

FILM COCKTAILS

Episode One

A Tale of Two Drinkers

A television station has a greater appetite for films than twice the staff can produce – sensibly. The production staff is expected, nay forced, to consistently produce good shows on half the budget of poor ones. With this in mind, it is imperative that they learn the gentle art of internal politics. The ultimate law is that every hour must be filled. Herewith a tale of ten minutes of one of these hours.

A TV sports producer and his production assistant decided to make a short film of the "Bestonian Gymnasts." These shapely girls do dance routines like musical team gymnastics. The production meeting was held (as usual) in the local tavern on Thursday. The film crew was not invited (also as usual). The aesthetic merit of some of the dancers increased in direct proportion to the number of drinks consumed. Herewith the results of their monumental planning.

Friday morning the gymnasts were phoned and they agreed to devote Saturday morning to the venture. That afternoon the music they were to dance to was recorded in an empty room on a slightly out of tune piano. It sounded like 12 different two-finger exercises.

The soundman played back this unmusical abortion, in the middle of Wilmot's pasture early Saturday morning, to allow the dancers to rehearse. Meantime, a scaffold was erected for one of the two cameras. By the time the camera was set up there was time for one run-through before lunch. Half the gymnasts had made other arrangements for the afternoon so this had to be it.

"ROLL FILM"

Each cameraman assumed that the other was taking the master shot and that he only had to shoot additional material. Sometimes both cameras stopped at the same time. No routine was completely recorded. Some of the gymnasts agreed to stay on so that they could get some closeup material. Once again the soundman operated the antique tape recorder playback. It was as musical as a wonky metronome. At full blast the three-inch speaker competed favorably with a harvester in the next field. As before, each cameraman assumed that the other was getting closeups and that he only needed to acquire some medium shots.

Now this is real planning. The cows had been removed from this field the day before in case the dancers were barefoot. It should be noted that by this time the producer was on his way to Winnipeg, and the production assistant who was directing, loved football, baseball, and hockey. He was also very good at videotape recording.

Blue Monday came. It was time to screen the rushes. Because of the low budget the rushes were the original film, and would also be used on air. The production assistant (away on another film binge) left a note with the film: "The producer wishes to see the ten minute finished product on Thursday, had a few problems as you will see. Good luck."

The film editor was the quiet backroom type. He rarely spoke and didn't like being spoken to; the kind of guy thought by many to be antisocial, and certainly "a little strange." Worse, he hated sports, but it was the only job where he'd be left alone. The fact that this was to be a musical item, did arouse his enthusiasm somewhat. He prepared himself for something a little more challenging than the usual sports footage. But as the film was projected the editor noted that there was no opening shot, no closing suggested, no story, no complete sequences, no sync, and not even a guide track. To top it all, the sound track (that two-finger piano joke) was useless.

It has been suggested that if the film editor isn't cranking his rewinds he isn't working. This is not true. Our man locked the door, went into a thirty-minute trance, and came up with this solution: first a large dose of Eno's. Then he timed the actions of the gymnasts with a stopwatch. Since the dance exercises were so varied it resulted in a whole page of figures. These notes he took to a record library. The budget didn't include the services of a music consultant so it took a whole day to select the music. Sections of each disc were checked with a stopwatch and a variable pitch tuning fork. Tuesday, sequences from three concertos were rearranged to match a visual progression. Wednesday, the picture was chopped up, marked, and also carefully rearranged to fit the new music until Thursday, by which time a complete ten-minute ballet was formed.

The producer received a letter of thanks. Soon afterwards, the production assistant was promoted to producer and the film editor became a confirmed drinker.

—David Adolphus, CFE

Affiliates Get The Vote!

Something that has been bothering Affiliate Members for some time, is that they don't get to vote in the business of the Guild.

O.K., in future, they do!

To compensate for the imbalance that might otherwise result, affiliates will be entitled to **one** vote and full members and associates will receive **two** votes each, on any occasion that a vote is called for, including elections. So, for those of you who are concerned with the business of the Guild, make sure you attend meetings and USE your votes.

Guild Annual Ball

It seems to be generally accepted, at least in Toronto, that the Guild's annual 'do' is the one most enjoyed by the film community. Naturally, we like to think it's the best so we have set the date for the CFEG 6th Annual Dinner, Dance and Awards night – Saturday, 17th November, 1973. We know the information is a little premature but if we don't book now, we don't get the same choice, as far as locale is concerned, later. We have booked the date – why don't you? We will shortly be announcing details regarding submission of films for the awards so if you've done anything special recently, think about it!

'Out-of-Town' – Out of Mind?

Certainly not true! For some time we, the executive of the CFEG, have been very concerned that the Guild is not getting many applications for membership from across Canada. In common with the directors' and cameramen's associations, most of our members live and work in the Toronto area. At present we have five members in Vancouver, two in Edmonton and a few in Montreal. There are many more out there and to make the Guild truly effective, frankly, we want to get them!

As a national organization, it is high time we became 'national' in the full sense of the word.

We feel that one of the main problems may be that we are organized from Toronto and people elsewhere seem to have some objection to this. Face it, an organization has to be run from somewhere and, as we started it here, this is where it happens to be. Why were similar groups not formed in other film areas? The answer, of course, is obvious! Not a sufficient number of people doing the same job in the same place, to justify it! (With the exception of Montreal and, possibly Vancouver). So, why don't they join us?

SHOOTING IN CANADA ?

Rent from the complete rental house

INEQUIP

Is it that they object to 'control' from Toronto? Do they object to sending fees and dues to Toronto? Do they not care enough about the dignified profession they are getting a living from? Do they not wish to be involved with others with a common interest? Are they only professional in the sense that they get paid for doing the job?

Too often, when a prospective member is approached, he will ask what membership in the Guild will do for him. Perhaps he should ask himself what can he do for the Guild? If he finds an answer to the last question, he may also find one for the first!

However, during our most recent executive meeting, among many other subjects, we discussed thoroughly the 'national' problem. What we have come up with, follows. First of all, we decided to appoint people who have helped us in the past, as Regional Directors. For a trial period we have appointed Ray Hall cfe as Regional Director, West Coast; Gerald Wilson cfe as Regional Director, Prairies; and Fred Hillier cfe as Regional Director, Eastern. Ontario will be organized by the National Executive Board from Toronto, as in the past. The first job for the Regional Directors will be to arrange for meetings to be held and endeavour to recruit new members in the area they represent. The Guild will pay any necessary expenses and also arrange any printing that may be needed.

The next step, we suggest, should be to form a local division and hold elections for a Regional Executive. Having done this, perhaps the financial structure should be arranged in a similar manner to the present one in Toronto. All initiation fees and dues would be held for local use except, say, five dollars per member to cover the cost of Cinema Canada, printing, postage and anything else that proves more economical to arrange from a national base.

What do you think?

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

Ken Page cfe - Montreal; Sydney Pearson cfe - Montreal; Rimmelt Hummelen - Toronto (Associate); Brigitte Bergen - Toronto (Affiliate); Murray McGregor - Toronto (Affiliate); Jim Munro - Toronto (Affiliate).

That's all from me for now!

Sincerely,

Phil Auguste cfe

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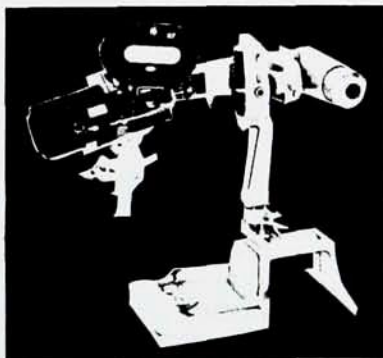
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