

SHOOT ALBERTA

by Stacey Bertles

In summer, as bureaucrats go on vacation and producers go into production, deals "in development" grind to a slow halt. This year, Alberta flatlands and badlands will provide the backdrop for at least a half-dozen major projects. Here is a short list:

The Gunfighters

Alliance's two-hour television movie pilot went into production in Edmonton May 24. The first locations were based in the historical Fort Edmonton Park. Producers Stephen J. Roth, Jeff King, and Allan Stein might hope that the location is charmed. (**Stone Fox**, Allacom's made-for-TV feature shot there earlier this year and held a respectable share against both the Academy Awards and NBA basketball when it aired on

NBC. That bodes well for future co-productions.)

The Gunfighters will air on Global Television Network this fall and will be syndicated worldwide in 1988. Hopefully, it will spawn a weekly half-hour series. Clay Boris directed George Kennedy, Art Hindle, Tony Addabbo, and Reiner Schoene. Shooting in Fort Edmonton lasted until June 3rd and then moved to Drumheller, Alberta, to use locations in the badlands and a local ranch. Scheduled wrap date was June 17th.

The New Gunsmoke

Meanwhile, back in Calgary, CBS (Great Western Productions) is trying to rekindle the popularity of **Gunsmoke** with a made-for-TV movie remake directed by Vince McEvetty.

Shooting took place from June 1st to June 26th.

Summer Lighting

At the end of July, Sun Down Productions will begin work on the new Costra-Gravas feature, **Summer Lighting**. The drama about midwestern wheat farmers stars Tom Berenger and Debra Winger. Shooting should begin July 27th and last until the end of September. Locations will be scattered around Lethbridge.

Cowboys Don't Cry

Anne Wheeler, back from New York (where she was an honoured New Director), Paris (where **Loyalties** scooped up a Jury Award and 5,000 francs at the International Festival of Films by Women), and India (where she scouted locations for her script **Bye Bye Blues**) has been hunkering down over an adaptation of **Cowboys Don't Cry**. Based on a novel by Alberta writer Marilyn Halvor-

son, the feature deals with the relationship between a retired bullrider and his teenaged son. Since the story roughly follows the rodeo circuit, production will be split between Edmonton and Calgary. Shooting is slated to run from August 10th to September 11th. Wheeler will direct the Atlantis production.

Flash Frame

David Winning will start shooting his second feature just about the same time that his first feature will be released. **Storm** should hit Canadian theatres late this summer and will be distributed to 200 American theatres by Cannon in November.

Flash Frame, the new project, is an action-suspense drama about a photojournalist who becomes involved in a revenge/murder plot. Winning is producer, director, and co-writer. Shooting should start August 3rd and will continue

for 10 weeks, mostly in locations around Calgary. Winning said the budget runs to the "multi-millions" and comes from an American source, presently unnamed but "not Cannon." A distribution deal is in negotiation.

Bordertown

Alliance will be back again in September, shooting a 26-episode series about the disputes in a town on the Alberta/Montana border in the 1880s (before there was a border). Coca-Cola and Global are backing production. Executive producers are Robert Cooper and John Kemeny.

The more perceptive reader may notice the majority of these productions are westerns. This trend in production had led to speculation that the once-popular genre is about to make a comeback. Locals who seek acting employment have been advised to begin growing their hair and beards immediately.

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Malo cuts a Wacko deal

BANFF - It's official. The seven-project package being developed by Wacko Entertainment is receiving a substantial investment from René Malo's Malofilm Group.

Five features and two series make up the package, and several projects may be ready to go shortly, though in the understanding, Wacko has three years to complete the first project, president Wendy Wacko explained at a press conference.

The following properties comprise the package: **Strikers Mountain-The Series**, an action adventure set in the Rocky Mountains; **The Button**, a funny, wellcrafted feature about two men, who each have "the button" at their fingertips; **Dragonfall**, an exciting teenage horror story based on a book by Lee Hindle; **Zombie**, a powerful and shocking true story about a government cover-up in World War II; **The Last Romantic Guy**, a wacky comedy about a man whose life is transformed after a heart transplant; **The Hunt**, an epic drama, a modern day Moby Dick, set on the ice flows off Newfoundland; **Wing and a Prayer** (1/2 hour television series), a World War II era comedy about instructors teaching young recruits to fly under the British Commonwealth air training plan.