

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

On April 15 the Westbrook Theatre in Calgary hosted the world premiere of *Death Hunt*, the \$10 million action-adventure which filmed in the Banff/Canmore area from March to May 1980 in a storm of controversy. The Raymond Chow/Albert S. Ruddy production, which starred Charles Bronson and Lee Marvin, was based on the true story of RCMP pursuit of "Mad Trappers" Albert Johnson in the 1930's. The script of *Death Hunt* (née *Arctic Rampage*) drew heavy criticism from relatives of the historic characters, who claimed "gross distortion" of the facts, particularly with the portrayal of RCMP Corporal Edgar Millen (played by Marvin) as a drunkard, and the re-named pilot Wop May as a homicidal maniac. Prominent Alberta writer Rudy Wiebe continued the controversy (fueled by numerous letters to the editor in local newspapers) with charges that the *Death Hunt* writers pilfered ideas from his earlier (unproduced) *Mad Trapper* script. Meanwhile, cast and crew toiled at the specially constructed set in Canmore with a host of prominent Canadian actors, as well as seventy Albertans.

Canadian Odeon and Twentieth Century Fox re-carpeted the Westbrook for the premiere, with limousines, flowers and tuxedos in evidence. Producer Murray Shostak, actors Henry Beckman and August Schellenberg, Twentieth Century Fox representatives André Beaugard and Linda Goldenberg flew in for the occasion. Local crew and cast members in attendance included John Scott (wrangler) Jamie Brown (makeup and special effects) Jim Roberts (actor) and Trudy Work (production secretary). Producer Shostak introduced the film with words of praise for the benefits of filming in Alberta, which were greeted with mixed reaction from those crew members whose names were omitted in the credits, and those actors whose roles were reduced to near-extra category.

A reception at the historic

Wainwright Hotel in Heritage Park followed the screening. Canadian Odeon district manager Chris Van Snellenberg, advertising manager Ed Svihura, western general manager Barney Regan, and Astral-Columbia-Fox branch manager Barry Fillier attended, as well as Malcolm Harvey (Calgary Film Development Office) William Marsden (Director, Film Industry Development Office, Alberta Economic Development, Edmonton) Bruce MacDonald (Business Development, City of Calgary) and Mayor Ralph Klein (former broadcaster recently elected Mayor of Calgary).

Canadian Odeon reports that *Death Hunt* is playing on 35 screens in Alberta, and 125 screens across Canada, with a Texas opening slated soon.

On March 13 an advance screening of BM Film Corp's *The High Country* (a.k.a. *The First Hello*) was held at the Brentwood Cinema after a small reception at the Calgary Inn. Lawyer Gabor Zinner hosted the gathering for producer Bruce Mallen, who sent telexed greetings. Directed by Harvey Hart, *The High Country* (starring Linda Purl and Timothy Bottoms, with Paul Jolicoeur as "Squeaky") was filmed in the Banff area in the fall of 1979. Actors Jolicoeur and Grant Lowe, 2nd stuntman Billy Groves were present, in addition to Jack and Peggy Goth, Harry Cole (*Ghostkeeper*) and Maggie Murphy (Western Casting).

The Alberta 75 Showcase held in Edmonton in March featured film projects assisted by the 75th Anniversary Commission: Goshawk Film Productions' *Spirit of 75*; Thoughtbubble Productions Ltd's *The Threadbare Mayor* (with puppet by Ronnie Burkett); Filmwest Associates' *Our Architectural Heritage*; and Tinsel and Sham Film Productions' *Alberta-Sketches of a Province*; plus *Peace by Piece*; *Fitness Carol*; *Heritage Alberta*; *The Riders*; *The Homecoming*; *Tones of Two Cities*; *They Led the Way*; and *To Climb Chief Mountain*.

A reception at Government House in Edmonton launched the Showcase. Dr. Jerry Ezekiel of Film and Literary Arts, Alberta Culture, was master of ceremonies for the film showings. Not available for screening were *Alberta: The Time and the Place* (Londalita Films) *Ride into History* (Precious Films Ltd.) and *Generations* (Century II Motion Pictures Ltd.)

Ron Brown of Century II reports that *Generations*, a one hour television pilot, is near completion. The 75th Anniversary project (about a family conflict over an inherited farm) was directed by Frank Fry, and will soon be available for private screening. Nearing production is the historical drama *Edmonton Chronicles*. Also in progress, reports President Brown, are *Finding Out* (a half-hour television program for Alberta Agriculture) *Klondike Days* (a half-hour travel program) and three other projects.

On April 13, Alberta Culture and the Alberta Women's Bureau co-hosted a screening of *The Persons Case*, a one-hour television drama based on Emily Murphy's historic struggle to have women legally declared persons in 1929. The ACCESS television production starred Frances Hyland, and was written by Sharon Pollock. John Wright directed the cast, which included Tanya Riga, Angela Gann and Stu Carson. The Alberta Women's Bureau and Alberta Culture co-sponsored the \$126,500 production. A wine and cheese reception followed the screening at the University of Calgary.

Congratulations to recent award winners: Tom Peacocke brought home a Genie for his performance in *Hounds of Notre Dame*; Sharon Pollock won an ACTRA award for her radio script *Sweet Land of Liberty*; and CFCN picked up three awards at the CanPro Awards in Victoria. Rick Francis, manager of CFCN Film Productions, reports that the documentary *Interferon* (produced and narrated by Mayor Ralph Klein in the days before the election) won a Gold Award for Best Information Special; *The*

Chucks, an essay on chuckwagon racing, won a Gold Award for the Sports Special Category, and CFCN Lethbridge won a certificate of merit for *This Day Belongs to Me*.

The Calgary Inn was the site of a reception sponsored by AMPIA and the CFDC on April 6, Ian McDougall, Ken Rosenberg and Karen Laurence toured Calgary and Edmonton, meeting with interested parties... Douglas Film Group premiered their new dramatic television series *The Garage Gazette* on March 21 at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton. Donaleen Saul and Geri Cook wrote the scripts about the adventures of a children's newspaper. Michael Douglas directed the cast, which included Doug Paulson, Sharon Lolownia, Brad Hodson and Val Pappes. ACCESS sponsored the 15 minute programs... Group 3 Films Ltd.'s feature *Parallels*, produced by Jack Wynters, directed by Marc Shoenberg, and shot in Edmonton in 1979 with Judith Mabey in the leading role, is being handled for world wide syndication by Linder, Brooks and Kearce Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia, who also have the rights for theatrical distribution of the film. Theatrical and television distribution in Canada will be

handled by Creswin Ltd, Toronto...

Deborah Peaker of Northern Film Productions Ltd., Edmonton reports that her adventure documentary *Spirit of the Hunt* has completed photography, and is ready for editing. Budgeted at \$125,000, the film focuses on a communal buffalo hunt narrated by Will Samson. Peaker hopes to have the film cut and ready by September.

Cast and crew of *Takeover* (a drama for the CBC *For the Record* series centering on a Calgary businessman) flew into Calgary for two days of shooting... And a sizzling contemporary version of *Dante's Inferno* is heating up the streets of Calgary. The original steamy script was by millionaire Hymie Singer, who contributed the \$500,000 budget. Director Philip Marshak and Producer Martin Dorf (the team that gave us *Dracula Sucks*) have now hired a second writer. Marshak reports that the new script is PG, "a camp, tongue-in-cheek comedy with threads of wisdom." There is no DGC, IATSE or ACTRA involvement in the picture, which held open auditions for cast and crew at the Trade Winds disco. ●

Alberta ready to legislate financial development agency

EDMONTON—A new bill before the Alberta legislature is indicative of continuing government support for the Alberta film industry. Tentatively titled the Alberta Motion Picture Development Act, the proposal for government funding for commercial film projects could be operational by the fall of this year.

A number of meetings between the Minister of Economic Development, the Honorable Hugh Planche, and representatives of Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPIA), as well as the CFDC, have led to the concept of "matching money at commercial terms."

If passed, the act would allow the Alberta Government to match money already raised from the private sector, with

funding determined by an appointed board and a checklist of criteria.

The act will apply not only to feature films, but also to short films of a commercial nature.

The Alberta Government is also involved, through Alberta Culture, with the Banff International Festival of Films for Television, to be held in Banff Sept. 20-30th.

Duke goes again, now with D. Moore

TORONTO — Dudley Moore, who starred with Bo Derek in the hit comedy, "10", will play the lead role in Daryl Duke's comedy romance, *Six Weeks*, to be shot in August.

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