

## SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

CALGARY - The Ermineskin Indian Band of Hobbema, Alberta, is financing an \$8 million feature based on the life of Billy Mills, the Oglala Sioux who won the Gold Medal in the 10,000 metre run at the Tokyo Olympiad. The film, viewed by the Band as "an inspiration for Indian youth" will shoot in Southern Alberta and Japan in the spring and summer of 1982.

Ira Englander of Englander Productions (Culver City, California) will produce *Indian*, the first feature for a company known for the production of documentary films. "In the past, movies about Indians, even when positive, become showcases for the noble warrior. We are going to tell a contemporary story about a man who defied the odds," said Englander. Screenplay is by Shirl Hendryx (*Welcome to our Night, The Terror at Blakesville*).

Billy Mills was not only the first American Indian, but also the first American, to win a Gold Medal in the 10,000 metre run. "We show a man who above all strives for personal dignity. This film is about winning, both on and off the athletic field," according to Englander.

CBC radio drama will expand into more regional production, according to Susan Rubes, head of Drama Programming. Rubes was in Calgary in conjunction with a marathon production session November 11th - 18th, which will result in new radio dramas for future broadcast.

The ten day Calgary session will produce seven 15-minute dramas, and two 30-minute dramas, as will a similar session in Montreal.

Actors, writers, technicians and directors from CBC's western Canadian centres participated under the guidance of Betty Davies (Senior Radio Drama Producer, BBC) and

Marsail MacCuish (Senior Technician, Radio Drama, CBC).

Rubes says the CBC wants to expand the existing pool of writers, and build a wider use of actors and new producers. "Without those three elements, there can be no expansion." To facilitate the script expansion in the West, Ruth Fraser has been hired as the western editor. The next step in this session, according to Rubes: "First, we hear them and hope they are good, then air them in January, February, and March".

In addition to the two current radio drama series (*Sunday Matinee* and *Nightfall*) Rubes plans the following: another half-hour; a five-minute syndicated soap; a 15-minute series; and a mini-series. She hopes to produce more shows from different parts of the country. "The regions want to hear themselves represented on the air," she says, adding that this will create a good decentralization of work. She wants "more shows, better, and faster," and hopes to double the number of hours currently allotted to drama. She is also attempting to negotiate "repeat" times with ACTRA, in order to service the audience who may have missed the first broadcast, by repeating a show within three days.

Rubes anticipates 30 new writers and six new producers from the training program, and anticipates an advertising campaign in June for "a lot of dramas in the can that nobody's heard yet."

How does one write a good radio script?... According to Rubes, there are three considerations: 1) a good relevant story with a beginning, middle and end 2) the dramatization of familiar material as a starting point ("The audience likes the familiar") and 3) visualization rather than verbalization. ("In radio, there are no physical

barriers, you can do anything, move anywhere."

"If you like writing dialogue and are facile, you will catch on very quickly," predicts Rubes, adding that radio is now seen by many writers as a good livelihood.

Regarding radio performers, she comments that the radio actor must be "truer" than in any other medium, except perhaps film. "In film, you communicate through the eyes... in radio, through the voice and pauses."

Rubes anticipates more actors in the regions working through the expanded program, and sees people shifting from one part of the country to another, as work opportunities vary.

Calgary has chosen for the western base for the training program because "There is a good studio here, the radio director (Ted North) was very supportive, and... there is a lot of talent here."

## Reed Communications into adventure and religion in '82

EDMONTON - Reed Communications has gone through a major house-cleaning as it gears up for its 1982 production schedule, reports president Donald W. Reed. Some 51 production staff were laid off on January 8; 38 of those reapplied for their old jobs and 36 were rehired. "I was angry that we had to do that, but we wanted maximum quality and efficiency, and needed to put our house in order."

Reed has just closed its third public offering in as many years, selling \$15 million in units for its Travel Library of 400 programs. All four western provinces were used for the sale. A fourth prospectus for the Medical Library, also pegged at \$15 million, has been withdrawn.

In addition to updating its Career Service, Leisure, and Travel Libraries, Reed is busy producing a \$20 million Adventure Library of 300 programs

and two docu-dramas. "The latter is just a polite word for a feature film," comments Reed. Also in the works is a 5,000 program Religious Library, and the sky seems to be the limit.

"There could be ten companies like ours in Canada. The market for video software seems limitless. Yet, we go to the video-markets at Cannes, New Orleans, Germany, and were the only Canadians there. More people should be out there selling," concluded Reed.

Reed's philosophy is that one counts on producing top quality programming; that it is the packaging and the marketing which makes the difference. For the moment, Reed Communications is moving full steam ahead on all fronts.

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## RSL makes Scandale on q. t.

MONTREAL - R.S.L. has almost finished shooting *Scandale* in Montreal, a "comedy with a little bit of sex," pegged at under a million dollars by Stephen Roth, producer.

"It's just a little film we're financing ourselves. We really want it out and in the theatres before anyone knows about it," he continues. Director George Mihalka (*Pinball Summer, My Bloody Valentine*) is helming the pic, whose story is distantly related to the recent episode in Quebec wherein technicians at the National Assembly were accused of having used the

video systems at the assembly to make pornographic films.

R.S.L. still plans to make *Ladies Night* with Sidney Furey later this year. The film, a "sexy Saturday Night Fever" is set in a milieu of male strippers. The pre-production on the film had been temporarily suspended when the initial federal budget seemed to change the rules for production in Canada.

Mordecai Richler has also readied a script for R.S.L. from his book "Joshua Then and Now" which Roth hopes to see in production this year.