

on the shoot

On the shoot the glamour and tinsel of cinema gives way to hard work, tedium and endless trying to get that perfect shot. Natalie Edwards visits Don Shebib's *Second Wind*, and captures the flavor of real filmmaking.

by Natalie Edwards

In which I visit the set for **Second Wind**, Don Shebib's new feature film.

The location was one of Toronto's most exclusive semi-suburban retreats where \$100,000 ranch homes are strewn midst cul de sacs and curved crescents among the hills and streams of the valley at the northern edge of town.

The house was easily identifiable. Sound and equipment trucks were lined up at the curb, and the thick cables led directly to a doorstep piled with boxes of assorted donuts, the unenviable but inevitable food of film crews everywhere.

Inside, shooting was underway in the sunroom, its once roomy proportions strangled with stands, lights, gells, camera, cables and personnel. The little intimate scene would be produced, as usual, before an audience of technicians, script girl, first and second AD (assistant directors), boom man, gaffer, prop people and of course the cameraman and his operator, *and* the director. The sound man was forced to sit in the adjoining dining room.

In preparation for the episode in which Lindsay Wagner, as the mother, talks to her little eight year old son about the problems caused by his father's new love-track running, a measuring tape is stretched from the camera to Miss Wagner's stand-in, and light meters held appraisingly here and there. The operator practices the dolly the camera will take to close in on the mother and son during their talk. Gells are adjusted. Props checked. Finally Miss Wagner is called, and after a repeat of all checks, the famous words are quietly spoken: "Action. Roll it."

It is followed soon by that equally famous word: "Cut."

The first take was cut because an edge of a gell showed in the frame.

The second take was cut because the camera dollyed over a cable.

The third take was cut because a dog outside began a loud persistent bark. The second AD disappeared and presently the bark became a surprised yelp, followed by a muffled sound and then silence. The AD returned.

Miss Wagner again started the scene with a long study of

the magazine through which she was to thumb, before she asked her film-son to join her.

"Could you please get into the scene a bit more quickly?" asked Don Shebib politely, "We're really rather desperate for time."

The fourth take was cut because the camera ran out of film.

Through all these and the ensuing almost innumerable takes, everyone was calm, good natured, relaxed. The ambience was professionally pleasant. The AD occasionally called out for silence in the rest of the house when the sounds from rooms, where other performers and technicians waited, became too evident, but otherwise the atmosphere bore more resemblance to an operating room in a hospital during an important lengthy piece of surgery, than a theatrical endeavour.

Finally a take began which looked good. Sound level was fine, boom in place but not in frame (difficult in a confined space), lights and gells OK, camera gliding smoothly in its rehearsed trip to peer at the performers, no lines forgotten, when Miss Wagner stopped the scene by holding up her hand.

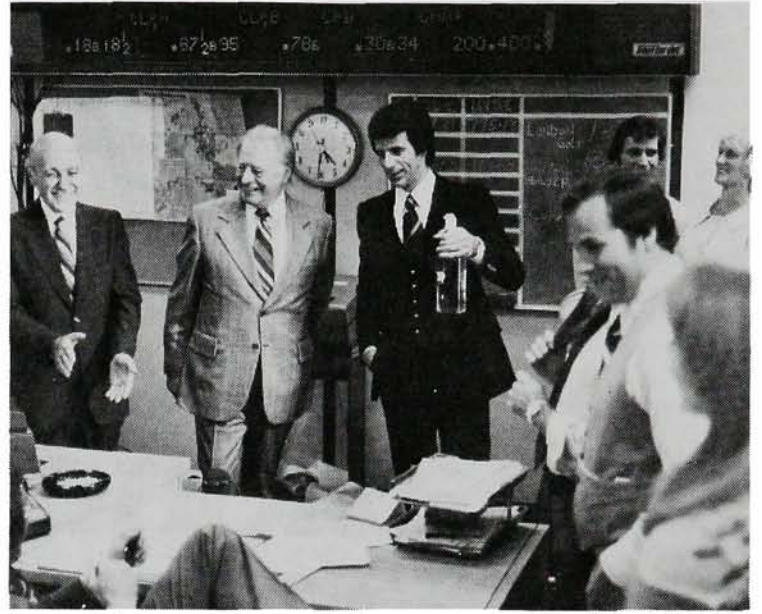
She explained to Shebib that the boy was looking directly at her at a point where she thought he was either supposed to be looking out the window behind her or across the room.

"I liked that," said Shebib quietly. "It made sense. That's why I didn't stop the scene."

And they prepared to begin another take. Shebib was as stoical as a mother, as controlled as a monk. When these qualities of his were later complimented, he favored me with a wry smile which led me to believe he was not always like this and that some of the badinage about his variety of vocabulary and volume of approach was true, and that it was not confined, in its freshness and vitality, to expressions of contempt at conferences on Canadian film and comments on Canadian critics, but occasionally found its way onto his set. My impression of a civilized and extraordinarily well-controlled director might just ruin the reputation of Shebib as a master of the expletive. Too bad, but truth will out when **Cinema Canada** visits the shoot.



James Naughton plays Roger Mathieson, a young stockbroker who is challenged by long distance running.



Actors Bob Slee and Robert Goodier with Naughton.



James Naughton and Ken Pogue



Alan Levy and Lindsay Wagner play Mathieson's son and wife.

Second Wind

by Don Shebib

To be released February 1976



Vivian Reis and Louis Del Grande with Lindsay Wagner in a party scene at the Mathieson's.



Tedde Moore plays another new interest in Roger Mathieson's life.