden** of the Economic Development department have expressed their wishes to see the federal government reinstate the CCA. Marsden, who is the director of film development for the Industry Development Division, is off to meet with his provincial counterparts in Toronto.

**TINSEL MEDIA TAKES AWARD**

Congratulations to Edmonton's Tinsel Media Productions, who picked up an Ohio State Award on April 6. Tinsel Media took first place in the category of best one-hour documentary in the physical sciences for *Buried In Ice: The Franklin Mystery*. *Buried In Ice*, a look at the discovery of the ill-fated Franklin expedition, was produced by Tinsel and aired on Nova/PBS. Tinsel's **Nick Bakyta** was on hand to pick up the award presented at Washington, D. C.'s National Arts Centre. The Ohio State Awards are given for excellence in the areas of educational, informational and public affairs broadcasting.

**BYE-BYE CANNES**

As they say, the final cut is the cruelest one of all. True Blue Film's *Bye Bye Blues* (directed by Anne Wheeler) won't be competing at the Cannes Festival. The European selection committee viewed a 3/4 inch video dub of a fine cut with a temporary mix, but declined to pass the film. Still, the True Blue crew seems to be in fine form. The Los Angeles-based Image Organization Inc. is the sales agent for the film, and they'll take a 10-minute promotional trailer to Cannes. As well, the film will be submitted to the Moscow Film Festival at the end of the month.



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