

REVERB

An Actress Answers...

Perhaps I am being overly sensitive (actors do tend to be a bit thinskinced sometimes), but I must take exception to David McCaughna's description of me ("one-time pop singer and Toronto personality") in his recent interview with my friend and colleague, Brenda Donahue. I have made a good to excellent living as an actress since I was fourteen years old. In the last two years I've appeared on Broadway with Zero Mostel in **Ulysses in Nighttown**, off Broadway in Leonard Cohen's **Sisters of Mercy** and at the Shaw festival in **Sisters** (among other plays - usually in leading roles, always in featured roles). I have generally received excellent notices, both in Canada and the U.S. In November, I had the female lead on **Kojak**. Presently I am with the Stratford Festival, playing two leads and one featured role. As a hobby, I wrote a twice-weekly newspaper column for the Toronto Star. I do not believe it conceited or mistaken to feel that all this adds up to more than a "one-time pop-star and Toronto personality". I love my work and work hard, supported only by that work. It is therefore disheartening to be described as some sort of ex-professional and playgirl type.

With regard to the play **Me**, yes, I was Martin Kinch's lady. Yes, we lived together for a while. In truth, I loved the man. The character of Chloe is, however, a tripartite creation. Part myself, partly a woman named Elaine Reed and partly Martin's not inconsiderable socio-sexual fantasy life. It's a good play, though he could not permit either of the women in it to be successful at anything but wanting *him*. I don't normally write "letters to Editors", but here I felt I absolutely had to, as both my professional and personal life seemed maligned by the piece.

Gale Garnett

Cannes Omission

In your recent issue of **Cinema Canada**, you had several articles on the Cannes Film Festival. I was surprised to find that amongst your reviews of Canadian participants, you had omitted mention of one Canadian entry - **Revisited** by Joyce Borenstein. This fact should be publicized. It would help promote a deserving film, as well as fulfill your policy of thorough and just reporting.

Revisited has recently participated in some other festivals and won several other awards: Seventh Annual Brooklyn Film Festival (August 1974); screening and tour, Athens International Film Festival (April 1975); Silver Cup, Santa Barbara International Film Festival (November 1975); award and screening, Sinking Creek Independent Film Festival (May 1975); screening at Filmex - The Los Angeles International Film Exposition (March 1975).

Name withheld upon request

'Northern' Lives

'Northern' Lives

I wish to draw your attention to a reference in the article entitled "Soundman" by George Csaba Koller in your issue no 20.

Patrick Spence-Thomas is quoted as saying "Then there is Soundmix and Studio Sound Services, they're middle range".

I would point out that Studio Sound Services went into bankruptcy two years ago, and since September 1973 the theatre with its facility has operated under the name of Northern Sound Studio.

Northern Sound Studio is, and has been, very successful since its inception with a completely new image being created by improvement in

equipment and the personality of its staff.

My own experience as a Soundman covers a 35 year span with a credit list (as far as I know) second to none in Canada. Prior to coming to Canada three years ago, I had spent all this time at major studios in England.

It is sometimes said that Canada does not have "talent". The talent does exist, although it is not always acknowledged by contemporaries. In its short history Northern Sound Studio makes interesting reading - overcoming an inherited bad reputation, ... operated by people relatively unknown to Toronto. If you have a few minutes to call in I would be pleased to add further to its merits.

Studio Sound Services is dead but Northern Sound Studio is very much alive!

Len Abbott,
Northern Sound Services

A Puzzling Point

I would like to add something to John Hofsess' article, "Headless Horsemen" (no 18) and Bob Fothergill's "Reply to Hofsess" (no 20). Firstly, I would like to say that I applaud the honesty of these two men for saying what many non-filmmaking Canadians have been feeling for a long time - that, for the most part, English Canadian films are irrelevant, boring, self-centred home movies, with little meaning to anyone beyond the filmmaker and his personal friends, and that they avoid or ignore many important social and political issues that concern us all. I sympathize completely with their call for films that connect with people and promote social awareness.

I have recently had an experience involving the Canada Council which will perhaps add another puzzling point to the whole issue of meaning and relevance in Canadian films. Last summer I collaborated with Margot Cronis on a 17 minute film for CBLT

television, about the life situations and struggles of men and women who have been permanently injured while on the job and are receiving workmen's compensation pensions. While working on this film I learned a great deal about the injustices many of these people have suffered in the face of our production-oriented society, and a massive, inhuman government bureaucracy. We both felt that their stories needed a more detailed and careful telling, both because of the increasing number of people who join their ranks every year and also because we felt that their predicament might lead some people to a greater understanding of our own society. In my opinion, such a film would be the sort of film that Hofsess and Fothergill speak about.

Because of the nature of the subject, we decided it would best be dealt with by making a documentary film, not the traditional, objective 'talking heads' type of documentary, but an expressive, sometimes subjective look at the situation from the point of view of the injured workers themselves. First, we took our proposal to the National Film Board's Challenge For Change program, to see if they would help finance it. While they could see the merits of the project, they have not been prepared to spend any money on it because of the uncertain future of Challenge for Change, and later, because a new Executive Producer had not been named to replace retiring Len Chatwin (which, at the time of this writing, is still the case).

So, in the meantime, we applied to the Canada Council for the meagre sum of just over \$9,000 – an amount that would cover only the most basic costs of production. Because we were aware that the Council's Film and Video Division did not usually give money for documentary productions, we applied to the Explorations Division, which gives money for projects of a more diverse nature. We supported our application with letters of recommendation from John Hofsess, Don Shebib, Ron Evans, and a prominent Canadian sociologist who attested to the social relevance of the project. Not long after submitting our application we received word that it has been moved from Explorations into the Film and Video Division. I phoned Penny Jaques, as I was very concerned about this change, and she explained that because of bureaucratic rules about eligibility, our application would have to be consider-

ed with the regular film applications. Apparently, I am too well-known as a film-maker to be eligible for a film grant under Explorations! However, she said she would try to make the difficulty of our position clear to the jury. I reluctantly sent her a letter which attempted to clarify our intentions. But my efforts turned out to be in vain.

I would like to state here, at the risk of appearing immodest, that my previous experience in film is substantial and I think it would, at least, qualify me to make an attempt at a movie of this type. In working professionally in the film business for over 10 years I, among other things, produced, directed and edited **The Only Thing You Know**, an experimental feature film which was nominated as Best Feature at the Canadian Film Awards in 1971 and won Etrogs as Best First Feature, and Best Actress. In addition to this, **As We Are...**, the cinema verite film about mentally retarded children which I shot and co-directed, won the Grand Prix at the Oberhausen Documentary Film Festival this year. **The Megantic Outlaw** which I co-edited with Ron Kelly is considered one of the best 90 minute dramas ever produced by the CBC; **Janis** which I worked on as a cinematographer is a successful Canadian film; I have also directed for the CBC Drama Department and numerous newsmagazine, television and non-theatrical documentaries.

However, this kind of experience didn't seem to help the application very much.

In late July, the Jury sat to make their decisions and when I called them in August, I was told that we had not been granted any money. Why? – "Well, the project was not exactly the sort of thing the Council thinks it should be funding and the money is very low this year. However, if you have any other ideas, please don't hesitate..."

It's strange – the Canada Council and the CFDC have always been able, even in the most austere of times, to find lots of money to fund "personal" films, very often the same ones that both John Hofsess and Bob Fothergill complain about, and they are often made by people with very little experience or background in film-making, but seemingly with the right connections. Yet, when it comes to a serious film-maker with proven background and training who wants to make a serious film about an increasingly important social issue, it seems to me ironic, curious and exceedingly frustrating that the Canada Council can't even find a few thousand dollars in their yearly budget to help finance it, because it "isn't exactly the sort of thing they usually grant money to."

If some Canadians are feeling the need for more political and socially aware films, the judges at the Canada Council certainly aren't.

Clarke Mackey

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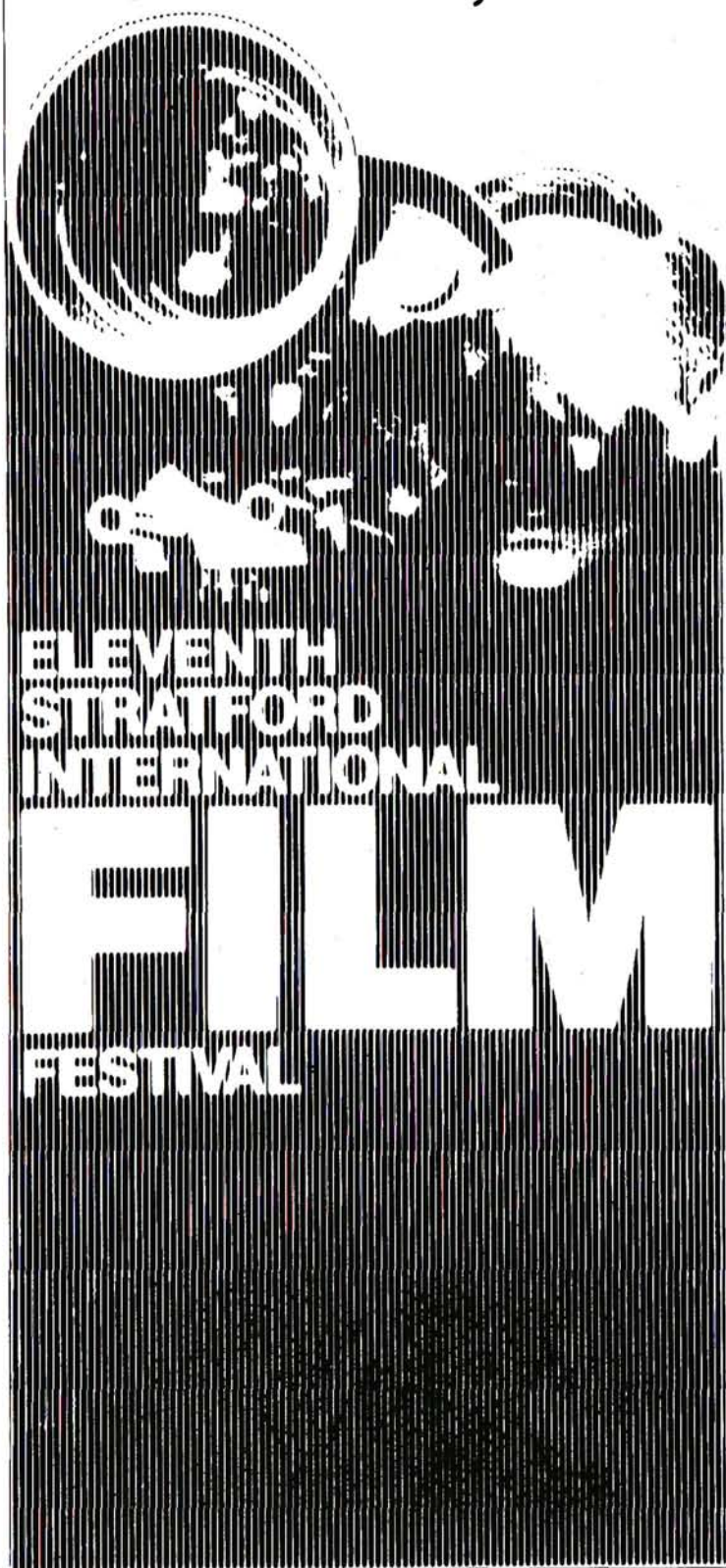
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