

Liaison Office set to smooth production in Ottawa

OTTAWA - Sensing a need for "one-stop" production clearances, Ottawa opened its first official Film Liaison Office in June. Jerry McEvoy will serve as the new Film Liaison officer, responsible for promoting the benefits of shooting in Ottawa, and making shoots easier for local producers.

The Ottawa-Hull Film and Television Association had run "a liaison office of sorts" in the past, McEvoy said in an interview, but the capital region's intersecting web of government jurisdictions made it difficult to obtain shooting permits. When the mini-series *A Private Capital* came to the city to shoot last year, it had to get permits from seven separate government agencies before shooting on the Inter-Provincial bridge between Ottawa and Hull could begin. Ottawa, which had up to that point existed in relative obscurity as a production centre, suddenly found itself under the glare of hostile media and industry attention.

McEvoy's first task is to combat what he admits is a stubborn impression that Ottawa routinely creates impenetrable bureaucratic fogs.

"I don't have a pie-in-the-sky attitude," he said. "I realize that I could do this job really well for a year and not bring one production to town. But there's nothing going to sell a production faster than someone saying 'I shot in Ottawa, it's no problem.'"

Calling the capital a place that can be sold both "on its individuality and its generality," McEvoy said he will stress Ottawa's European feel and its architecture as an alternative to Montreal.

"No one wants to shoot in (Montreal's) Place Jacques Cartier anymore, and the restaurants there are fed up with crews coming in, anyway. Ottawa is fresh.

"Ottawa is a fair-sized city that has an inordinate number of terrific buildings, embassies, all the federal buildings, parkland.

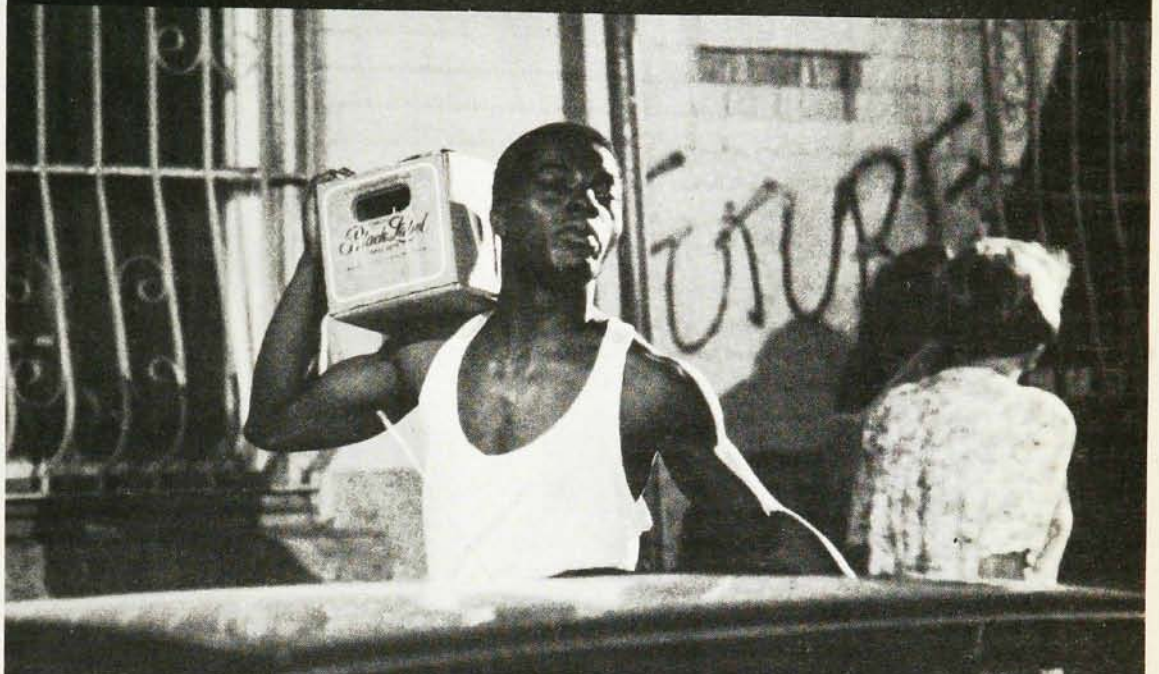
We're not in direct competition with Toronto as a production centre, but we're certainly in competition with Calgary, and Pittsburgh and Philadelphia," McEvoy said.

With the closest film laboratories and equipment rentals in Montreal, big out-of-town productions will probably be drawn by the "capital city" look of Ottawa, he added. But getting permission to shoot from sensitive government and embassy officials is never easy.

"It all depends on how silver-tongued I am. For example, there's a small Toronto company called Visual Productions that does low-budget features shot on Betacam. They were coming up

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here to shoot and I had arranged tentatively with the American embassy to use just its facade as an actor enters the door. This was a KGB-CIA thing. They read the script, didn't like the script, but said it shouldn't be a problem if you're shooting inside. But then the July fourth weekend happened, that little incident in the Gulf (where an American warship shot down an Iranian passenger plane), and suddenly on Tuesday they're locked up like a drum.

"Ultimately it wasn't a problem because the University of Ottawa had a perfect building which was much grander than the American embassy, and we had unrestricted access."

Quebec grosses for Tadpole: two solitudes

MONTREAL - *Le Grenouille et la baleine*, produced by Rock Demers and directed by Jean-Claude Lord in the Tales For All series, hit the \$1.3 million box-office mark in mid-July after opening, June 18, on 39 screens across Quebec.

The English-language version, *The Tadpole and The Whale*, earned \$2,500 during a one-week run

at two cinemas in the Montreal area. The film is scheduled to be released in Toronto in early September.

New directors execs

MONTREAL - L'Association des Réalistes et Réalisatrices de Films du Québec (A.R.R.F.Q.) has elected Alain Chartrand as its new president. The vice-presidents are Brigitte Sauriol and François Labonté. Other executive members are Paul Tana, Louise Lamarre, Jean Chabot, Mireille Dansereau and Roland Paret.