Cinema Papers #77 January 1990

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67 PRODUCTION SURVEY

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DEBORAH UNGER
AND JOHN POLSON IN
BLOOD OATH

SPECIAL FEATURE
JOHN FARROW
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PLUS
BLOOD OATH
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Don McLennan’s New Film
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JANUARY 1990 NUMBER 77

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67 PRODUCTION SURVEY

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season's greetings

from all at Colorfilm
why people are prepared to stay in the films rather longer than otherwise, and also why Venice almost seems to trade on presenting the perversely difficult. Its series of special events (Krzysztof Kieślowski’s entire Dekalog, Peter Brook’s Mahabharata, here only in its three-hour theatrical version; a documentary about one of Stalin’s ‘bodyguards’, which allows its subject to spend much time extolling the dictator’s virtues) all bespeak much seriousness and earnestness. So, too, did its extensive Jean Cocteau retrospective, presenting in unsubtitled French, Spanish and Italian prints virtually every film that remarkable man had anything to do with.

As well, the Competition seemed to pride itself on the presentation of films which were exceptionally, shall we say, dogged. Even before the event started, Bertrand Tavernier withdrew his La Vie et Rien d’Austral, when it was relegated to the more populist (and popular) “Venezia Notte” series, alongside films by Peter Weir (Dead Poets Society), Peter Greenaway (The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover), Pierre Jolivet (Force Majeure), Paul Bartel (Scenes from the Crime Struggle in Beverly Hills), and Pupi Avati (Storia di Ragazzi et Ragazze), to name the better ones. Tavernier was apparently miffed that the sole French entry selected for Competition was the Alain Resnais dud I Want to Go Home, a film already passed over by Cannes, so the story went. Tavernier had reason: Resnais’ film, an English-language comedy scripted by Jules Feiffer, was, at least to English-speaking ears, not very funny.

Resnais was not, however, the only big name to come a thud. There was also little enthusiasm for films by Gabriel Axel (Christian), Paul Cox (Island, Amos Gitai (Berlin-Jerusalem), Mimal Sen (Ek Din Achanak), Alain Tanner (La Femme de Rose Hill) and Lina Wertmuller (On a Moonlit Night).

This is a problem for competitive events. The need to have a selection of new films often means that the films selected to make up the numbers get one of their few public screenings at a competitive “A” festival and then sink into a richly-deserved obscurity. Such films are apparently “unworthy” of anything but one of the three main European festivals – a strange paradox.

Fortunately, however, there was one genuinely fine filmmaker whose work indicated an artist of immense stature. Measured, controlled, and pin-point precise in its observation, framing and narrative, Hou Hsiao-hsien’s Beijing Chengshi (A City of Sadness) stood out like Gulliver among the Lilliputians. The fact that it actually won the Golden Lion should be a relief for all concerned. Many thought it may prove too long or too ‘difficult’ to capture the Jury’s vote, but in the end it was apparently unanimous.

Hou’s film makes demands on the spectator. At two-hours-and-forty minutes and on a subject which, for total appreciation, requires a background knowledge of modern Taiwanese history, it makes no concessions, nor should it. It is unlikely to be a film that will catapult Hou into commercial, mainstream success, but then he hardly needs it. What he needs, and one hopes a prize of this nature will provide it, is a secure production environment so that he can turn his hand regularly to such majestic works. If that happens, his output may well come to rival that of Bresson, Dreyer or Ozu in its richness and its reputation.

For the rest, I must admit to enjoying Jean-Jacques Andrien’s Austral, and Oja Kodar’s faded, two films about which I was made to feel should be immediately relegated to guilty pleasures, so intense was the scorn. The Andrien film is set for its first third on a sheep property in outback South Australia. Then its protagonist, Edouard Pierson (played by Jeremy Irons in a performance that others laughed merrily until the somewhat jaundiced end, and I have to confess I was one. Perhaps Venice just puts some people in a cheerier mood.

STAFF CHANGES
Phillip Adams has been reappointed chairman of the Australian Film Commission for a further 12 months on a part-time basis. The Minister for the Arts, Clyde Holding, said, “Phillip Adams has provided the Commission with strong leadership and great vision over the past six years. I am particularly pleased that his exceptional understanding of the industry will continue to be available to the Commission as it seeks to re-position its services following the recent changes to film assistance.”

Michael Mitchener has been appointed director of Film Victoria, replacing the retiring Geoffrey Pollock. Mitchener has worked at the Australian Film Institute and for the annual Screenwriters’ Conference, and has been until recently manager of the Queensland Film Development Office. Mitchener said, “Film Victoria has the reputation for being the most successful and innovative of the state film bodies.”

David Pollard, the first chief executive officer of the Australian Film Finance Corporation, has resigned for “family reasons”. Pollard said, “I leave with regret but in the sure knowledge that the FFC is functioning effectively under the direction of a committed Board for the support and secure future of the whole industry.” He will stay on until the new appointment is made.

Ross Dimsey has completed his contract as senior producer of drama for ABC Melbourne and is resuming his career as an independent producer of film and television. Dimsey took over at a time of near standstill in Melbourne ABC drama, and while there oversaw the mini-series The Magistrate, The Four-Minute Mile, Darlings of the Gods and This Man, This Woman, the tele-feature Becca and the continuing series House Rules and Inside Running. Dimsey is presently developing a project with the ABC.

NOTEDue to having received only one month’s Film Censorship Listings, it has been held over to the next issue.
The Australian Film Finance Corporation has issued its first annual report, for the financial year 1988-89.

FEATURES

The FFC received 37 applications, considered 26 of them and approved 17 with a total production value of $92,446,326. The FFC committed $51,911,575 (61.95% of its 1988-89 investments); the remainder was from the private sector.

Following are details of each feature to receive FFC funding. The title is followed by (i) the production company; (ii) the amount of FFC equity investment; and (iii) the pre-sale(s) or other secured by the production company prior to application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Equity Investment</th>
<th>Pre-sale(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia and Australia</td>
<td>Vestron Pictures</td>
<td>$5,750,000</td>
<td>Flair (4 x 60 mins) Flair Television Productions; $4,417,471; presold to Seven Network and Pandora</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Girl from Tomorrow</td>
<td>Film Australia</td>
<td>$1,695,256</td>
<td>presold to Nine Network and Latin Quarter</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Greatest Tune on Earth</td>
<td>Australian Children's Television Foundation Productions</td>
<td>$452,000</td>
<td>presold to Seven Network; the ACTF to distribute in all territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haydaze</td>
<td>Barron Films Production</td>
<td>$1,195,499</td>
<td>presold to Ten Network and Recom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katie's Rainbow</td>
<td>South Australian Film Corporation; ABC</td>
<td>$3,494,610</td>
<td>presold to ABC and Granada</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Private War of L'ecrin Smith</td>
<td>Australian Children's Television Foundation Productions; the ACTF</td>
<td>$2,047,500</td>
<td>presold to ABC and Granada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Kenny - Angel of the Outback</td>
<td>Resolution Films</td>
<td>$2,975,000</td>
<td>presold to Nine Network and Recom</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Newspaper Saga</td>
<td>The Paper Man</td>
<td>$3,976,701</td>
<td>Village Roadshow to act as sales agent in all territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father Brown Film Productions</td>
<td>$1,672,461</td>
<td>Village Roadshow to act as sales agent in all territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbours Beet Palm Beach Pictures</td>
<td>$1,400,000</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>It's Now or Never</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<td>Man of Fire</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<td>Riders on the Storm</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<td>Strangers</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<td>Till There Was You</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<td>War Crimes</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<td>The Way of the Wirrunin</td>
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<td>Wendy Cracked a Walnut Classic Films</td>
<td>Beyond International to distribute in all territories except North America and Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>The FFC received 23 applications, considered 18 of them and approved 13 with a total production value of $46,373,477. The FFC committed $24,987,499 (31.08% of its 1988-89 investments); the remainder was from the private sector.</td>
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TITLES
AN EDITOR'S DILEMMA

The title of Steven Soderbergh's first feature has inadvertently raised the century-old problem of how to record accurately a film's title in print. The opening of Soderbergh's film reads: sex, lies, and videotape. This has led many reviewers to break their usual style and print its title solely in lowercase, as if that film were a special case. Yet, countless films are released worldwide each year with lowercase titles, and they receive no similar treatment. And as if to prove pedantry isn't the issue, the second comma in Soderbergh's title is almost always ignored.

Of course, many films have titles only in upper case; these too are rarely differentiated from the those in upper and lower. And what of titles with special graphics, or varying letter size?

Clearly, a print journal should develop a style and maintain it. As Cinema Papers, titles are usually printed in upper and lower case, and italicized to delineate them within the text. This is a compromise for the sake of readability; to have a mix of lower-case titles with upper-case ones would be confusing. More important, until one sights a print of a film, one can't be sure how its title is reproduced on the celluloid. Press material is no help, as it often varies from the film. Take Giuseppe Tornatore's Nuovo Cinema Paradiso: the title is clearly rendered as that on the film (in neon to boot), but all the Australian press material has it as Cinema Paradiso. Why change the title, and, if it was deemed essential, why was the print's title not changed as well?

The classic Australian case of a confusing title is David Baker's film of the Barry Oakley football novel. The film's title is: THE GREAT MACARTHY. The Oakley novel is A Salute to the Great McCarthy. The first question: Why the irrelevant change? The second: How does one reproduce the film's title in upper and lower, if that be one's want? There is no help within the film, because the only time the footballer's name is sighted in print it appears capitalized in a newspaper headline. To make matters even more difficult, there are no end character-actor credits.

At the time of the film's production, Cinema Papers was assured the correct rendition was The Great MacArthy, a nice variation indeed. But this view is not supported by the press material or the recently re-released video. The outside slick and trade ads have the video title as The Great McCarthy, but that doesn't match the title on the cassette inside the box.

Among the many other intriguing Australian titles are: Peter Kenna's The Umbrella Woman (this is the title on the film, as well as the contractual one, not the abbreviated version usually printed); Careful He Might Hear You (there is no comma, unlike in the novel's title); Ghosts ... of the Civil Dead with its spooky ellipses; the missing apostrophe from Luigi's Ladies (and, indeed, from Dead Poets Society); Mad Max 2 (not II); and A Personal History of the Australian Surf Being the Confessions of a Straight Poofter (sadly, the witty second half is always dropped).

Recording a title accurately may not seem all that important to many, but to others it is a never-ending source of research and intrigue.
Shortly after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, Japanese troops captured the Australian garrison on the little-known Dutch East Indies island of Ambon, 650 km north-west of Darwin. The Japanese established a Prisoner of War camp which would be the scene of atrocities and genocide. Six hundred Australians entered Ambon Island POW camp; three years later, one hundred and twenty were barely left alive. After the war, the Australian Army held a war-crimes trial on the island.

_Blood Oath_ is the story of that incredible trial, which herded together the ninety-one Japanese officers and men who had controlled and run the POW camp.
IN THE FILM, Bryan Brown plays the prosecuting Australian Army lawyer, Captain Robert Cooper. But Cooper was not his real name: it was Captain John Williams, then a junior army lawyer and now a retired judge. Brown, who met and had a long breakfast with Judge John Williams on the set, says he did not attempt to portray the real man, but to create his own vision of the man: “I saw Cooper as something of an intellectual, formal and cerebral. I could relate to what he did, and took it from there.”

Brown’s Captain Cooper is a quintessential ‘Aussie’: decent, irreverent, tough, sensitive, butch and clever all at once. It is the man many Australian males would like to think is their innermost heritage.

It was Judge Williams’ son, Brian, who came across the transcripts of the trial and began the process of bringing it to fruition as a film, after teaming with co-writer Denis Whitburn. Says actor Bryan Brown:

Brian and Denis sent me the script about three years ago. We had a few beers and talked about it. I was very interested in the subject. Maybe it was the power of history, of getting close to something that had only been half revealed. That meant we could examine a certain time in history that was complex and, at the same time, horrendous. You could see it had potential; it is about human beings in extreme situations.

Much the same can be said about filming it. Brown had gruelling monologues that had to be word perfect. The courtroom itself was a reconstruction inside the Warner Queensland Studios, from old photographs out of Judge Williams’ files. The tropical heat had to be manufactured, and director Stephen Wallace wanted “an Aussie informality” about the proceedings. “It took several days to work that out”, says Brown. “But then it became interesting.” (It’s the fourth film on which Wallace and Brown have worked together.)

Brown was fascinated by working with the Japanese actors, who had been cast in Tokyo. Says Brown:

They are trapped by their customs and traditions. They couldn’t just say to the director, ‘Hey, Steve…’, as I do. One day, when Stephen and I were just talking away, they told me that they wished they could speak as freely as that. It made me see a bit better why they are as they are.

Both Brown and Wallace have high regard for the Japanese actors, not only for their professional talents but for their great interest in the subject. Says Wallace:

There are no war films shown in Japan, because they don’t believe the characters. There is no good news about the war for them: they lost … Also, there is all this shame about the treatment of prisoners of war. That is our sub-theme. We don’t object to how the Japanese fought, we object to how they treated the POWs. And the Japanese have never apologized for it. But, then, they haven’t really dealt with it themselves.

But, as Wallace points out, the film is not only about the war: “It is as much about Japanese society.” Wallace is highly enthused:

My mother had been very affected by the Second World War and I had also wanted to make a film dealing with it. I’m glad I’m doing this: it has a dramatic script and touches on the Australian soldiers’ experiences. I need it, and perhaps Australia needs it.

Originally, I got very involved emotionally; it became a part of me. Now, I’m just trying to make the project work.
OPENING PAGES: THE EXECUTION OF AUSTRALIAN ARMY PILOTS ON THE JAPANESE-HELD ISLAND OF AMBON DURING WORLD WAR II. STEPHEN WALLACE'S BLOOD OATH.

LEFT: CAPTAIN COOPER (BRYAN BROWN), THE AUSTRALIAN PROSECUTING LAWYER, AND THE JAPANESE DEFENDANTS AT THE AMBON WAR-CRIMES TRIAL. BELOW RIGHT: JAPANESE POWS ARE ORDERED TO UNCOVER THE MASS GRAVE ON AMBON ISLAND; AND: FILMING THE MASS GRAVE SEQUENCE. DIRECTOR STEPHEN WALLACE LINES UP THE SHOT THROUGH THE CAMERA.

The courtroom scenes proved the toughest, challenging Wallace’s inventiveness. With some forty per cent of the film shot in the courtroom, new ideas for angles and treatment were welcome. “We went for the reality”, says Wallace. “It was a very delicate balancing act. Sometimes our sympathy is with the Japanese; at other times we hate them.”

But the other scenes were equally challenging. “Three hundred and fifteen Australian bodies ... it’s just a figure. Imagine watching three hundred and fifteen soldiers being bayoneted. Can’t help being affected”, he says. “We bring it down to one execution – it’s enough.”

But how does he direct even one execution, with a group of actors for whom it is merely an idea. “I said, ’Imagine your worst nightmare.’”

Curiously, Wallace adds, “none of the victims screamed ... they simply accepted it, as did many of the soldiers.”

Of all the Japanese characters, there is only one who is not guided by bushido, the code of the Samurai: this is Baron Takahasi, played by George Takei, the American-born Japanese actor (Dr Sulu of Star Trek fame). Takahasi is the commander of the camp, but washes his hands of the routine. Takei:

Takahasi considers himself above all that. He’s an aristocrat and a dilettante, and affects the fashionable aspect of being an English gentleman who loves medals and costumes and the military. He’s dependent on the advisors under him. Ultimately, he’s an unattractive character.

Bushido is a code that still guides many Japanese. But there are signs of a reaction against what many now see as an age of aberrant militarism, according to Judge John Williams: “Pretty well the entire Japanese force on Ambon had not been back home to Japan for near on eight years, an extraordinary thing. They were expendable. That’s part of the militarism.”

With an MA in history and a special interest in Japan, Judge Williams cites the works of writers such as Saburo Ienaga, an academic of some repute, “on the theme that Japan sees its militarism in perspective. But the question is what is being related through the Japanese school system? Is the shame hiding the truth?”

Judge Williams has steadfastly refrained from reading the script, preferring to wait and see the finished film. But he helped wherever he could, mostly because he believes “it is important that something be said about this event. Nothing has been written about it and there are some things the public don’t know about.” For one thing, the Americans pushed hard to curry favour with the anti-Communist administration in Tokyo by being overly keen to forgive and forget. Says Judge Williams, “More than 50 per cent were acquitted at the major Ambon trial. That is staggering.”

What is also staggering was the ambit of the trial. Williams:

This was not an ordinary trial; it was a means of exposing through the evidence what in fact happened, hidden from the eyes of the whole world. The hurriedly assembled evidence covered the entire length of the war.

There was a secondary issue: 91 soldiers were tried collectively in just one trial. The reason for this was that if the evidence was to come out, you had to get all the people involved in one big net and trust to luck.

Normally, trials are not vehicles to tell narratives over a period of several years.

Yet this is exactly what the transcripts have triggered; it is an exceptional opportunity for filmmakers, reconstructing untold aspects of a war that changed the world forever, with the help of the man who was central to this particular scenario.

Judge Williams has also kept letters he received following the trial, including one from a Japanese soldier who was convicted. He writes to express his thanks for the judge’s efforts to save him from one of two death sentences. Says Judge Williams, “You had to have a certain balance, and realize there was more to it than these individuals.” It is a remark that underlines one of the crucial elements of the script: Cooper, and through him the audience, makes a journey that completely by-passes revenge on its way from blind justice to soaring compassion. Says Brown:

The Japanese guys who came over all wanted this film made, but it’s very hard for them. I think it’s also quite confronting for Australians – and the Americans. It’s clearly controversial and we’re all striving to do justice to it, while still making a movie.
DENIS WHITBURN AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

Brian Williams is the son of Judge Williams, who was the prosecuting lawyer at the Ambon war-crimes trial. Putting that story to film has been for Williams a personal quest. After working in video and book retailing, Williams became a full-time scriptwriter. He has written several feature, documentary and mini-series projects, and was script consultant on Vanished, now in production in Yugoslavia. His partner on Blood Oath is Denis Whitburn, a professional writer, whose credits include the Augie-nominated play The Siege of Frank Sinatra (1980) and the docu-drama Warriors of the Deep (1984). He co-authored and co-produced the mini-series The Last Bastion (1984) and Bodysurfer, which won Best Screenplay for a Mini-Series at the 1989 AFI Awards, and wrote the shooting script for the feature Breaking Loose (1988). Recently, he scripted The Sher Mountain Mystery, now in production, and Backstreet General, which begins shooting in January 1990.

The following interview begins with Williams’ describing how he first came across his father’s transcripts of the Ambon trial.

What most fascinated you about the papers and the photographs?

WILLIAMS: The sheer scale of violence that my father was able to enter into and examine. It was beyond belief. You read the transcripts and they gave you the worst nightmares, especially the statements by the prisoners. It was really shocking.

So this project has always been with you from the age of twelve?

WILLIAMS: Yes, which brings me to the relationship with Denis. When I saw The Last Bastion on television in 1984, I decided immediately to approach the people involved. It was the final catalyst for me to get moving on the project. I then ran into Denis at a Screenwriters’ Conference in Katoomba. I remember saying, “Look, I think I have the sequel to The Last Bastion.”

Denis, how did you react to Brian’s coming to you with the project?
WHITBURN: It was not only Brian’s coming to me, it was my coming to the subject matter.

Back in 1982, I had been hired to write *Warriors of the Deep*, a docudrama for television about the Japanese submarine attack on Sydney Harbour during World War II. That job took me to the National Archives in Washington for a week and also briefly to Japan. The research only took about a month, but I developed a strong interest in the period. Soon I started to develop an idea for a play, almost a two-hander on the relationship between General Douglas MacArthur and John Curtin during the war.

At the end of ‘82, I still hadn’t put it down on paper when David Williamson and I got together to write a treatment for a mini-series of Mary Durack’s *Kings and Grass Castles*. It was while we were working on the treatment that we began talking about various things in coffee and lunch breaks. Somewhere along the line up came the subject of World War II and Australia. David had a certain interest in the period but had never really delved into it. I mentioned the MacArthur-Curtin idea and we started getting enthusiasm about its dramatic potential. But we had to keep that enthusiasm down while we finished the *Kings and Grass Castles* treatment. Once that was completed and in the hands of Durack’s agent, we knocked out a treatment for what became *The Last Bastion*. We then took it off to Matt Carroll at Ten, and in a pretty short time we had the funding to develop the six-hour mini-series as writers and producers.

At the time *The Last Bastion* was about to air in 1984, as Brian said, our paths met at the Screenwriters’ Conference.

When Brian approached you, at what stage was the project?

WHITBURN: Brian had a certain concept in mind. At that stage, we were actually looking at doing a three-hour tele-feature; we felt we needed that kind of length to make the story work. We had a couple of meetings at the ABC with Michael Carson to explore that. Michael was very keen on the idea.

To what extent did the *Blood Oath* story present itself, full blown and ready, in the transcripts?

WHITBURN: It wasn’t based on a transcript, it was based on a box full of transcripts! A daunting task! It would have been easy to walk away.

On the surface, the story we wanted to tell appeared very simple: namely, that of an Australian Army lawyer who was sent to Ambon to prosecute Japanese war criminals. He goes there with certain preconceived notions, such as that the Japanese are a brutal race and that the men were all guilty. But, on arriving there, he discovers that things aren’t black and white. In a sense, it is his journey of discovery, that is what attracted me to the story.

But faced with a box full of trial transcripts, that simple concept started to become very complex. Brian and I spent two years sifting through the material to find a clear and dramatic storyline. Only then could we actually begin writing the treatment.

WILLIAMS: That’s why we brought in all the other material: to focus the story on a broader context. We had my father’s personal material and the Japanese lawyer’s own account of the trial. It was an extraordinary and brave thing for a man of his calibre to go back to Japan and write a book immediately after the trial in 1946. Also, there was all the political material that Denis had gone into on *The Last Bastion*, and which I was getting into as well. It was the complexity of all this material that meant we took so long engineering the dimensions of what we ended up with.

Were the transcripts a constrictive device in creating a dramatic script?

"THE HIGH POINT OF THE YEAR HAPPENED AT THE START OF THE FILM ... WHEN MY FATHER AND I WENT BACK TO AMBON TOGETHER ... THAT JOURNEY FOR ME WAS THE ACCOMPLISHMENT ... JUST TO GO WITH HIM BACK THERE, TO BE THERE."

— BRIAN WILLIAMS
WHITBURN: Very constrictive; that's why it took so long. We spent two years under the false impression that the answer to the drama lay in the transcripts, whereas in fact it wasn't until we put them aside that we actually found our story.

Now, maybe we needed those two years of delving into that historical research to be able to then step away from it. But, it was a very frustrating time: every time we thought we had the key, it turned out to be a false lead.

Did you intentionally set out to base the dramatic nut of the script on the prosecuting lawyer, who was, in the transcripts, Brian's father?

WHITBURN: Originally, Brian's father did present a figure with certain dramatic characteristics. But it was only as we developed the story from the treatment stage, through the various drafts, that the character of Robert Cooper [Bryan Brown] took on his own personality.

It must have been tempting to constantly idealize the character of Cooper. Do you feel that you have managed to avoid doing that and thus keep him real?

WHITBURN: We were writing the drama in retrospect. And it is very difficult to put yourself in that unique situation of saying, "Let's take ourselves back to 1945-46, forgetting we have experienced anything in the interim, and write the character from that point of view." I don't think there is any writer in the world who can do that; there are so many psychological pressures and inputs that influence you.

We had a pretty good knowledge of the political landscape we were dealing with: i.e., the ramifications of what happened at the end of World War II. In a way, we were looking at good guys and bad guys on both sides. Obviously, we weren't talking about American or Australian brutalities, but the Allies had their prejudices.

We always saw Cooper as a man in between, trying at all times to keep himself distanced. As strange at it may seem, the image we had for Cooper, and this is the reason he is called Cooper in the film, was Gary Cooper in *High Noon*.

At what point did Bryan Brown become interested in the project?

WHITBURN: When we wrote the treatment in mid '87, we always had Bryan in mind for the lead role. We thought he had the characteristics we were after for Robert Cooper. We then got the treatment to June Cann, his agent, who sent it across to Bryan in Africa, where he was filming *Gorillas in the Mist*. He came back very quickly and said he was interested and that he wanted to meet us when he got back to Sydney. So, he virtually came on board from the treatment stage. And we kept going back to him with each draft for his reaction and input.

It was one of those rare occasions where the original actor that the writers had in mind responded right from the start and stayed with the project right through to the end.

Once you have a particular actor in mind for a role, you are writing that role to that actor's potential, and, to some extent, his or her limitations. Any screenwriter who sits down and says, "I'm going to write this screenplay for Clint Eastwood", would have a pretty good floorplan from the start.

Judge Williams' life is crucial to the story you are telling. Was he involved in writing the script?

WHITBURN: Judge Williams was there if we needed him. He was like the Obi Kanobi character in *Star Wars*. If we found ourselves painted into a corner, not knowing where to go, Brian would go back to his father, who would then point us in the right direction, emotionally or historically. He was invaluable in that respect. But he didn't look over our shoulders and say, "Don't do that, you should be doing this."

Judge Williams' public attitude to the film is very much one of wait and see. Brian, can you discern not only what he feels about the project, but what your mother feels about it, in terms of involving your father's history?

WILLIAMS: Both of them feel it is a positive thing, because it has given him a sort of perspective on his life. At the same time, he didn't want to read the script because it is a dramatic fabrication. It had to be, because you couldn't make the story work on the original basis; it was too sprawling, chaotic.

The high point of the year happened at the start of the film, I suppose, when my father and I went back to Ambon together. We were there on Anzac Day with the survivors, in this cemetery where the Prisoner of War camp once was. It is a magnificent cemetery. That journey for me was the accomplishment, really - just to go with him back there, to be there.

One of the historical aspects of the film is the behaviour of the Americans.

WHITBURN: Through the character of Beckett [Terry O'Quinn], who is the Liaison Officer for the Tokyo trials, we explore the politicking
that went on at the end of World War II. Even before the war was over, by late '44, the Allies had a pretty good idea that they were going to win back Europe. They weren't so sure about Japan, but they were working on the atom bomb and that was the ace up their sleeve. But the question that was being raised, even before Japan was defeated, was: What is going to happen to Hirohito? It was a question raised by working on the atom bomb and that was the ace up their sleeve. But the question that was being raised, even before Japan was defeated, was: What is going to happen to Hirohito? It was a question raised by the royal families of Europe, because Hirohito was of royal blood and it was unheard of for such a person - even of a defeated nation, who was from all the evidence very heavily involved in that nation's going to war - to be prosecuted.

WILLIAMS: In fact, the complicating factor was that the Soviets had a man, a KGB agent as it turned out, advising MacArthur on who was to be prosecuted. The Soviets wanted the chief anti-Soviet Hirohito circle fellow, Prince Konoye, to be prosecuted and, when MacArthur reluctantly agreed, the Prince committed suicide. That had immediate ramifications.

WHITBURN: The other concern of the Americans was blocking off the Communists at both the European and Asian ends. In Europe, they achieved that with the division of East and West Germany. In Asia, the Americans felt the only place where they could contain the Communist threat was Japan.

So, these two influences - the royal-family pressures out of Europe and the political concerns of having to contain the spread of Communism - led to Hirohito's being given immunity. That immunity then spread out like a ripple effect to his immediate circle. And it is basically those people who were pardoned who then became the foundation for the political and business rule of Japan. That ultimately resulted in all the scandals involving corruption, etc., that have been going on for the past couple of years in Japan. In essence, the Americans set up the economic foundations that have virtually contributed towards the serious deterioration of the American financial system.

All this is seen in the film through the characters of Takahasi (George Takei) and Beckett. Takahasi, who is the camp commander in the story, is part of the Emperor's circle and there is no way in the world that the Americans, represented by Beckett, will let him be prosecuted, because that would open up a whole can of worms with ramifications throughout the rest of the trial.

Were you at any time concerned that the script could result in an anti-Japanese film?

WHITBURN: We were tackling a subject matter that on the surface could be viewed as 'Jap-bashing', but it was always our intention that we would write a film about reconciliation. We set out to write drama that appeared to be one thing, but in fact intended to serve a different purpose. That is what attracted me to it, and kept Brian and I going through the two years of writing.

From the beginning, we used the trio of Puttnam films - Chariots of Fire, The Killing Fields and The Mission - as role models for the kind of film we wanted to make. Those films involve men from conflicting cultures brought together on a high moral ground. That was the concept that we had for Blood Oath.

Blood Oath deals explicitly with Japanese war crimes. Is it correct that the Japanese have really had no opportunity to experience the kind of catharsis that other countries and societies have experienced through films, such as the Vietnam movies in the U.S. and those on Nazi atrocities in Germany?

WHITBURN: The aspect of brutality by the Japanese against the Allies has been basically submerged throughout Japanese culture. There has been only a handful of films that attempt to approach the subject; one is The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On, which delves into the matter of cannibalism by Japanese soldiers in New Guinea, on both their own people and the Allies. Also, in 1986, there was a feature documentary made by NHK in Japan, at a cost of $16 US million, The Tokyo Trial. It really goes into the historic perspective of why Japan went to war with China, and why Japan opened up that war into the Pacific.

But, yes, the Japanese haven't gone through the same catharsis that America is experiencing with its post-Vietnam films.

Was that a consideration in writing the script?

WHITBURN: Not really, because we were told by a number of 'experts' - and one tends to come up against 'experts' all the time in this business - that there was no way that the Japanese would ever contemplate distributing a film like this. We did not agree with them. But, at the same time, we did not concern ourselves with this issue as it would have hindered the creative development of the story.

Do you see filmmaking as a future area of co-operation between Australia and Japan?

WHITBURN: Well, it's interesting that the three Japanese actors in the film - who are, by the way, quite exceptional - brought a commitment and strength we had not seen before. They are very keen to continue
this relationship between Japan and Australia through their craft. But, Brian and I don't really see much of a move being made by the Australian creative community, or by the Japanese creative community, to bring the two industries together.

WILLIAMS: David Puttnam is doing it.

WHITBURN: Yes, and there are one or two Americans, but the whole thrust at the moment seems to be Sony buying out Columbia Pictures, or JVC investing $100 million in a producer like Larry Gordon. No one seems to be asking, "What are our mutual interests? What are our conflicts? Where are there parallels between our cultures, let's get into it." The only other Australian project I know of in the Blood Oath ilk is The Cowra Breakout.

WILLIAMS: The journey for us went beyond the personal story, based on my father, through to a passion for the whole project. It takes place after World War II, but this time it is entirely set in Japan.

WHITBURN: Brian's right: it created for us a passion to explore further the dramatic potential of the story.

WILLIAMS: It was always our intention that we would write a film about reconciliation. "We were tackling a subject matter that on the surface could be viewed as 'Jap-bashing', but it was always our intention that we would write a film about reconciliation."

WILLIAMS: The Human Condition.

WHITBURN: We have absolute faith in our vision and our commitment to the project, because our roles went way beyond mere writers. We brought Bryan Brown to the project, and Bryan was the key to the financing between Village Roadshow and the Film Finance Corporation. We played a major role in securing that Village Roadshow distribution guarantee, and we brought the original director to the project, Geoff Murphy, who unfortunately had to drop out because of delays in the financing.

So, as joint producers with Charles Waterstreet, we have a strong emotional commitment to Blood Oath.

WILLIAMS: I heard the same question asked of Roland Joffe, whose film about Robert Oppenheimer, Fat Man and Little Boy, had just been released in America. He said with absolute conviction, "Yes, my film will find an audience because things that are of great historical interest, and are well-told stories, even if they are very strongly political, will find an audience because there is an audience now for that." In Europe and Japan, there is a great historical tradition for the sort of things we are dealing with in Blood Oath. For example, the great 10-hour epic by Kobayashi, The Human Condition.

We are looking forward to seeing the response of different audiences. I want to be in Japan and Europe, but mainly Japan, to see the response of the audiences. I know it's going to be fascinating.

WHITBURN: The Japanese actors told us they had not come across a script like this in Japan, one that told this type of story or revealed these truths. George Takei from the States, who plays Takahasi, said that such a difficult subject has made its way to the screen. ■
REPORT BY STEPHEN CROFTS

"Crocodile Dundee Overseas"

If the huge international success of "Crocodile Dundee" is common knowledge, it is not so well known that the world outside Australia sees some five minutes less of the film than are screened in this geopolitical space. The re-editing was required by Paramount, the film’s U.S. distributor; Twentieth Century Fox, distributor for the rest of the world, made no further changes. In the words of the New York Times, Sidney Ganis, president of marketing for Paramount, “saw the biggest problem with "Crocodile Dundee" as ‘convincing an American audience to see an Australian movie’. Paramount’s solution was to disguise as much as possible the fact that it was an Australian film.”

Publicly available - that in the mid-1980s 85 per cent of Australian theatrical screen time was occupied by American-produced films. Meaghan Morris puts the share of 1985 theatrical rentals at 78 per cent. Australia has remained for the U.S. the eighth largest source of revenue in absolute terms, and the highest in per capita terms.

EXPORTING AUSTRALIAN FILM TO THE U.S.

Australian cultural nationalism tends to exaggerate the impact of Australian exports on the other side of the globe, where the principal markets are the U.S. and the UK: witness the nationalist triumphalism of David White’s Australian Movies to the World. The film export drive is no Canute holding back the U.S. waves; it more resembles a few rips against the prevailing tide. Tim Burstall, experienced revival film director, describes the U.S. market as “the most lucrative, but also in some way the most insular and the most closed”. Australian films have had to confront not only American distributors’ and exhibitors’ preferences for films American, but also American cultural indifference to non-American product. Hard-fought forays into the U.S. market established only a few successes prior to "Crocodile Dundee": on the arthouse exhibition circuit, My Brilliant Career and Breaker Morant; and in mainstream entertainment venues, Gallipoli, Mad Max 2 (retitled The Road Warrior) and The Man from Snowy River.

During the recent change of editor at Cinema Papers, Stephen Crofts was left with the unfortunate, but understandable, impression that his article had not been accepted. As a result, it was sent to Tom O’Regan at Continuum and published in Vol 2:2 1989. With few exceptions, Cinema Papers has only published articles exclusive to the magazine. However, given the above circumstances, and the belief that the readerships of the two journals do not significantly overlap, Crofts’ article is, with the gracious permission of O’Regan and Continuum, reprinted here.
State subsidy buffered the Australian production industry less and less from such expectations of self-sufficiency through the 1970s, and the 10BA tax schemes enacted in May 1981 urged a more directly commercial orientation. As the figures above indicate, production costs escalated, suggesting a need to recoup more costs through overseas sales at the same time as pre-sales and distribution guarantees increasingly locked Australian product into overseas, and thus particularly U.S., markets. The 1980-1 U.S. successes of Breaker Morant, Gallipoli and The Road Warrior fuelled the growing mid-Pacific orientation. Witness the 1982-7 figures of 143 Australian feature films released in Australian cinemas, and of 75 released in U.S. cinemas.

"Crocodile" Dundee is Australia's first major marketing success in the U.S. Right from script conception it evinces a boldness lacking in what Susan Dermody has called the "American Express limbo culture" of most 10BA films. Setting itself in both Australia and New York, and dumping on neither, "Crocodile" Dundee "salvages the cultural assertiveness [of the cultural nationalist film] and all the economic pragmatism" of the mid-Pacific 10BA film epitomized by Roadgames, set on the Nullarbor and "starring Jamie Lee Curtis, Stacy Keach and a dingo". With Hogan established as something close to an Australian national institution through the Hoges persona of The Paul Hogan Show, he and producer John Cornell were so confident of Australian and world success that they issued their prospectus without pre-sales or distribution guarantees; and it was oversubscribed. After the Australian opening on 26 April 1986, they took the film direct to a Los Angeles film market research company before approaching any major studios. National Research's test screenings produced evidence that "audiences loved the humour, the hero and the outback photography", and gave Hogan a rating considerably above stars of the order of Robert Redford.

By July 1986, as the film was on the point of becoming the most popular film in Australia, Cornell and Terry Jackman, the film's sales representative, had signed a contract with Paramount. The financial details are a fairly well-guarded secret: Paramount paid between $5 and $11 million for American (including Canadian) theatrical distribution, television, video and cable rights, and spent between $8 and $10 million advertising the film in print and, unusually, on television. The re-editing was reported not at all in the Australian press and in only three papers in the U.S. (The New York Times, The LA Times and The Washington Post). Once the deal was done, Hogan and Paramount's president of distribution, Barry London, worked in Australia on the alterations detailed below. Publicity prior to the 26 September 1986 New York premiere of the film took two forms. First was Hogan's informal campaign via television ads in eight key cities for the Australian Tourist Commission: "Put another shrimp on the barbie." These made his face, if not his name, widely known. There followed the Paramount campaign. Apart from the press and television ads, they staged sneak previews at no fewer than 500 cinemas across the country on 20 September, and had Hogan do a 30-day press tour to accompany the film's release. After its New York premiere, it was opened at 879 U.S. and Canadian theatres, increasing to 1485 by 17 November (compared with 75 cinemas in Australia, and, indeed, 2500 for "Crocodile" Dundee I). It was, in Sarris' words, a "textbook word-of-mouth triumph ... I kept waiting for the movie to disappear. Instead, it clobbered everything in sight." With Hogan established as something close to an Australian national institution through the Hoges persona of The Paul Hogan Show, he and producer John Cornell were so confident of Australian and world success that they issued their prospectus without pre-sales or distribution guarantees; and it was oversubscribed. After the Australian opening on 26 April 1986, they took the film direct to a Los Angeles film market research company before approaching any major studios. National Research's test screenings produced evidence that "audiences loved the humour, the hero and the outback photography", and gave Hogan a rating considerably above stars of the order of Robert Redford.

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The film export drive arose partly from well-known cultural factors - national self-esteem, and concerns to develop foreign trade and tourism - but also from a complex of economic and demographic factors. These comprise assumptions about budget size, the size of the domestic market and the extent of state subsidy of production, factors which were summed up in the advice offered in Australia by John Huntley, a visitor from the British Film Institute (LINDA KOSLOW SKI). PETER FAIRMAN'S FACING PAGE: "CROCODILE" DUNDEE AND THE AMERICAN REPORTER, SUE CHARLTON (LINDA KOSLOW SKI). PETER FAIRMAN'S".

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“CROCODILE” DUNDEE: AUSTRALIAN AND WORLD VERSIONS

Key to Characters
SC Sue Charlton, Newsday journalist
R Richard, her boss and lover
W Wally, of Walkabout Creek Tours
CD “Crocodile” Dundee

Australian Version:

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Analysis

97'07" Running time, Australian video version

GENERAL CATEGORIES OF CHANGES – KEY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Category of Alteration</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Narrative streamlining</td>
<td>For reasons of pacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOB</td>
<td>Australian outback slowness</td>
<td>Heterosexual couple formation takes precedence over Australian atmosphere and tourist images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Australian tourist images</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Australian mateship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOV</td>
<td>Australian ocker vulgarity</td>
<td>Sound mix enhances this ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>“Heroic” features</td>
<td>Promotes the American against the Australian within the couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Australian self-deprecation</td>
<td>Dealing with the culturally and linguistically unfamiliar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Australian language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>US political self-censorship</td>
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ANALYSIS OF CHANGES

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<th>Segment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NS AOB</td>
<td>Here an Australian outback slowness interrupts the forward narrative drive of US heroine’s (helicopter) search for the “Crocodile” Dundee story. The Australian version contrasts Northern Territory with New York cultures and technologies, whereas the United States version erases the outback slowness and rewrites these scenes in line with the slicker, goal-oriented structure of the journalist-in-foreign-country genre. Australian mateship and ocker vulgarity are played down in favour of the US heroine, heterosexual couple formation and a presumed more WASPish audience. The Australian mock heroic mode (already set out in the stuffed crocodile and the progressive deflations of Wally’s lionization/mythification of Dundee in the pub) is here cut short: as if US viewers are to be exposed to too much anti-heroism, to too much self-deprecation. Within such a conception, the</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NS AOB</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>NS AOB</td>
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mock-heroic mode should naturalize heroism, not undermine it. The dropping of dialogue about Dundee's wrestling the live croc and of his "That's where the croc got me" eliminates narrative redundancy before he tells his full story later in segment 7. It also diminishes his heroic status. This segment is a good example of the Australian sound mix, with dialogue barely audible over atmospheric noise. The US mix gives more voice presence, and thus more attention to the couple and less to the sound of the environment.

6.1 AL "Bastard" is less literal, and more familiar Australian slang than in American.

7.1 NS AT The film's only panoramic views of Kakadu - grand views of Jabalowonga - are cut.

11.1 NS (US)H The cutting of Charlton's growing fear and exhaustion makes the croc attack more of a shock, and makes her less a foolish victim.

14.1 NS Narrative economy.

15.1 AL "Stickybeak" is Australian-only slang.

16.1 NS Narratively, the scene supplies nothing but a reminder that Wally will return to Dundee and Charlton.

The Australian outback disappears, and along with it an account of Australian tourism - Wally's "Miss Charlton's articles are the wholesome family audience.

"Stone the bloody crows" likewise.

Narrative economy and pretty outback.

"Billabong" is meaningless outside Australia.

22.1 NS Narrative streamlining applied in New York section, too.

25.1 AL "Fucking" is more offensive in the US than in Australia. "Streuth" is Australian slang, not American. "Stone the bloody crows" likewise.

27.1 NS The cocaine sniffer's reaction shot was doubtless judged superfluous.

32.1 NS US viewers could be assumed to be more familiar than Australian with the grandiose Sensitivity of US Senator Tom Bradley.

32.2 PSC In the Australian print, Dundee wanders around Times Square to a wishful guitar soundtrack after being, effectively, jilted by Charlton's engagement to Richard. There are three possible reasons for this cut: hardened American notions of heroism; the fact that these shots focus attention on Dundee at the expense of Charlton; and the inappropriateness of Times Square sleaze to the wholesome family audience.

35.1 NS Curiously, of the three shots placing Dundee in his Plaza Hotel suite, the one is cut which best explains - by showing both the television noise and his distance from the phone - why he does not hear Charlton's phone call.

36.1 NS H A lesser sentimentalism, and a concern with a tighter narrative.

It will be seen from the preceding that narrative streamlining accounts for many cuts, and that this is principally why the Australian outback half loses more than its New York half. In the words of Barry London, "we accelerated the pace to the taste of the American consumer."1 The world print also boosts the formation of the Dundee-Charlton couple at the expense of Australian atmosphere. This promotion of human over outback is enhanced by the sound mix. Within the couple, a number of alterations play up the American and play down the Australian. Several cuts excise Australian slang and less-becoming behaviour in the interests of a more WASPish audience.

Overall, then, it was an aesthetic rather than a cultural agenda which determined Paramount and Hogan's cuts. The aesthetic considerations are those applied to mainstream entertainment film. As such, these expectations are more stringent than those applied to the majority of Australian films shown in the U.S., which are exhibited in the U.S. as "art" films, as being different from standard Hollywood (or Hollywood-modelled) fare, films distinguished by their good taste, respectability, elegant mise-en-scène, promotion of characterization over plot and so on: all with the special advantage for a U.S. audience of not having to cope with too foreign a language. If U.S. editing of such films is unknown, this is because it is not sections of films which are cut, but whole films which are not taken up by U.S. distributors. The less-acceptable genres have tended to be more culturally specific: the '70s ocker comedy and the social-realist film (Love Letters from Terabar Road, Hard Knocks, A Street to Die and many others). The most acceptable genre - the period film - is less culturally specific than the excluded categories, but somewhat more so than the mainstream entertainment successes of The Road Warrior, The Man from Snowy River and "Crocodile" Dundee. The Road Warrior and Snowy River conformed to the mainstream generic expectations of the action film and the Walt Disney Western respectively. Adopting a less familiar generic mix, "Crocodile" Dundee was not surprisingly tailored for U.S. distribution. In this context, Australian cultural specificity of necessity loses out; aesthetic criteria do have cultural consequences. Hogan at least would see that as a tiny price to pay for "Crocodile" Dundee's becoming the highest-grossing foreign film in the U.S., as well as a monstrous success in the U.K., in France, and in countries as unexpected as Denmark and Japan. Cultural nationalists may bewail the loss of true-blue Australia from the film. A more realistic view would recognize prevailing and very strong international film distribution arrangements.

My thanks to David Stiven.

NOTES


2. See Kristin Thompson, Exporting Entertainment: America In the World Film Market 1907 - 84, British Film Institute, London, 1985.


5. Dermody and Jacka, op. cit., p.1041.


11. Australian Film Data, Australian Film Commission, Sydney, 1988, pp. 34 - 35.


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Solrun Hoaas has been working largely unheralded at her craft for many years. Some say she is obsessed with all things Japanese. But that is only one aspect of this intense and often introspective writer-director: “I think I have been an appalling dilettante for most of my life, in the sense that I have been doing a number of different things and I have changed course on occasions. It’s funny: I’m still being described as a new, up-and-coming filmmaker when I’m in my forties.”

Although born in Norway, Hoaas spent most of her formative years studying, experiencing and alternating between Japanese and Norwegian lifestyles. Her artistic education has been diverse: watching American films whilst growing up in Japan, contemporary theatre studies during the Japanese theatre renaissance, newsroom training at a Norwegian television station and even a spell amongst Canberra academia.

Hoaas studied film at the Swinburne Institute of Technology and has completed several personal documentaries on Japanese ritual events, as well as a short film poem on Judith Wright (On Edge). She then made the applauded Green Tea and Cherry Ripe, a documentary drawn from the reminiscences of Japanese war brides: “On coming to Australia I was struck by how conscious Australians are of the wartime experience and how obsessed a lot are with the POW experience. It keeps surfacing in the media and being exploited for dramatic effect. If one has a dual or a triple cultural background then it seems only natural to want to consolidate the pieces together.”

Hoaas has further developed that interest in her first feature, Aya, currently in production around Melbourne and parts of Hobart. Aya focuses on Hoaas’ real obsession – people’s strengths, instincts and relationships – and backdrops it against cultural cross-currents: “I’m concerned with making a film that communicates to a wide audience, rather than the sort of specialized films I made early on. I have probably been influenced less by Hollywood than other filmmakers. I derive more from Japanese theatre and European filmmaking.

“Poetry is another good basis for straightforward dramatic structure, where you have internal rhymes and rhythms, parallels and motifs. Even though Aya is about a Japanese war bride, it is also an expression of certain feelings of stages in my life, of being on the outer in a number of cultural situations.”

With a wry smile Hoaas adds, “My one big dream is to be a violinist in a big orchestra. It would be the ultimate happiness to play the same tune as everyone else. It would be very satisfying.”

Profile: Pat Gillespie Photo: Ponch Hawkes
Don McLennan has recently finished post-production on his fourth feature. Breakaway, a road movie based on a ‘buddie’ relationship between an American prison escapee (Bruce Boxleitner) and a meek Australian businessman (Bruce Myles), is an action-based character story reminiscent of McLennan’s 1987 feature, Slate Wyn & Me. Made for Antony I. Ginnane’s International Film Group with a distribution guarantee from Hemdale, Slate Wyn & Me was the first of two features McLennan made for IFG. The second, Mull, a little-seen and vastly underrated family drama, won Nadine Garner Best Actress at the 1988 Australian Film Institute Awards. It was the second occasion McLennan had directed an actress to success in this category. (Eight years earlier, Tracy Mann won the award for her role in his first feature, Hard Knocks.)

During the final editing stages of Breakaway, McLennan spoke about the four features, his experience with IFG and his views on the current state of the Australian industry.

Breakaway

Is Breakaway an original script?

Yes. Jan Sardi wrote it about five years ago under the AFC-PBL script development scheme just after he and Michael Pattinson had worked together on Street Hero. As I’d know Jan for some time, and we had often exchanged ideas, he gave it to me to read. I liked it very much, but thought no more about it because the rights were tied up with AFC-PBL.

The script went to two or three companies, but for various reasons it never happened. Then, when I was finishing Mull, Jan came back to me with it and said, “The script’s now free. Are you still interested?” I said I was, and that’s how I became involved.

How was the film financed?

Through a distribution deal with Smart Egg Pictures in the UK, up against European territories. The remainder was put up by the Film Finance Corporation and Film Victoria.

It is interesting that, with an American in the main role and the rest of the cast Australian, you went for a UK distribution deal.

I never thought about that, to be quite honest. When I went away last year to put the deal together, I flew first to London and spoke to distribution companies there. I always perceived that it would be easier to put the deal together with a UK distributor for European rights than it would be with a U.S. distributor for North American rights. It also became pretty obvious that the FFC and Film Victoria would be reasonably at home with putting their money up against North America and Australasia in the deal. Of course, once we had the European distributor in place, which had insisted on an overseas actor in one of the lead roles, the FFC and Film Victoria were most keen to see an American actor in the cast, seeing their money was up against North America and Australasia.

Were you acting in a producing role as well as director?

Yes. I also had Jane Ballantyne working as co-producer. I made the running on the deals, and she did the follow-up and paperwork. She also took on the line producing role during production.

What do you perceive as the market for Breakaway?

Jan Sardi, Jane and I always knew the market would be those 15 years-old through to their early forties. It’s certainly not a teenage movie, and we didn’t pitch it that way. If one had to narrow it down further, I would say the 20s-to-30s age group.

How did you come to choose Bruce Boxleitner for the lead role?

We gave the script to a casting agent in Los Angeles, who did quite a bit of work putting together names for us. We also came up with a list of our own. Out of the people who were available and we could afford, we chose Bruce.

Bruce’s background is basically in television, although he did
one or two features some time ago. He was the co-lead in *Scarecrow* and *Mrs King* and has done quite a few tele-movies, including a remake of *Red River*.

One of the reasons Bruce wanted to come out here was that it represented an opportunity to get into features. *Breakaway* he has more than shown he's capable of carrying a feature. I'm surprised that he hasn't done more, to be honest.

What about Bruce Myles? His character has to change from being an accountant-type figure into a crazed bankrupt. That is a fairly difficult thing for an actor to pull off, and Myles does it very well.

Bruce is part of VIP [Victorian International Pictures], which also includes Michael Pattinson, James Hardy, Mac Gudgeon and Jon Stephens. When Jan came to me with script for *Breakaway*, he said, "I've always thought of Bruce paying this role." I'd seen Bruce in several plays at the Melbourne Theatre Company and so on, and thought it was a wonderful idea. Physically, he was just right for the role. But I also knew we had to have a really top actor, given as you say the journey his character has to take. I thought Bruce would be fantastic for it, and he was. His performance is outstanding.

Bruce is also a director as well as an actor and writer. He co-directed *Ground Zero* with Michael Pattinson, and he has directed quite a lot of plays for the MTC and other companies. His background is theatre, rather than films, but he's been on the other side of the camera and he is aware how to pitch his performance for cinema.

What was the rapport like between Boxleitner and Myles?

They had a fantastic relationship, off and on the set, and I think that shows in the film. Before we started shooting, the two Bruces, myself, Deborah Unger and Toni Scanlan went through the script, reading the lines and discussing what the point of each scene was. That was the extent of our rehearsals. I don't like to do too much rehearsing before shooting so as to maintain freshness and spontaneity. During filming, the two Bruces spent quite a lot of time between set-ups running through scenes between themselves. Once we got on the set, the three of us would then work together on the performances. What made it work so well was the fact they got on well together.

What roles has Zbigniew (Peter) Friedrich taken on the production?

Peter is director of photography and supervising editor. What we have done on this film, which we hadn't done before, is have two editing rooms, with two assembly editors working under Peter's supervision. Peter and I look at the stuff, mark up what we want, and then the assembly editor goes to work on it while we go to the other room and start working on the next reel. It speeds the process up enormously, cutting down all that sitting-around waiting while the splices are done and the footage is found.

You have had a long association with Friedrich.

I met Peter about twenty years ago at Crawfords, where we became mates. That was in the days when everybody worked on each other's films and nobody had any money. When *Hard Knocks* came along, I chose Peter to shoot and cut it. That worked out very well, so the relationship continued.

I have a lot of respect for Peter's ability as a filmmaker, and I trust
his opinion and taste on many things. I find working with him very easy because I don’t have to discuss things with him. For example, when we finish shooting a film, I very rarely get involved in the first cut, letting Peter put it together. I then step in after the first cut and sit down with him at the Steenbeck.

As far as shooting on the set, especially on Breakaway, our understanding became even more unspoken than in the past. I might have had an idea of how to do a particular shot, but essentially I let Peter work out the camera angles and shots. That saved a lot of time, because I was free to run through scenes with the actors.

It is also a wonderful experience having the D.O.P. cut the film for you. It saves a lot of time on the floor because you know the shots are going to cut.

**MULL**

*Why was the title changed from “Mullaway” to Mull?*

When the film was about to be released, Filmpac [the distributor] came back and said it ought to be called Mull, because “Mullaway” sounded like a film about fish. What Filmpac didn’t realize is that “mull” is modern slang for “having a joint”. I didn’t mention that to them; I really didn’t have any say in the matter.

Personally, I think they should have left it as “Mullaway”. There’s a section in the book where Phoebe is accused of “mulling away her time.” That’s where the title came from.

*How did you become interested in the project?*

Our company, Ukiyo Films, picked up the rights to the novel. I was going to write the script myself, but I was very busy on other things and felt that I should bring in another writer who had a more experience in writing for kids. So, I approached Jon Stephens, who I had known for quite a while. Jon hadn’t done a feature at that stage, but I thought it would be a good project for him.

The father, Frank Mullins (Bill Hunter), has a mind that seems set in the 1950s, if not the ‘40s. This is also reflected in the production design and the St Kilda locations.

There was certainly that feeling to the novel, in the way people spoke, and even in their thought processes. We did update some of the dialogue, but it still says the same things.

The ‘dated’ look is to do with showing that theirs is a struggling family, without a lot of money. If you look around St Kilda, that is very much how it still is, with cheap housing and flats and a lot of 1940s decor.

As for the costumes, we went for the same vein. I actually snuck along to a Revival meeting to observe how people were dressed. It was exactly the same: pants two inches above the ankles, the black functional shoes ...

The scene at the ‘born again’ Christian Church seems very realistic. *How did you cast it?*

Jon Stephens helped with that. Greg Apps from Liz Mullinar cast the picture, but Jon sat in on all the casting sessions, as he’d had quite a lot of experience.

Jon also devised a way of auditioning the kids via workshops, which I sat in on. After that, it was decided that Jon should handle all the extras casting.

One of the most interesting relationships in the film is the homosexual attraction between the two adolescent boys, Guido (Juno Roxas) and Steve (Craig Morrison). *How much did that reflect the book?*

It is much the same, though more expanded in the novel. One of the challenges of adapting the book was that there was so much to deal with. So we decided very early on that the film would be about the girl. It would be a year out of her life, and all the social issues – teenage homosexuality, drug addiction, the born-again Christianity, the ethnic stuff with her Greek friend and so on – would just be background to show how she coped with things.

*Mull and Hard Knocks* are two films about working-class female adolescents who go through rite-of-passage experiences. *Breakaway* appears more like *Slate Wyn & Me*, a knock-about fantasy action movie about criminals on the run. *How has this doubling come about?*

Coincidence more than anything else. They were just scripts or novels that came to me which I liked at the time. I don’t want to do another rite-of-passage youth film in a hurry, and I don’t think I’ll be doing another road movie for a while, either.

On the one hand, I certainly learnt a lot from doing *Hard Knocks* that I was able to use in *Mull* and *Breakaway*, in terms of composition...
of shots, cutting and pacing — those sort of things. But I certainly didn’t do *Breakaway* and *Mull* because they were similar to *Slate Wyn & Me* and *Hard Knocks.*

In *Mull* and *Hard Knocks* you have made two films where the lead performers have won Best Actress at the AFI Awards. To what do you attribute that success?

The first step was casting the right person. The myth of the director’s being able to get a performance out of an actor that nobody else can is what it is: a myth. If actors can’t act, you can’t make them.

What I try to do for all my actors is create an environment whereby they feel comfortable with and confident in what they are doing. They also know they have a fair amount of latitude to play with it. For example, if the actors are having trouble playing a scene, you know it’s not because they can’t do it, but for some other reason. It’s either the lines of dialogue, the motivation, the way they walk across a room … whatever. I always look to see what the problem is and try to rectify it.

I was certainly very lucky to work with both Tracy Mann and Nadine Garner, who are great actors. But one thing to remember about films for which actors win awards is that usually the actor has the dominant role. In *Hard Knocks*, Tracy Mann is in every scene, so, if she’s good, she looks fantastic; the same with Nadine in *Mull*. I’m not taking anything away from Tracy or Nadine, but a lot of people looking at those films and judging performances can get taken in by that.

How did you become involved with producer Howard Grigsby?

Howard had just finished working on Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket* when he came out to work as head of production for Ginnane. Part of his deal was that he would be allowed to produce two films a year for IFP.

Howard is the best producer I have worked with and one of the few creative producers in the country. He is a writer as well, and has also directed, so he understands the problems you have as a director and writer. You can sit down with him and have an intelligent discussion about the script, the pacing and rhythm, the structure.

Howard doesn’t work for Ginnane any more. He has set himself up as an independent and he has a couple of projects he is trying to get off the ground. Hopefully, we’ll do another film together. It is just a matter of finding the right project.

**SLATE WYN & ME**

Your film makes a significant change to the novel: the schoolgirl, Blanche, has become a school teacher.

The reason was casting; simple as that.

I had picked up the rights to the novel and started developing it with [producer] Tom Burstall, whom I’d known for a while. We came up with several drafts of the script, which Film Victoria financed. But when we showed it around town, we couldn’t get a bite. As it wasn’t a script that allowed for overseas actors, we couldn’t go that route. It had to be an Australian picture.

We were basically at the end of the road when Tom said, “Tony Ginnane is back in town doing a few things. Why don’t we talk to him?” Tom was dealing with Ginnane at that point on *Great Expectations*. So, Tom took it over to Tony, who read it and said he was interested. He was about to leave for either Cannes or MIFF and he took the script with him. He came back with four offers from overseas companies within a week.

One of the offers was from Hemdale, but it was conditional on casting someone of standing in Australia. Now, Sigrid Thornton had read the novel and wanted to play Blanche, but we felt the part was a bit too young for her. But when we couldn’t get anywhere with it, Sigrid came back and said she was still interested, provided we aged the girl into her mid 20s.

Tony and Hemdale were keen on the idea, so we went ahead and adapted the script accordingly.

That was a substantial change to make; it meant you ended up with a very different film.

No question about it whatsoever. That decision also limited the dramatic possibilities. We lost the sexual tension of a 15-year-old girl’s being stuck with the two guys as they travel around the outback. They would have made for a more intense, more sensual film.

When the school teacher begins having emotional feelings for the male characters, it feels as if Sigrid Thornton is struggling to find the right way to make her actions believable to an audience. Do you think the script changes led to that confusion?

Yes. I wanted Sigrid to go a lot further with it than she did. For example, there is a scene where her hair gets cut. I would have liked to have seen her hair actually cut off during the shot until it was only an inch or so long. But Sigrid couldn’t do that, for various reasons. That sort of affected everything else.

Part of the problem may have been because I hadn’t done a film of that size before. Maybe I didn’t feel secure enough to push Sig as hard as I could have. Sig didn’t trust me as much as she would have liked to. She looks very much at sea in the film, because she wasn’t as focused on the role as she should have. I blame myself partly for that.
You have been involved with the Australian film industry as an independent filmmaker since the early 1970s, originally being the manager of the Melbourne Filmmakers Co-operative. What are your impressions of the changes within the industry?

There are many good things about the Australian film industry. It is just so damn difficult getting to make films that to be allowed to make them, no matter the circumstances, is just fantastic.

Without taking anything away from that, if there has been major disappointment in the industry, from a producer’s point of view, it is that we didn’t develop the talent we could have in the 1980s with all that 10 BA money. There haven’t been, with few exceptions, any substantial talents to emerge from the industry. I’m talking about actors, directors and writers. We didn’t discover another Mel Gibson, a Bryan Brown or a Judy Davis. A few people have come up, but nobody has hit that level. There have been no new Peter Weirs or Fred Schepisi.

I don’t agree with people who say 10 BA was a waste of money. The more money we can put into the film industry, the better. Nor do I agree that we should only be making so many films a year. That’s the old boys’ network to me.

When the 10 BA money was around, the unions resisted overseas actors very strongly. You can see their point, but we should have been bringing more overseas actors out here. The films that were made would have been marketed a lot better and they would have earned considerably more money back. That was a big mistake.

Actually, I don’t see any future for the industry if it stays contained within Australia. The country is not big enough to support it; we just don’t have the people here who can draw in the crowds at the box-office.

Do you just mean actors?

Actors, directors, writers. There are a lot of people here who get big fees for making films. But there are very, very few who can justify it. Australian actors get substantial fees to appear in films, yet in most cases their names alone couldn’t guarantee getting their salary back at the box-office, let alone the film’s budget. The same thing applies to writers, directors and producers. If the industry were based more along the lines of the way it is in L.A., where you’re only as good as your last picture, there would be a lot less people in this country making films.

Why did that situation developed here?

There was so much 10 BA money around that producers could afford to take big fees for putting deals together. The actors, directors and writers then heard what the producers were getting and demanded big fees too. We are still wearing that. The cost of some crews here, and the awards that they work under, are just ridiculous. We are pricing ourselves out of the market.

At the the height of 10 BA, people said they wanted to make a film for, say, $3 million. But how many of these people seriously thought about whether they could get that $3 million back? I have been a bit guilty about it myself, too. A lot of filmmakers think that the marketing and selling of a picture is a dirty exercise and that someone else should do it. I find that even now, especially with the young people coming into the industry, that there is an aversion to aspects of their job. For example, an actor I know of, who had just come out of NIDA, said to the director of her first film, “I don’t do publicity.” I mean that’s crazy. Every lead actor should be doing publicity.

You said earlier that overseas elements are essential to Australian films. Does that mean you feel the kind of deal-generated projects set up by the Film Finance Corporation are the best way to go?

No. The FFC has two problems, which I’m sure it is aware of. First, there is a one-door policy. I’d hate to get on the wrong side of the FFC, for any reason. Second, everything is deal-driven. The FFC doesn’t want to get involved in assessing a script, or what sort of film it is. But I don’t know how you can responsibly put money into a film and not assess those things.

In a sense, it is probably not that much different to the 10 BA era.

What the FFC is trying to do is put that assessment back on the distributors and marketing people, which is not a bad way to go, I suppose. But the FFC has its problems, there is no doubt about that, although it has learnt an awful lot in the past twelve months.

I must say, though, that the FFC has been very good to us. The help and assistance it has given us is fantastic. I have no complaints.

You made two films with Antony I. Ginnane’s International Film Group. How did you find that experience?

You always have an interesting experience working with Ginnane. I have a lot of respect for Tony; he is probably one of the few true producers in the country. He is a great deal maker and it is a pity that he’s not doing any more films in Australia. What’s happened to him [feeling pressured to work outside the FFC set-up and, thus, overseas] is not right.

On the other hand, you have to be on your toes with Tony. He takes no prisoners when he does a deal with you, which is fair. He’s a businessman, and that’s his business.

Tony never interfered creatively in any of the films I did. We have had our disagreements over the ending of Slate Wyn & Me, which were resolved, but apart from that he didn’t intervene.

As for the money side, we were constantly fighting. But that’s all part of business.

What was the disagreement over the film’s ending?

The problem is that the principal character, Wyn [Martin Sacks], is a guy who’s quite cold-bloodedly killed someone with an axe. There is no way he is going to be allowed to walk off into the sunset. He knows he is going to die, but he feels he has to come back to see the girl.

The dispute was over how the scene between Wyn and the girl should be played. Hemdale wanted it to be far more emotional with “I love you” and all that sort of teary stuff. I wanted it to be a little harder, more functional and pragmatic.

What is your next project?

I don’t know yet; there are a couple of projects I’m looking at. I might go to live in L.A. next year. I figured I might as well go broke there as here. I’m now with the William Morris Agency and it has expressed interest in my working in America. But if something good comes up here, I will certainly consider it.

The funny thing about my career is that nobody ever really comes to me with projects. I have only ever been approached once with a film where the money was in place and they wanted me to direct. I have engineered and developed all my projects; I guess I’ll continue doing that.
PAUL KALINA

Today, many Australian films and tele-features are released directly to video. As a result, they are often ignored. To help counter this, CINEMA PAPERS will publish in every issue short reviews of all Australian, first-release, feature-length videos. Films made in foreign locales, but with significant Australian participation, will also be included.

As well, all those Australian films which have been theatrically released, but are now appearing on video for the first time, will be listed with relevant details. Shorts and documentaries of special interest will also be covered.

Filmmakers and distributors who feel they have videos of interest for this section should send information to Paul Kalina at Cinema Papers, 43 Charles Street, Abbotsford 3067, or fax it to (03) 427 9255.

FIRST RELEASES

Above: William Anderson (John Stanton), right, is held captive after discovering an illegal heroin stash in Brian Trenchard-Smith's Day of the Panther.

DAY OF THE PANTHER


Jason Blade (Edward John Stazak), William Anderson (John Stanton) and Anderson's daughter Linda (Zale Daniel), all graduates of the legendary Panther School of Martial Arts in Hong Kong, intercept a Triad drug ring deal in the course of their duties as undercover investigators. Returning to Perth, where Linda is murdered by drug king Baxter (Jim Richards), Anderson masterminds a plan that sees Blade infiltrate the criminal dealings of a notorious businessman to find the ruthless killer.

The centre-pieces of this martial arts-action film are the numerous fight sequences, which are staged for maximum realism by the skilled fighters in the principal roles. Scriptwriter Peter West, who began his career in filmmaking as a stuntman, works some comic parodies of television cop serials into this otherwise standard genre piece. Director Brian Trenchard-Smith keeps the action moving, making the most of Perth locations and a shoe-string budget, but fails to illicit anything more than perfunctory performances from the actors.

DRIVING FORCE


Run-of-the-mill road-action genre film about a tow-truck driver, Steve (Sam Jones), trying to survive in a not-too-distant future on the treacherous highways. Here he finds himself in an extended confrontation with the barbaric Black Knights who, in vehicles resembling the hot-rod buggies of Mad Max 2, control the tow-truck trade by causing car smashes. Like Max, Steve is the archetypal outsider whose only connection with humanity is his young daughter until, quite predictably, a love interest is introduced which enables the family to be reconstituted.

Uninspired direction, bland performances with a formula-bound script set this apart from its numerous precursors, such as the spirited Mad Max series, or the self-consciously satirical Commando (Richard Lester). Much of the film is taken up by a dull subplot in which Steve argues with his tyrannical parents-in-law for custody of his child. The film's setting is a weird amalgam of the Dynasty-like settings in which the in-laws live and the apocalyptic wastelands where an American-Asian community commands the cut-throat trade in car parts. The stult work is by Grant Page (Mad Max).

INNOCENT PREY


Innocent Prey could be regarded as a virtual encyclopedia of thriller and horror-film conventions and cliches. After a series of harrowing encounters with her psychopathic husband in Dallas, Texas, the innocent prey of the film's title escapes to the fatal shores of Sydney, where a double-whammy of hair-raising adventures await her. Not only does the bloodthirsty psycho somehow manage to make his way to her door, but her host turns out to be a demented and tormented Norman Bates-like man using elaborate surveillance equipment to watch her every move.

Missing the possibleities of this pot-pourri, Innocent Prey is marred by its bland, workmanlike direction, an implausible script and listless performances. It is an international 'number plate' film in every sense of the term. There is a music score by Brian May, and brief appearances by Grigor Taylor and a solemn Martin Balsam.

JILTED

Moir, Jennifer Cluff, Steve Jacobs, Tina Bursill, Helen Muktins. Washed up in a holiday resort is a handful of characters seeking refuge from an uneasy past. The temperamental cook (Richard Moir) has been sacked from almost every one of his previous jobs; the manager (Steve Jacobs) cannot escape a failed marriage, Vietnam or the shame of sexual and managerial impotency; the accountant Paula (Tina Bursill) turns to fiction to deal with her desires and inhibitions; and the waitress Cindy (Helen Muktins) continues to be mistreated by uncaring lovers.

The appearance of an enigmatic stranger (Jennifer Cluff) catalyses various reactions amongst the group. In time, each will recover to realize his/her longing for human contact and an ability to take charge of his/her life.

Bill Bennett's fourth feature sticks closely to a script, rather than relying on the improvisational technique of his previous films. The result is a disarmingly loose storyline that, nonetheless, succeeds in uniting the disparate quests in a tangled web of relationships. Filmed on the ever-shifting sands of Fraser Island, the setting becomes an ideal complement to the film's depiction of transient and fragile relationships.

Despite the torrid-sounding subject matter, Bennett portrays the characters' behaviour, mannerisms and language with a playful and slightly-mocking tone, finding much comedy in the laconic and vernacular. As one has learnt to expect from Bennett's work, the performances are fresh and finely-tuned.

**STRIKE OF THE PANTHER**


Sequel to Day of the Panther, which was shot at the same time as the original.

More bone-crunching action as martial arts expert Jason Blade (Edward John Stazak) seeks arch-rival Baxter (Jim Richards), who has kidnapped his lover, Anderson's niece, Jemma (Paris Jefferson).

**THE THIRD WAVE**


Designed specifically as a high-school discussion starter, this 28-minute video deals with the issue of AIDS amongst a group of heterosexual teenagers.

**THIS FABULOUS TUESDAY**


Detailed and comprehensive celebration (one hesitates to call it a documentary) of the Melbourne Cup, presented by the horse race's major sponsor, Foster's Lager. It contains some interesting archival footage, courtesy of Movietone News and the National Film and Sound Archive, and uncritical background information on many facets of the famous race. The irritatingly sanctimonious narration is provided by Bill Collins.

**ARIA (Segment 5)**


Bruce Beresford's segment of this compilation 'opera' film is based on the aria 'Glück, das mir verbieh' from Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Die Tote Stadt.

**OTHER RELEASES**

**CANE TOADS – AN UNNATURAL HISTORY**


A social history of the Queensland cane toad which imaginatively blends fictional and documentary techniques, bizarre fact and true-life drama, light-hearted comedy and social commentary. Released for sell-through at $29.95.

**"CROCODILE" DUNDEE II**


The immensely successful sequel to the box-office hit of 1986. It will now also be remembered as John Meillon's last screen performance.

**AFTRS VIDEOS**

The Australian Film, Television and Radio School has released several industry-related videos. David Puttnam – Industry Seminar was recorded when the prominent producer and former chief executive officer of Columbia Pictures visited the AFTRS earlier this year. The "1989 Filmmaker Interviews" series contains interviews with writer Robert Caswell, director of photography John Seale, playwright David Williamson, and directors Vincent Ward, Stephen McLean and Yahoo Serious. The four tapes in the "Writers on Writing" series are designed as audio-visual handbooks on the skills and practices of writing for film, comedy, television and radio. "Shaping Your Sound" is a series of 80-minute videos on professional recording techniques, presented by engineer, producer and AFTRS lecturer Tom Lubin. Also, there is the final programme in a series on the forms and functions of screen music which focuses on the work of composer Bruce Smeaton.

**CRAWFORD CLASSICS**

Crawford Productions has launched a video label, Crawford Classics, which will distribute select mini-series, tele-features and series made by the Melbourne-based production house. The videos will be sold to the public through Myer department stores and direct mail-order.

The initial release comprises the complete, 4 ½ hour All The Rivers Run ($59.95) and three episodes of The Zoo Family ($29.95, the entire series to be released in three-episode instalments in subsequent months).
DEAD CALM

FIRST CONTACT

GOING SANE

THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER 2

THE RIGHTEHAND MAN


GLEANING THE CUBE

THE GREAT MACARTHUR

While researching in 1980 a planned film on Australian colonialism in Papua New Guinea, Robin Anderson stumbled upon film shot in the 1950s recording three Australians’ encounter with an ‘undiscovered’ society living in the highlands. That footage forms the basis of this documentary, which won the Grand Prix of the Cinema du Reel Festival in 1983. A fascinating documentary about colonialism and colonialist attitudes.

CONTRIBUTION TO PAGE 66
JANUARY

New South Wales
Music and Television Recording Certificate Course – Stage 2
South Australia
Drama Script Analysis and Breakdown
Tasmania
Radio Journalism

FEBRUARY

New South Wales
Music and Television Recording Certificate Course – Stage 1
The Producer, The Market, The Audience
Research
Queensland
Producer’s Relationships
South Australia
Actors Workshop – Working with the Director and the Camera
Victoria
Script Editing
Western Australia
Broadcasting Law

MARCH

New South Wales
Commissioning and Making Corporate Videos
Production Accountancy
Successful Dealmaking
Film Marketing
Successful Packaging
Queensland
The Art Department
Video Production Course

APRIL

New South Wales
Production Management
Film Music – The Final Dimension
Television Commercials Production
The Pitch
AMS Audiofile
Queensland
Post Production Sound
South Australia
PCs in Production
Tasmania
Location Recording
Victoria
Getting the Most out of Your PC
Introduction to Film Equipment and Processing
Actor/Director Relationship
Western Australia
Audio Location

MAY

New South Wales
Multitrack Radio Production
Producer and the Law
Music and Television Recording Certificate Course – Stage 2 and 3
Harrison Series X
Dance Video Directing Course
Queensland
Assistant Directors, Floor Managers Course
RMBA/AFTRS Copywriter’s Course
South Australia
Independent Film Workshops and Seminars
Tasmania
Audio Production

JUNE

New South Wales
Production Language Used in Television Commercials Production
Radio Announcing and Presentation for Professional Broadcasters
Dolby Stereo
Queensland
Introduction to Non-Broadcast TV Production
Victoria
‘Hypothetical’ - The Money and the Box
For further information regarding courses in New South Wales and Queensland please contact AFTRS Industry Program, Sydney Base on (02) 805 6600.
For further information regarding courses in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia please contact AFTRS Industry Program, Melbourne Base on (03) 690 7111.
JOHN FARROW
1904 - 1963

AUSTRALIAN-BORN JOHN FARROW wrote twenty-four features and directed forty-three, among them four of the finest films noir made in Hollywood: THE BIG CLOCK and NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES (1948); WHERE DANGER LIVES (1950) and HIS KIND OF WOMAN (1951). He won an Academy Award for his work on the screenplay of AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (1956), and he received several prizes for direction, including a New York Film Critics’ Award (and an Academy Award nomination) for WAKE ISLAND (1942).

Much of Farrow’s work was on low-budget B-films, and it varies somewhat in quality, but at his best he was one of the most accomplished filmmakers in the 1940s and ’50s. To this day, he remains (with George Miller) arguably the finest filmmaker born in Australia. Yet, he has been largely forgotten, his films ignored by historians and critics. Today, he is probably best known as the father of Mia Farrow. It is time to start redressing the balance.

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BEGINNINGS

JOHN NEVILLE VILLIERS FARROW was born on 10 February 1904 in Sydney, the son of Colonel Joseph Rashmere and Lucy (nee Villiers) Farrow. He was educated in Australia by private tutors, as well as at Newington College. Later, he went to England and Winchester College, before entering the Royal Naval Academy. After graduating, he took part in several scientific expeditions and later became a fellow of the Royal Geographical and Royal Empire societies.

During his early adulthood, Farrow worked as a first mate on Pacific cargo ships. He spent two years with the U.S. Marine Corps in Latin America, and fought in Nicaragua. He also began writing short stories and poems, many of which were published.

In the late 1920s, Farrow worked his passage to the U.S. According to actor Ray Milland, it was as “a purser on a Matson liner”. According to scriptwriter and director Tay Garnett, Farrow’s friend and collaborator:
[Farrow] had hit the U.S. beach by jumping ship in San Francisco, having arrived on an Australian windjammer. He played the total ignore for Immigration authorities, an omission he had to correct many years later. [Farrow was arrested in the 1930s for his illegal entry, but was later acquitted.]

Johnny was my kind of person: Of Irish descent, he was a poet of merit, and had been published in all the top literary magazines of the day. Blondly handsome, with unforgettable blue eyes, he could be capsuled as type casting for the Crown Prince.

Someone who knew Farrow well, and who would later work with him on *Honda* (1953), was actor Michael Pate. He recalls the Farrow of those early Hollywood years:

John Farrow was an enormously wonderful man, and probably one of the toughest sons of a bitch that ever stood on two legs.

When he first came into Hollywood, he was an intimate of a few fairly tough fellows, athletic people like Johnny Weissmuller. John used to swim with Weissmuller off the coast of Santa Monica, and they'd think nothing of churning 8, 9, 10 miles up and down that coast. You had to be pretty tough to get out there in winter and swim in that kind of stuff.

John was also a very strong person within himself. But always, I guess, there was that little flaw, where, with all the best endeavour in the world, he didn’t always do things the way he might have wanted to. At his worst, you would probably want to deck him with a chair. But, at his best, he was a gracious, charming person. He would go out of his way to help people without ever letting them know. He would have gifts delivered to people’s doors when they were sick, like a great big copper tureen of soup from Lucy’s. And if somebody needed money, John would give it to them. He was that type of person.

At some (undetermined) point, Farrow converted to Roman Catholicism and became an extremely devout churchgoer. Despite this conversion, he would gain a reputation as a hard drinker and ladies’ man. Pate, however, has a sobering perspective:

John loved to drink, but I don’t think he was a serious devotee, like a few I could mention. The Hollywood that Farrow, Ward Bond, John Wayne and a lot of others grew up in is all gone. Their drinking has to be seen in the context of what that time came out of, which was of course the 1920s and the ’30s.

**SCRIPTING**

AFTER ARRIVING IN HOLLYWOOD, Farrow put his naval background to use by finding work as a technical and script adviser on films with naval themes. (He kept up his sailing interests by purchasing a boat, “The Ida.”) His first script credit, for co-authoring the titles on a silent film, came in 1927 with *White Gold* (William K. Howard). Garnett also worked on that film for DeMille Pictures:

We had first met when [Farrow] was brought to my office ... by a producer who said, 'The boss wants you should learn Mr. Farrow how to write screen plays.' We shook hands. Johnny flashed a subtle deadpan wink. I grinned, and it was Instant Friendship.

After the producer had left, John asked, 'Is it possible for one to teach a tyro to write screen plays?'

'Not unless he has enough sense to do the job on his own,' I answered honestly. 'But possibly I can come up with a few handy do’s and don’ts.'

'All suggestions will be greatly appreciated,' grinned Johnny.

Farrow’s other 1927 credit was for *The Wreck of the Hesperus* (Elmer Clifton), which was based on a “story” (i.e., plot outline) he had fashioned from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem.

The next year, Farrow worked on two more films at DeMille, Victor Schertzinger’s *The Showdown* (titles) and Paul Sloane’s *The Blue Danube* (story). He then joined Paramount Famous Lasky, where he had “the special assignment of creating purpose-built dialogue that players who did not speak English too well could handle without difficulty.”

Farrow worked on William A. Wellman’s *Ladies of the Mob* (screenplay), Rowland V. Lee’s *The First Kiss* (adaptation), Clarence Badger’s *Three Week-ends* (adaptation) and Ludwig Berger’s “sound” film, *The Woman From Moscow* (screenplay and titles). During this period, Farrow came into contact with several of the great names of American cinema, such as Clara Bow, Fay Wray, Gary Cooper and Pola Negri, all of whom starred in films he had written.

In 1929, Farrow worked on four projects: *Wolf Song* (Victor Fleming), *A Dangerous Woman* (Rowland V. Lee), the classic *The Four Feathers* (Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack, Lothar Mendes) and *The Wheel of Life* (Victor Schertzinger). The next year he scripted Richard Wallace’s *Seven Days’ Leave* and Louis Gasnier’s *The Shadow of the Law*. Farrow also had one of his published short stories, “The Bad One”, adapted into a film of the same name, starring Dolores Del Rio (George Fitzmaurice, 1930). To coincide with the release, Farrow wrote a novelization illustrated with scenes from the film.

In September of 1930, Farrow left Paramount Famous Lasky and joined producer Charles A. Rogers at RKO Productions. His first projects were *Inside the Lines* (Roy J. Pomeroy) and *The Common Law* (Paul L. Stein, 1931). RKO also filmed a play Farrow had written, *The Registered Woman*, under the screen title, *A Woman of Experience* (Harry Joe Brown).
In 1932, Farrow sailed to Tahiti to pursue his greatest love, writing. He began work on a novel and also compiled the world's first English-French-Tahitian dictionary. That same year, Farrow scripted the British film, *Woman in Chains* (Basil Dean).

Farrow also became involved in an unusual project, G. W. Pabst's *Adventures of Don Quixote* (1933). An opera film starring Feodor Chaliapin and several Australian singers, it was made in France in both French and English. Adapted from the Cervantes novel by French poet Paul Morand, Farrow is credited as "Collaborator for the English Version".

The same year, Farrow's now-completed novel, *Laughter Ends*, was published in both London and New York. The following year he directed two short films, *The Spectacle Maker*, from his own screenplay, and *War Lord*.

In 1935, Farrow joined MGM and was assigned to *The Last of the Pagans* (Richard Thorpe, 1936), which he scripted from Herman Melville's *Typee*. MGM was the studio behind the highly successful Tarzan films and it was on one of them that Farrow would get his first chance at directing a feature.

MGM had just finished *The Capture of Tarzan* but was very concerned that at test screenings it had "terrified the children and brought outraged complaints from irate mothers and women's organizations". The studio decided against releasing it in its present form and, when director Jim McKay refused to bowdlerize it, Farrow took over. Unfortunately, Farrow's version ran into censorship troubles with the Hays Office and he, too, found himself replaced, this time by Richard Thorpe.

Re-titled *Tarzan Escapes* (1936), and with Farrow co-credited for the screenplay, the reworked film had its violence and sexual nuances almost completely toned down. According to Gabe Essoe, a historian of the Tarzan films, "this film marked the third major step in lowering the Tarzan series to the child's level." The most controversial lowering of standards had been the Hays Office-imposed changes to Jane's costumes. Originally, her garb, with its waist-high slit, had matched Tarzan's brief outfits, and together they had helped give the first women typical of 1940s cinema. Born on 17 May 1911 in Boyle, County Roscommon, Ireland, Maureen Paula O'Sullivan was the daughter of a major in the Connaught Rangers. She was educated at the Sacred Heart convent outside London (where a classmate was Vivien Leigh) and later in Paris. She went to Los Angeles in 1930 after having been approached by director Frank Borzage at a dinner dance for the Dublin International Horse Show. O'Sullivan did six films at 20th Century-Fox, including Borzage's *Song of My Heart* (1930), before moving to MGM. There she found an endearing fame in six Tarzan films.

According to Hollywood mythology, O'Sullivan and Farrow met on the set of *Tarzan Escapes* and married the next year (on 12 September 1936). But according to O'Sullivan it happened differently:

I met John when I first came to Fox Studios. He was a writer then, and I was doing a film called *Just Imagine* [1931], a science-fiction musical set in 1980 ... I met him because I was looking for my director David Butler as I was on early call and wanted to look at something in the rushes and I did not know where his office was, and I wandered into John's office. John always thought I did it on purpose, and that was the beginning of our meeting. Fate. So then we made a date on my birthday ... 

Like Farrow, O'Sullivan was a Catholic and together they became one of the most famous devout couples in Hollywood. An unnamed friend of the Farrows is quoted as saying:

They stayed married. They kept having babies. They went to church ... They appeared so straitlaced — it was all very odd in film circles.

At the time of their wedding, Farrow and O'Sullivan had vowed to have ten children; they had to settle for seven. A Beverly Hills neighbour remembers:

The Farrows were a mighty army and they would all march to church [the Church of the Good Shepherd] every Sunday without fail. They were very religious, very devout Catholics.

Farrow's commitment to Catholicism was further illustrated by his writing a biography of Father Damien, *Damien The Leper*, which was published in 1937. In a foreword to the book, author Hugh Walpole writes:

I consider this book of Mr Farrow's both true and beautiful ... I scarce) know how Mr. Farrow has been able to leave so vivid a picture of Father Damien in the reader's mind with so few words about him ... Now that I have read this book I feel that I have Damien as a companion for the rest of my days. This is an addition to one's spiritual experience, and I thank Mr. Farrow for it.

In another passage, Walpole description of Farrow's writing style is, coincidentally, an accurate account of his directing style at its best:

Mr. Farrow is never melodramatic. He does not often build up the character ... from the outside, but lets it gradually live of itself through the incidents.

Later that year, Pope Pius XI made Farrow a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of
the Holy Sepulchre, Officer of St John and Chevalier of Tunis. This later led actor and friend Robert Mitchum to call him “the Count” or “Knight of Malta”, as well as “the Militant Catholic”. This last description has special meaning when one considers Farrow’s portrayal of priests in his films. In *Ride, Vaquero!* (1953), for example, Father Antonio (Kurt Kasznar) picks up a gun and says, “It is lawful to repel violence with violence.”

Daughter Mia Farrow has said of her father’s Catholicism: “He was very friendly with the Jesuits, and the house was always filled with priests; to some extent he looked down on Hollywood.”\(^1\)

Farrow also joined the advisory board of Mount St Mary’s College and was a regent of Loyola University of Los Angeles. He was subsequently to write a biography of St Ignatius Loyola.

However, Farrow’s Catholicism did not stop his many relationships with women. According to several French critics\(^2\), Farrow was a notorious seducer of starlets. Michael Pate has a different view:

Farrow was certainly very fond of women, and he loved to be around them. But I don’t think you could call him a womanizer, even if he might have felt attached to one or two people in his time.

**Directing**

In 1937, Farrow received his first feature credit as director with *Men in Exile*, the first of seven films made with producer Bryan Foy at First National and Warner Bros.: *West of Shanghai* (1937); *She Loved a Fireman*, *The Invisible Menace*, *Little Miss Thoroughbred*, *My Bill* and *Broadway Musketeers* (all 1938). Surprisingly, none had a Farrow screenplay. Maureen O’Sullivan explains why:

It is a very rough thing to go from one profession to another. And [John] was a very successful writer, a highly priced writer, and when he wanted to become a director they thought of him only as a writer. Then, after he became a very successful director and he would want to write his own scripts, they would say, ‘But you’re a director, not a writer.’ They were really very strange.\(^3\)

*Men in Exile* is the story of James Carmody (Dick Purcell), who is exiled on an island with
a gang of gun runners. The Motion Picture Guide states: “Though the plot is thin, the action is fast paced and the performances are notable.”

*West of Shanghai* is set during the Sino-Japanese War and stars Boris Karloff as "White Tiger", a Northern Chinese bandit. He sacrifices his life after a skirmish with some Americans so that the man who had previously saved his life, Cortez (Gordon Oliver), can be re-united with his lover, Jane (Beverly Roberts). Against the practice of the time, Farrow cast his film, except for the lead roles, with Chinese actors and extras.

Dick Foran plays a cowboy star-turned-fireman in *She Loved a Fireman* (the “She” is played by Ann Sheridan), while Boris Karloff returned in *The Invisible Menace* as a civilian accused of murdering an army officer.

The next three films form a kind of trilogy. *Little Miss Thoroughbred* is a tear-jerker, with Janet Chapman as an orphan who believes, much to her guardian nuns’ dismay, that her father is still alive. When she can’t find him, she manages to win over the heart of the gambler, “Nails” Morgan (John Litel). *My Bill*, a remake of Archie Mayo’s *Courage* (1930), is the tale of a widowed and ruined mother and her children, only some of whom remain loyal to her. *Broadway Musketeers* tells of three girls (Margaret Lindsay, Ann Sheridan and Marie Wilson) who leave their orphanage to take on the outside world, with tragic results.

Farrow’s last film for Warner Bros. was *Women in the Wind* (1939), the story of a woman’s air race, starring Kay Francis. He then moved to RKO to work with producer Robert Sisk on *The Saint Strikes Back*. The second film in the series, but the first with George Sanders as Simon Templar, it was a major box-office success and greatly helped establish Farrow’s reputation as a commercial, reliable director. That same year, O’Sullivan gave birth to their first child, Michael Damien.

In keeping with work schedules that seem near impossible today, Farrow directed four more features that year: *Sorority House*, a drama about college snobbishness; *Five Came Back*; *Full Confession*; and *Reno*, a morality tale about a couple (Ruth Roland and Montagu Love) who go to Reno for a divorce. Two of these films (*Sorority House* and *Five Came Back*) were shot by the great Nicholas Musuraca, who would later work with Farrow on that noir masterwork, *Where Danger Lives* (1950).

The most famous of these films is *Five Came Back*, an affecting melodrama about those passengers who survive a plane crash in a South American jungle. Farrow manages to generate a genuinely moving finale out of a highly manufactured and sentimental situation: namely, there is only room for five on the re-built plane and the survivors must choose who stay behind. Co-written by Dalton Trumbo, it was the second time (*Sorority House* was the first) Farrow had worked with the famous scriptwriter and later victim of the Hollywood blacklist.

The other film of note that year is *Full Confession*, the harrowing story of a man (Barry Fitzgerald) wrongly sentenced to the electric chair. Father Loma (Joseph Calleia) has heard the confession of the real killer, McGinnis (Victor McLaglen), but is prevented by the seal on confession from using that knowledge to save the innocent man. Farrow wrings maximum tension from the priest’s struggle of conscience, and from his attempts to make McGinnis admit to his crime.

Apart from its wonderful performances and skilful direction, *Full Confession* is important in being one of Farrow’s clearest film examinations of Catholic dogma. Essentially a religious conservative, Farrow supports the seal’s inviolability. But, equally, he seems to argue for a pragmatic, humanistic approach to earthly problems. It is a contradiction of sorts and seems
Lucille Ball, Joseph Calleia, The Reclining Allen Jenkins, C. Aubrey Smith and Chester Morris in Farrow’s effective melodrama, Five Came Back (1939).

Farrow’s A Bill Divorcement (1940), with Maureen O’Hara and Adolphe Menjou, a remake of the George Cukor classic (itself a remake), this time starring Maureen O’Hara and Adolphe Menjou.

World War was now raging in Europe and Farrow, having been born in Australia, was officially a British citizen. As the U.S. did not enter the War until late 1941, the main option for U.S.-based ‘British’ volunteers was to cross the northern border into Canada, a fellow member of the Commonwealth. Farrow joined the Royal Canadian Navy, first in the Information Department and later at sea in the North Atlantic. He served on the extremely dangerous Atlantic convoys and quickly rose to the rank of Lt-Commander in both the British and Royal Canadian navies.

In 1941, Farrow was assigned to an anti-submarine vessel, where he caught a severe case of typhus and nearly died. He was invalided out and returned to Los Angeles. O’Sullivan gave up her film career and tended him back to health at their Beverly Hills home. Later, he received decorations from Spain, France and Rumania, and was honoured as a Commander of the British Empire.

In 1941, Farrow was assigned to an anti-submarine vessel, where he caught a severe case of typhus and nearly died. He was invalided out and returned to Los Angeles. O’Sullivan gave up her film career and tended him back to health at their Beverly Hills home. Later, he received decorations from Spain, France and Rumania, and was honoured as a Commander of the British Empire.

While recovering, Farrow wrote two books, The History and Development of the Royal Canadian Navy and Pageant of the Popes (1942), an overview of the papacy. Paramount then offered him the chance to return to filmmaking with the war drama, Wake Island (1942). It is the story of the heroic to-the-last-man defence of the American Pacific-island base days after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Farrow won the New York Film Critics’ Award for Best Direction (breaking John Ford’s winning run of the previous three years) and achieved a first for an Australian: an Academy Award nomination for Direction. (The Award itself went to William Wyler for Mrs Miniver.)

Wake Island

Despite having been made in the heated atmosphere immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbour, Wake Island manages to avoid most of the cliches of its genre. It is startlingly realistic and almost entirely free of jingoism: there is not one speech about fighting for the flag or the American way of life, though there is an understandable call to arms against the Japanese.

The dialogue between the men on this barren island outpost is nicely underwritten, and the actors catch exactly the right tone. A fine example is the wrenchingly underplayed scene where Lieutenant Cameron (Macdonald Carey) asks Major Caton (Brian Donlevy) permission to fly what is obviously a suicide mission (Cameron’s wife having been killed at Pearl Harbour). Farrow has wisely realized that Cameron’s actions speak with sufficient eloquence not to need false dramatization.

In part, Farrow’s sensitivity in handling the material comes from his obvious affinity with the marines, no doubt stemming from his own experiences in the Marine Corps. The relationships between the men reveal the veracity of experience rather than a scriptwriter’s
Farrow’s direction, which is often brilliant, is best seen in the long sequence where the
Japanese ships start bombing the island. Major Catón has decided not to return fire
immediately, hoping to entice the Japanese ships closer to shore. Farrow subtly builds the
tension with an almost Bressonian understanding of mise-en-scene (and this is pre-Bresson).
There is virtually no dialogue, the primary sounds being the booming guns and a gunner’s
rhythmic calling out of the ships’ range. The compositions are austere and precise (and near
perfectly shot by Theodor Sparkuhl).
Farrow intercuts between stark images of detonation and close-ups of near-expressionless
faces as the men stoically wait out the barrage for their opportunity to return fire. And when
that time comes, their charge into activity is supported with predictably stirring music. Yet
again, it seems, one will have to endure an overwrought sequence of American heroics. But
almost immediately the music fades and the resultant battle is matter-of-factly staged, the
camera recording it with almost documentary detachment. And as the time approaches when
the men must face inevitable death, there is no false heroism, just the odd humorous line to
help break the unbearable tension.
In its quietly unassuming way, Wake Island is one of the finest and most moving war films
ever made.

The next year, 1942, Farrow made for Columbia his second war film, Commandos Strike at
Dawn. Starring Paul Muni as a Norwegian resistance leader, the film used locations in British
Columbia, and had assistance from the Royal Canadian Navy, in which Farrow had served.

Commandos Strike at Dawn

Commandos Strike at Dawn is a deceptively pastoral recreation of the effects of war on a peaceful Norwegian fjord village.

The centre of the war is far off and many of the villagers hope to live through it undisturbed. And even when a contingent of German soldiers comes to oversee the surrounding area, the temptation is to go on as if nothing has happened (“The herring will run, Germans or no Germans”). But for Erik Toresen (Paul Muni), a quiet, sensitive man, that becomes increasingly difficult. Distressed by the cold acts of Nazi brutality, he grapples with a mounting desire to use violence to overthrow their evil. As he says, “I have lived a quiet life. The Germans have not lived quiet lives. We must learn from them, how to become gangsters, thugs...” That resolve leads to a military victory, but also to his own death.

As with Wake Island, the story is calmly and effectively told. Though there are some
conventional Hollywood aspects to the plotting, Farrow, as usual, neutralizes them with
underplaying. What dominates is Farrow’s interest in the tensions between religious principle
and the necessity for (at times) less noble action.

On a technical level, the film is particularly interesting in showcasing what would become
a Farrow trademark: the sinuous and lengthy tracking shot. Often taking several minutes and
covering much ground, it seductively draws the audience into the characters’ lives and world.
In Commandos Strike at Dawn, the bravura shot is during a wedding celebration. Roaming
backwards and forwards through several rooms, Farrow neatly establishes the relationship of
one villager to another, delineating character and social position in a way that editing alone
would make look forced. And despite the shot’s length (six-and-a-half minutes), Farrow does
not struggle with the problem that bedevils most like-minded directors: that is, having actors
take unlikely walking paths or perform needless tasks just to stay in frame.

In Commandos Strike at Dawn, Farrow is still experimenting with technique. By the time of
Where Danger Lives and His Kind of Woman, he will have perfected it to a state of near genius.

The next year, 1944, came yet another war film, The Hitler Gang, which chronicles Hitler’s life from his
founding of the National Socialist Party to his appointment as Reich Chancellor in 1934.
Producer B. G. DeSylva apparently financed the film to counteract a Nazi documentary he
had seen, and at least one critic (in The New York Times) found Robert Watson’s portrayal of
Hitler such that Hitler ended up looking less odious than his henchman.

That year, Farrow also directed the stark Two Years Before the Mast (not released until 1946).
Alan Ladd plays Charles Stewart, the spoilt son of a shipowner who is shanghaied by the
sadistic Captain Thompson (Howard da Silva) and his first mate (William Bendix). On board, Stewart develops a friendship with Richard Dana (Brian Donlevy) that leads to them overtaking the ship and, later, revealing to Congress the appalling conditions faced by sailors.

Arguably the best of Farrow's seafaring films, it was a box-office hit, despite its often depressing depictions of the cruelties at sea.

Farrow went for a lighter vein in 1945 with You Came Along, a comedy with songs co-written by Ayn Rand, whose controversial novel The Fountainhead had been published two years before. Lizbeth Scott, in only her second film, stars as a girl in love with a serviceman (Robert Cummings) dying of leukaemia. One critic calls it an "Interesting but odd combination of occasional comedy and heavy romance", while another finds it a "weird mishmash of farce and sentimentality; quite watchable in its way".

On 9 February of that year, the day before Farrow's 41st birthday, Maureen O'Sullivan gave birth to their first daughter and third child, Maria de Lourdes (Mia) Villiers Farrow. (Mia had been preceded by Michael and Patrick, and would be followed by Theresa (Tisa), Stephanie, Prudence and John Charles.) Her godparents were director George Cukor and gossip columnist Louella Parsons.

The next year, Farrow made the Western, California, the first of four consecutive films with John Seitz, one of the greatest American directors of photography, especially of film noir. California is about a Union Army deserter (Ray Milland) who tries his luck on the goldfields. There, with the help of a gambler (Barbara Stanwyck) and a miner (Barry Fitzgerald), he takes on a former slave trader with dreams of taking over the territory. Ray Milland recalls the filming:

John was one of those directors who got phobias about people ... he'd deliberately bitch up the scene, because he didn't like the actors in it ... Consequently we had to make up our scenes ourselves, more or less. He had a touch of masochism [sic?] about him."26

Milland describes a tracking shot that ran for 1400 feet, or 15 minutes. Farrow had special

Finally Barbara said to me, 'This son of a bitch is not going to be satisfied until you've broken my jaw. Go ahead this time - break it. Really belt me. If you knock me out then I'll be all through for the day.' I said, 'Barbara I can't do it!' She said, 'You've just got to ... I can't stand these little slaps.' So, ... I belted her. She went out cold. He printed it!27

During the late 1940s, Farrow directed nine films, including several of his classics. The period 1947-51 was the high point of his career and contains the best evidence for considering him a major Hollywood director. It was also the time when he won the then prestigious, now discontinued, "Champion Director Award" (1946-47) in the annual Champion of Champions publication.

First up was Easy Come, Easy Go (1947), with Barry Fitzgerald as an Irish-New York rogue whose passion for gambling complicates the lives of those around him. Ostensibly a comedy, Fitzgerald's rascal is today quite unappealing (no doubt he would have been less so back then), and watching his antics often induces discomfort rather than mirth. But it is efficiently, if unspectacularly, directed, and there is no doubting Fitzgerald's skills and presence as an actor, even if, as here, they are indulged.

Then came Blaze of Noon (1947), with William Holden and Anne Baxter in a melodrama about stunt fliers. Melbourne film buff John Flaus has said it is "as perfectly directed a film as you could see" even if he has reservations about the material.

Farrow's next film was the well-regarded film noir, Calcutta (1947). Alan Ladd stars as Neale Gordon, a commercial pilot based in India who runs up against a dangerous femme fatale in Virginia Moore (Gail Russell). Intrigue of the Maltese Falcon-style abounds, and there is some prickly (and misogynist) verbal sparring. A famous exchange has Moore's "But you said you were crazy about me" rebuffed by Gordon's "Not that much ... Man who trust woman walk on duckweed over pond." The film was Farrow's third with Ladd (they would do two more together) and was a big success for both.

Farrow's first film for 1948 is perhaps his best-known, The Big Clock. (The source novel was recently remade as No Way Out by expatriate Australian Roger Donaldson.) Farrow's version stars Ray Milland and Charles Laughton, and marks the screen reappearance of Maureen O'Sullivan, who recalls:

I returned to the screen in the Forties because my husband ... wanted me to appear in several of his films. He didn't have the parts written with me in mind - in fact, with The Big Clock, I had to do a screen test because maybe Paramount might not have wanted me for it and they had the final say."28
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THE BIG CLOCK

GEORGE STROUD (Ray Milland) is the editor of Crimeways, one of the successful stable of magazines owned by magnate Earl Janoth (Charles Laughton). Only hours before leaving on a second ‘honeymoon’ with his long-suffering but independently minded wife, Georgette (Maureen O’Sullivan), George is fired by Janoth. He so consoles himself at his favourite bar with Janoth’s mistress, Pauline York (Rita Johnson), that he misses his train. Thereafter, he becomes involved in a series of events that leads to Pauline’s murder.

The next day, the Crimeways staff is sent out by Janoth in search of the murderer. The clues steadily accumulate and all point towards George. It then becomes a race against time for George to clear his name.

The film’s opening shot is probably Farrow’s most dazzling: the camera tilts across the New York skyline at night, before tracking through space and in a second storey window of the Janoth building, where it picks up a harried George hiding from the armed guards, then follows him across a hall and up the stairs into the control room of the title’s big clock, where he sees guards milling in the foyer below, before pulling back to reveal the face of the clock. The image then dissolves to a time 36 hours and 35 minutes earlier and the story of how George found himself in this life-threatening mess begins.

Not only is this bravura filmmaking (it even bears comparison with Welles’ opening to Touch of Evil), it neatly establishes several visual themes of the film: the importance of time in Janoth’s dehumanized universe; and the various levels and private spaces of the building, which indicate not only a physical reality but a social stratum, with Janoth at the pinnacle and his minions below. That is why Janoth’s ultimate fate involves plunging down an elevator shaft to the terra firma below.

Janoth’s entrance into the narrative is superbly handled. Farrow tilts down from a clock to the elevator doors’ opening. Janoth strides straight into a board meeting, caressing his little moustache and remarking that, “There are 2 billion, 81 million and 371 thousand seconds to the average man’s life.” And he is prepared to fire anyone who makes him waste even a few. In fact, Janoth is so obsessed with time that when George pleases him with a sales-boosting suggestion, Janoth replies, “You struck 12.”

The tension, over whether George can locate the real murderer before he finds himself framed and in the hands of the police, never falters. John Seitz’s lighting, while more mid-grey than usual in a film noir, is masterly, and the performances bristle with wit. Laughton is wonderfully psychotic and Elsa Lanchester maximizes her small part as an eccentric painter whose works George collects. She greets an art critic who once savaged her work with Come in Mr Klaussman... I’ve been planning to kill you for years”, and she fails to hand George over to the police because “I have few enough collectors without sending one to gaol.”

With a lightness of tone exceptional for film noir, The Big Clock showcases Farrow’s inventiveness with genre. Seductively entertaining, it is 1940s Hollywood filmmaking at its finest.
The Big Clock was followed by Beyond Glory (1948), a sombre story about war guilt. Alan Ladd plays a soldier plagued by his memories and tortured by others' insinuations about an incident in the war where he blacked out and his commanding officer was killed. Both his life and career seem in a hopeless cul-de-sac until, at his court-martial for skipping West Point, he is finally cleared.

Farrow's third film that year was another film noir, the classic Night Has a Thousand Eyes. John Trinton (Edward G. Robinson) is a man trapped by the visions he has of other people's tragic fates. According to Joan Cohen in Film Noir (it is too long since it was last seen by this author, who recalls being dazzled at the time), the film is a psychological thriller with its seer hero poised on the brink of doom. It is precisely the feeling of doom throughout the film that separates it from most mysteries ... Farrow's direction of [Barre] Lyndon and [Jonathan] Latimer's script [itself based on a Cornell Woolrich novel] is entirely realistic. The audience must believe that such things happen in an otherwise normal world ... In a noir sense, man cannot control or rationalize the future. Life is pathetic for the seer, who is helpless and useless despite his efforts to avoid tragedy. Trinton's dilemma is epitomized when he tells his best friend's daughter, 'I had become a reverse zombie, the world was dead and I was living.' Night Has a Thousand Eyes depicts the noir universe at its darkest.30

In 1949 came Alias Nick Beal, an updated retelling of the Faust story. Ray Milland is Nick Beal, alias the Devil, who bargains with, and is tricked by, a crusading judge (Thomas Mitchell). Farrow's direction has been praised for "fully utiliz[ing] the well-written script and the strange set designs to effect an otherworld feeling"31. Ray Milland recalls:

I loved that picture. Farrow was a strange man ... He was always writing scripts. He ... was very good for me and very good with me. We got along very well together, though he was the most disliked man on the lot, but a good director.32

Farrow then directed Red, Hot and Blue (1949), his first feature on which he had a screenwriter credit. The film is a commercially successful cross between musical comedy and crime story. Betty Hutton and Victor Mature star as a dating Broadway actress and director. It was followed by Copper Canyon (1950), the story of Jonathan Trumbo (Ray Milland), who hides from his enemies in the Confederate army during the Civil War. The romantic interest is provided by Lisa Roselle (Hedy Lamarr). The film was shot by the great Charles Lang and is generally considered one of those Farrow films where the beautifully captured landscapes help paste over the lesser moments.

Farrow then left Paramount and directed what may well be his masterpiece, Where Danger Lives (1950), the first of two films with Robert Mitchum. In his biography of Mitchum, George Eells writes:

Mitchum and director John Farrow met quite by accident and embarked on a marathon drinking match ... During the next four hours, they dreamed up a story, decided on Susan Hayward as the leading woman, and assembled an entire package in their heads. Congratulating themselves on their accomplishment, they staggered to their cars. Next morning a hung-over Farrow called to enquire whether Mitchum was serious about proceeding with their plans. Mitchum hedged. Eventually, each man revealed that he remembered nothing about the story they had spent the evening fantasizing. Nevertheless, Mitchum eventually spoke to The Phantom [Howard Hughes] and RKO took on Where Danger Lives, produced and directed by Farrow, with Mitchum, and Hughes's latest protege, Faith Domergue, in the leads.33

Maureen O'Sullivan plays a small part in the film. She recalls the film's enigmatic financier:

I have actually seen Howard Hughes. He was never on the lot when we were making Where Danger Lives at RKO but he used to have dinner with us occasionally. He was a great friend of John's. I didn't find him odd - that was before he was odd, I suppose. He was a rather good-looking, shy man, not all that exciting apparently - what I mean is that he was not witty nor did he say anything that I can remember. He was very conservatively dressed and quite nice. People always said how hard it was to get Howard on the phone, but John always got through.34
**WHERE DANGER LIVES**

Jeff Cameron (Robert Mitchum) is a kindly, uncomplicated doctor working in a San Francisco public hospital. He casually takes life as it comes, neither pushing for private-practice wealth nor formalizing his relationship with girlfriend Julie (Maureen O'Sullivan). But things change when Margo Lannington (Faith Domergue) is brought in after a failed suicide attempt. Jeff quickly develops a 'fatal attraction' for her, which leads, as sexual obsession so often does in film noir, to murder.

Jeff visits Margo’s darkly opulent home, where he is becomes involved in a nasty fight with her husband, Frederick (a magnificently sinister performance by Claude Rains). Jeff is able to subdue his opponent with a flooring punch, but not before he has been repeatedly struck on the head with an iron poker. Jeff momentarily losing consciousness, and when he finally comes to he is still severely dazed. Mistakenly believing he has killed Frederick, Jeff is easily convinced by Margo into fleeing San Francisco for the Mexican border. On the drive south, his concussion worsens, inexorably moving towards paralysis and coma. The film’s dramatic tension derives, in part, from whether Jeff can break free of her deadly spell before the police or his coma can overtake him.

Contrary to much film noir practice, Jeff is saved at film’s end, though Margo is not. After having failed to shoot him, she is fatally wounded by a border guard and dies with her fingers reaching through the border’s mesh fence to the freedom of the other side. Her final words are, “I did it alone. He didn’t even have the sense to know ... Nobody pities me.” (The last remark is an order of defiance, not self-pity.) Margo dies as she lived: alone. People were only useful to her in helping achieve her whims; the ever-present danger was that they might get too emotionally close, as Jeff threatened to do. For her, the only solution at the end is either to kill Jeff or die alone. That is why she confesses to the police, saving him from a death sentence. Where she is going, she wants no company.

In contrasting Margo’s pathological alienation with Jeff’s sexual obsession, Farrow and scriptwriter Charles Bennett painfully evoke the ease with which one partner can manipulate the other in an unequal sexual relationship. Margo encourages Jeff to override his reason with desire, and his advancing concussion becomes a brilliant metaphor for his emotional loss of control. (Mitchum’s performance here is one of his finest, using his whole body to frighteningly convey encroaching paralysis. Jeff’s fall down the stairs is as much a moral collapse as a physical one.)

Often, films noir have a central character, like a Phillip Marlowe, with the skills and wit to remain ahead of the shadowy characters trying to ensnare him. In *Where Danger Lives*, none of the principal characters has that edge: they are all tragically flawed, one tottering step from the abyss. When Margo grabs hold of Jeff after killing Frederick, she stares directly into the camera. Everyone is implicated in her act of sexual manipulation, forced to challenge his or her own failures of behaviour. Because it so morally unsettles, it is one of the most chilling moments in cinema.
Throughout the filming of *Where Danger Lives*, Mitchum and Farrow continued their spirited ways. Tay Garnett recounts:

Johnny [Farrow] had missed very little of life, good or bad, but he suffered no guilt feelings whatsoever. Mitchum said to him one day, ‘Man, you bug me. I’ve known some rough cats in my time, but you’re — without exception — the toughest. How can you profess to being a good Catholic? D’ya ever DARE go to Confession?

Johnny said piously, ‘Sure. To one of the oldest churches in California. You know that old Spanish mission on the Plaza in downtown L.A.? I go down there about every week or so and tell everything.’

‘Everything?’

‘Everything. Sometimes I’m in the Confessional as long as an hour.’

Mitchum’s chin dropped. ‘My God! What does the priest say?’

Johnny grinned. ‘Nothing. He just gives me absolution. The poor bastard doesn’t understand, or speak, a word of English.’

Given Farrow’s reputation, it is tempting to interpret O’Sullivan’s two roles in her husband’s films as commenting on their own relationship. In *The Big Clock*, she plays a devoted but independently minded wife; in *Where Danger Lives*, a gentle and long-suffering girlfriend. In both films, O’Sullivan’s man breaks appointments to spend time with another woman, giving hardly a thought to how his wife/girlfriend will feel or react. Yet, in each case, she stands by him and forgives, aware of his flaws but glad he is back. By the films’ closures, there is the sense of a relationship renewed, an expectation of better times ahead, but tempered with a realization (unusual for Hollywood) that there may still be problems. The image of husband and wife at the end of *The Big Clock*, O’Sullivan’s body drawn seductively against his, a wry but loving smile on her lips, is as touching a romantic closure as cinema has proffered.

After *Where Danger Lives*, Farrow and Robert Mitchum teamed again to make one of the great American films of the 1950s, and unquestionably one of the most eccentric, *His Kind of Woman* (“What kind of woman would that be?”, Mitchum inquired). Inventively mixing many film styles, including film noir and comedy, it prefigures such films as Francois Truffaut’s *Tirez sur le Pianiste* (*Shoot the Pianist*, 1960). But it so bedazzled the studio it was not released until 1951.
His Kind of Woman  [Review by Tom Ryan]

Graced with a splendid script by Frank Fenton, a collection of wonderful performances and Farrow’s sure hand with the right material, His Kind of Woman would have to be one of the most energetically chaotic films to emerge from Hollywood in the 1950s.

It begins like a noirish thriller, with Robert Mitchum classically hard-boiled of lip and world-weary of manner as Dan Milner, a man resigned to the fact that the world is there to take advantage of him. It ends as a madcap adventure with Vincent Price as hunter, actor and would-be hero Mark Cardigan scoffing at the bullet wound in his shoulder (“’Tis not so deep as a well, or wide as a church door”) and seizing his chance to save the day.

Along the way, it takes in a memorable bordertown meeting between Milner and singer and aspiring good-time girl Lenore Brent (Jane Russell) in a sequence that resonates generically in its setting and crackles deliciously in its dialogue. Mitchum’s been in places like this before—meeting Jane Greer in Out of the Past (1947) and fleeing with Faith Domergue at the end of Farrow’s Where Danger Lives (1950). Precariously pivoted between two worlds, the bordertown is a state of the spirit where decisions are made and destinies decided.

For Milner it is a turning-point, and from the moment his cheeks start to quiver at the sight of Lenore and at the sound of her siren song, his future is decided. Propelled by his passion and armed with an $18 bottle of champagne bought to impress, he takes a stand and makes his play. His knowing, gently mocking exchange with Lenore reveals her as a soul-mate. Suddenly everything matters.

Mitchum and Russell glow together on screen, and you know their fate is sealed just from the way Mitchum lazily raises an approving eyebrow and Russell defiantly curls her admiring upper lip.

What makes their meeting even more affecting is the edge of vulnerability that cuts its way through the wry parry and thrust of their talk. They have been life’s losers and they aren’t going to let their defences down for a while yet.

This is not the familiar stuff of film noir. Instead of casting Milner into the dark web of a femme fatale, His Kind of Woman leads him back into the daylight. In another context, Lenore and the sexuality she exudes might have been depicted as desirable but deadly; in
Farrow's film she is simply a voyager, like everyone else. Ultimately, she is thrust aside by the plot which, at least to this extent, adheres to the conventions of the thriller. But never for a moment does she compromise her integrity or her desire.

Nevertheless, like just about everybody else in the film, she adopts a guise to get by. Pretending to be Lenore, "a spoiled child of the rich", she is in fact Liz, down on her luck and trying to change it. When Milner enters her life, she is "somebody else’s woman", Cardigan seeming to represent her main chance.

Significantly, she brings out the best in him too, for though he's a cad, married and a philanderer with a history, his devotion to her needs proves to be beyond question. When she urges him to help Milner, making it clear where her romantic preferences lie, he hesitates only to quote Hamlet and then it's off to the rescue. The screen swashbuckler who thought he was a fake gets a chance to discover that he's not. He launches himself into the fray with one of the script's many wonderful puns: "The time has come to act!"

This film is a Hollywood treasure: the performances shine and the dialogue sparkles. Never for a moment does the pace let up, despite Farrow's constant readjustments of tone which see the melodramatic and the screwball often separated by no more than a frame. If they ask in a hundred years what Hollywood was like, His Kind of Woman would be a reasonable reply.

The same year as he made his two Mitchum classics, Farrow came into confrontation with the McCarthyite forces then purging the film industry of suspected Leftists. The Right had gained its greatest victory that year with the jailing of the Hollywood Ten, who had refused to tell the House Committee on Un-American Activities if they were members of the Communist Party. It was not a time for the faint-hearted to stand against the tide of reaction, for that could mean blacklisting and the end of a career.

Cecil B. DeMille decided to have his own purge of the industry and established the DeMille Foundation for Americanism to compile dossiers on all screen directors' 'Leftist' affiliations. One of the people in DeMille's sights was Joseph L. Mankiewicz, then President of the influential Screen Directors Guild of America, Inc. DeMille was only a board member but he saw himself as a kingmaker and was hell-bent on removing Mankiewicz. The issue he chose to fight Mankiewicz on was what a loyalist oath DeMille wanted imposed on all SDG members. Mankiewicz felt such an oath infringed Constitutional freedoms.

DeMille began to apply the pressure: articles appeared in the press calling Mankiewicz a "pinko" and a "fellow traveller", and all his films were secretly screened by DeMille's associates to try to find instances of Communist sympathies (they found none). DeMille and select SDG board members then decided to get rid of Mankiewicz as president by means of a recall motion. Ballot papers were prepared on anonymous stationery and, in Kafkaesque fashion, had only space to vote "Yes" to the recall motion. DeMille insisted they also had to be signed. He then scanned the private SDG membership list, and scratched off 55 names of those he felt might be sympathetic to Mankiewicz. Motorcycle messengers then delivered the ballots to the 'approved' members that night.

DeMille's plot was working perfectly until a messenger arrived at the Beverly Hills home of John Farrow. Appalled by what was happening, Farrow tried to reach Joe Mankiewicz, but on failing managed to locate his brother, Herman. In his autobiography, A Life, Elia Kazan quotes Joe Mankiewicz's version of events:

"I was watching a movie, and my brother, Herman, gets me on the phone and says, 'What do you and Andrew Jackson have in common?' I said, 'How drunk are you?' And he said, 'You are, this instant, being impeached. John Farrow just came over and he gave me a whole bunch of totems and amulets, all blessed by various popes, and John wants you to wear them close to your balls because that's where they're going to cut you.' It seems that George Marshall, one of the old-timers, had shown up at Farrow's house in the sidecar of a motorcycle and he walked into John's house and said, 'Here. Sign this.' And John said, 'I will not sign it.'"

The next day, a hastily-arranged meeting of Mankiewicz and his key supporters was held in the back room of Chasen's restaurant. They decided to petition the SDG for a special meeting to consider the proposed recall of the President. Twenty-five of the world's greatest directors courageously signed that petition, knowing full well they could be signing away their careers. The 25 included John Huston, Joseph Losey, Nicholas Ray, Billy Wilder and William Wyler. The 24th signature was John Farrow's.

The special meeting of the SDG was held on October 22 in the Crystal Room of the Beverly Hills Hotel. Farrow and the other signatories were present, along with some 500 others. The mood was explosive, and Mankiewicz was in a particularly shaken state, having asked Elia Kazan to accompany him for moral support, but Kazan had declined.

The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. and lasted seven-and-a-half hours. Mankiewicz rose and gave a powerful one-hour speech which quickly won over the audience. Then it was DeMille's turn. He attacked the 25 signatories and claimed that most were affiliated with subversive organizations. His speech was not greeted well. Then that great libertarian, George Stevens, gave a telling speech ("As the subject of Communism is often the theme, brother, if they can do it better [than DeMille's group], they are pretty good.") and resigned as a Guild member.

THE PETITION SIGNED BY TWENTY-FIVE DIRECTORS, CALLING FOR A REPEAL OF THE DEMILLE MOTION TO RECALL SCREEN DIRECTORS GUILD PRESIDENT, JOSEPH L. MANKIEWICZ. FARROW'S SIGNATURE IS NO. 24.
Finally, came the historic moment. There was a man of 55 sitting up the back who had remained silent throughout it all. Slowly he got to his feet; the room went quiet:

My name’s John Ford. I make Westerns. I don’t think there is anyone in this room who knows more about what the American public wants than Cecil B. DeMille – and he certainly knows how to give it to them. In that respect I admire him.60

Ford then turned to look at DeMille.

But I don’t like you, C.B. I don’t like what you stand for and I don’t like what you’ve been saying here tonight. Joe has been vilified, and I think he needs an apology.

The was a long silence. DeMille did not move and Ford continued, calling for the resignation of the board. Farrow then rose to his feet and said that a mass resignation would look as if one side had won at the expense of the other. He argued that a show of unity was important, and was backed up by King Vidor. But Ford was adamant about the correct course of action:

I believe there is only one alternative, and I hereby so move: that DeMille and the entire board of directors resign and that we give Joe a vote of confidence – and then let’s all go home and get some sleep. We’ve got some pictures to make tomorrow.

Walter Lang seconded the motion; Ford sat down and lit his pipe. DeMille’s board resigned and Mankiewicz was given an unanimous vote of confidence. Kazan sums up:

The men who beat De Mille, an extremist of the right, were not from the left. Many were ‘reactionaries’ like John Farrow or Jack Ford. But all were for the way of fairness and decency. What they were defending was classic Americanism, our basic way of living with each other in this country. And they did succeed.61

In the end, Farrow’s stand did not harm his career. But at the time he could not have known this. In the face of intense political pressure, he, like his co-signatories, had taken a courageous and principled stand.

The next year, 1951, Farrow directed Submarine Command, the story of a submarine’s executive officer, Commander White (William Holden), who has been traumatized by his decision on the last day of the war to make a sudden dive, thereby drowning his wounded skipper and quartermaster who were still on deck. The film has echoes of Farrow’s earlier Beyond Glory, White being plagued by self-doubts and tortured by his torpedoman (William Bendix). It is only by dint of courageous action during the Korean War that White regains his self-respect.

Farrow also did some uncredited direction that year on William Dieterle’s Red Mountain, when Dieterle became ill. The film is a highly-regarded Western set during the American Civil War, with Alan Ladd, Lizabeth Scott and Arthur Kennedy.

In 1953, Farrow made another Western, Ride, Vaquero!. It is not a particularly successful film, having a vaguely defined storyline and a choppy that suggests major post-production cuts. But even allowing for these, it is hard to explain the unusually listless direction or the often wooden performances. The one notable exception is Anthony Quinn, who makes his Jose Esqueda one of the most dynamic and engaging Mexican bandits in Vaquero cinema.

One particularly obscure relationship is that between Cordelia (Ava Gardner) and that man-with-a-past, Rio (Robert Taylor). When she ‘first’ meets him, Cordelia acts as if they have met before. But this is not something ever referred to again and is in fact contradicted by later dialogue. Perhaps the studio rewrote their relationship in post-production out of what had been shot.

Sydney film reviewer Bill Collins, however, has suggested an intriguing reading, with the essentially homosexual Rio responding sexually to a woman for the first time.62 Collins likens it to the relationship between the enigmatic Laura (Gene Tierney) and the gay Waldo (Clifton Webb) in Otto Preminger’s Laura (1944).

Farrow made eight more films in the 1950s, for a variety of studios: Botany Bay, Plunder of the Sun and Hondo (1953); A Bullet is Waiting (1954); The Sea Chase (1955); Back from Eternity (1957), a poor remake of Five Came Back; The Unholy Wife, and John Paul Jones (1959).

Botany Bay is quite forgettable. Set (supposedly) in his native Australia during the early days of white colonization, the film achieves neither authenticity nor drama. It’s only interest is its kitsch visualization of Australian flora and fauna, not unlike that seen on the worst of the Arnotts’ biscuit tins.

Plunder of the Sun, with Glenn Ford and Diana Lynn, is the story of a group of treasure hunters looking for gold in the Zapotecan temples of Mexico. Made for John Wayne’s production company, Batjac Pictures, it was a modest success.

Glenn Ford and Farrow had planned to do more films together, but they so failed to get on during the filming that Ford pulled out of the next one, Hondo. Wayne, who had planned merely to produce the film, was left without a lead. A great admirer of the script, he took on the lead role of the cavalryman himself.

Filmed in 3-D by Robert Burke and Archie Stout, Hondo is a highly-regarded film, often praised for being the first major Western to adequately portray the destruction and loss faced by the American Indians in the face of white colonization. Michael Pate, who starred as the Indian chief, Cochise, recalls:
Wayne and Farrow were very conscious that the film was trying to say something about what had been done to the Indians. It was on everyone’s mind.

*Hondo* was based on a story by Louis L’Amour, “The Gift of Cochise”, and, as you know, Louis was a very pertinent writer on Indian rights, ideas and stories. And the screenplay was written by James Edward Grant, who was one of the great screenwriters of all time. It was a really beautiful script; you could read it like a fine novel.

What finished up on screen may be a different matter altogether. Even with the best intentions in the world, you sometimes just can’t get up there.

One writer on Westerns, John Tuska, feels the filmmakers were successful and writes that it is “the closest one can come to a personal statement from [John Wayne] on precisely how he regarded the struggle with the Indian nations”.45

Director John Ford came and visited Wayne on location in Mexico. Pate recalls:

I thought [John [Farrow]] did terribly well to hold a lot of the elements together. But towards the end of the picture he was rather impatient to get back to Hollywood and start another project. So John Ford, who had come down on location to see Wayne, ended up doing all the second-unit work.

I remember Ford arriving towards the end of the filming. We had this wonderful picnic on the banks of the river that ran through the location. Ford sat down and had a particular chat with Philippa [Pate’s wife] because many, many years before he had been besotted with Philippa’s mother, who was one of his leading ladies, Louise Grenville. He got terribly romantic Irish about the whole thing and ignored me completely.

Farrow’s next film was *A Bullet is Waiting*, a “claustrophobic little film”44 about a criminal (Rory Calhoun) and a sheriff (Stephen McNally) whose plane crashes in the backwoods. They are forced to hole up in a small cabin owned by Cally (Jean Simmons) and her father (Brian Aherne). *The Motion Picture Guide* considers it “Overlong and very talky”46.

The *Sea Chase* was Farrow’s second film with John Wayne. It is a far less successful teaming than *Hondo*, Wayne unconventionally playing a German sea captain and Lana Turner a Teutonic spy. It is a curious aspect of Farrow’s career that the seafaring films of this former seaman are, with the notable exception of *Two Years Before the Mast*, among his least successful.

On 1 November 1954, in the middle of shooting, Farrow gave away Pilar Palette, Peru’s leading actress, at her wedding to John Wayne.

In 1956, Farrow co-wrote the screen adaptation of Jules Verne’s *Around the World in 80 Days*. He also began as director and did the Spanish sequences. But disagreements with producer Mike Todd led to Farrow’s resignation and subsequent replacement by Michael Anderson, who went on to win the Academy Award for Best Direction. Farrow did, however, win the Oscar for Best Screenplay with co-writers S.J. Perelman and James Poe. It was the first time an Australian had won an Academy Award in what is regarded as a major category.

The Spanish sequences, with the very long bullfight, are stylistically dissimilar to the rest of the film, having a more documentary feel. Perhaps they reflect Farrow’s long interest in Spanish traditions and history. What is curious is why Anderson and Todd seem to have made so little effort to incorporate these sequences holistically into the rest of the film. One doesn’t know how Farrow intended to cut these scenes, but it would be surprising if he were happy with the final result.

That same year, Farrow had published in Cambridge, England, *Seven Poems in Pattern*. A limited edition of only 250 copies was printed.

In 1957, Farrow directed *The Unholy Wife* (1957), a “provocative crime thriller”46 with Rod Steiger, and Diana Dors in her first American film role. The publicity had a provocative (for its time) tag: “Half Angel, Half Devil, She Made Him Half A Man”. The director of photography was Lucien Ballard:

I remember everyone told me how tough John Farrow was. The first day on the picture … I came onto the set and he had the camera all rigged up. I moved the camera twenty feet, and said, “Take a look at this, John, I think you might like it better.” And he did. It was just that no one had ever had the nerve to do anything like that before. He turned out to have an excellent visual sense – he liked anything a camera would like.47

The next year, Farrow and his entire family moved to Spain for the making of John Paul Jones (1959), about America’s first naval hero. Again it was a project to which Farrow was greatly suited, but his direction is flat and it remains one of his weakest films. Its only real interest is that it marks the screen debut of two Farrow-O’Sullivan children in the movies: the young John Charles and (the uncredited) Mia, who both had small roles. In most senses, it is a sad conclusion to a career marked with touches of greatness.

On *John Paul Jones’* completion, the Farrow’s moved to England to live, though son Patrick continued at college in Los Angeles. Then came the tragic news that the 19-year-old boy had been killed in a mid-air plane crash over California. The family, with the exception of Mia, who remained at her convent in Surrey, returned immediately to Los Angeles. Because of Farrow’s having served in the U.S. Marines, they formed a guard of honour at the funeral.

Two years later, Mia returned to Los Angeles where, after one more year’s schooling, she developed an interest in acting. But having seen the down side of Hollywood ambition, Farrow was deeply opposed to her pursuing acting as a career. Mia was sent back to England and a finishing school there. But after only two months, and secretly supported by her mother,
she turned her attention once more to acting. Her career proper would begin, after two more small roles, with Joseph Losey's Secret Ceremony (1968).

Mia was not the only Farrow child to venture into acting; Tisa has made a few films, debuting in James Toback's Fingers (1978), and Stephanie appeared in Toback's Exposed (1986). O'Sullivan, too, continued to make the occasional film, and co-hosted for several months the Today show in the 1960s. Her most recent film role, and one of her most memorable, is as the mother of Hannah (Mia Farrow) in Woody Allen's Hannah and Her Sisters (1986).

As for Farrow, he did not make another film after John Paul Jones, though he did direct the occasional episode of the television Western series, Empire (1962). Mostly, however, he devoted his time to family and religious matters; he and O'Sullivan were particularly active in Catholic and Jewish charities.

On 28 January 1963, John Neville Villiers Farrow died of a massive heart attack at his Beverly Hills home. He was survived by his wife and six of his children. Mia Farrow, who has spoken little about her father in public, has said:

[He] was a marvelous man, a paradox. He was remarkably knowledgeable. And tough, very tough. But he was gentle. He was many people at once, good and bad. He wanted to be the pope, a poet, and Casanova.

At his best, Farrow was also an extremely fine scriptwriter and director. Few filmmakers have made movies as masterly as Wake Island, The Big Clock, Where Danger Lives or His Kind of Woman. And Australia hasn't produced so many creative giants that it can afford to ignore someone as supremely gifted as he. Farrow's lack of recognition, especially in his home country, is little short of an outrage.

NOTES

1. Some of these films are less than an hour long, but film historians take a more flexible view about what constituted a feature in the cinema's early days. Today, according to most archivists, a feature must be more than 60 minutes.

2. Some of the biographical details come from the entry on Farrow in Terry Ramsaye (ed.), The International Motion Picture Almanac: Quigley Publishing, New York, various years.


5. As with all Pate quotes, from interview with author, 24 October 1989.


9. Thanks to Pat Gordon for tracking down a copy of this film.


11. ibid., p. 98.


15. ibid., p. 9.


17. ibid., p. xv.


22. ibid., p. 416.

23. ibid., p. 416.


27. ibid., pp. xxii - xxiii.


34. Canham, op. cit., p. 55.


37. There are numerous accounts of this issue, one of the fullest being in Kenneth L. Geist, Pictures Will Talk: The Life and Films of Joseph L. Mankiewicz, with Introduction by Richard Burton, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1978, pp. 173 - 206.

38. Geist points out in his excellent account that the group's actions mirrored a sequence in Frank Capra's Meet John Doe (1941), where uniformed cyclists are used to outmaneuver the ideologically sound John Doe. On this occasion, however, Capra was a member of De-Mille's clique and doing what he had previously and powerfully condemned. He would later resign as a SDG board member.


42. In phone discussion with author, 13 November 1989.


44. Jay Robert Nash and Stanley Ralph Ross (edd.), op. cit., p. 315.

45. ibid., p. 315.

46. ibid., p. 3635.


The following filmographies represent filmographies, as well as histories of the which was previously the most complete.

WHITE GOLD


THREE WEEKENDS


THE WOMAN FROM MOSCOW


THE COMMON LAW


A WOMAN OF EXPERIENCE


A DANGEROUS WOMAN


THE FOUR FEATHERS


THE LONE WOLF


THE SHADOW MAN


THE LAST OF THE PAGANS


THE WAY OF THE SHADOW


W B


COME AND GO


THE ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE


THE DON QUIXOTE STORY


THE FOUR FEATHERS


THE OLD LADY SHOWS HER MEDALS


THE WHEAT OF THE HESPERUS


THE FOUR FEATHERS


THE SHADOW MAN


W B


THE ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE


THE DON QUIXOTE STORY


THE FOUR FEATHERS


THE OLD LADY SHOWS HER MEDALS


THE WHEAT OF THE HESPERUS

1938

SHE LOVED A FIREMAN

Cast: Ka Yan Fraser (Janie), William Gargan (Ace Boreman), Victor Jory (Doc) Maxie Rosenbloom (Stuffy Mclnnnes), Fredric March (Bettem), Fred Arlen (Kit Campbell), Eddie Foy, Jr (Denny Carson), Charles Anthony Hughes (Bill Steele), Frankie Darro (Johnnie), Robert Lowery (Johnny).

SORORITY HOUSE
(U.K. title: THAT GIRL FROM COLLEGE)

Cast: Anne Shirley (Alice Fisher), James Ellison (Bill Losimi), Barbara Read (Dotty Spencer), Miss Revlett (Matilda), Betty Arnold (Ethel Fisher), Don Taylor (Jodi Simpson), Gene Markey (Little Joe), Frank Faylen (Morris), George Macready (Ralph). Prod., company: Warner Bros. B&W. 35 mm. 55 mins.

She's the Lady

Cast: Loretta Young (Carolyn Gran), Alan Ladd (Mr Jones), William Bendix (Johnny Sparrow), Philip Ahn (First Brother-Lin Cho), Iris Wong (Wan Su), Ray Xiong (Third Brother-Lin Wei), Marianne Quon (Tan Ying), Jesse Tsiu Sing (Student), Richard Loo (Lin Yun), Irene Tso (Donal Duck).

THE HITLER GANG

Cast: Loretta Young (Carolyn Gran), Alan Ladd (Mr Jones), William Bendix (Johnny Sparrow), Philip Ahn (First Brother-Lin Cho), Iris Wong (Wan Su), Ray Xiong (Third Brother-Lin Wei), Marianne Quon (Tan Ying), Jesse Tsiu Sing (Student), Richard Loo (Lin Yun), Irene Tso (Donal Duck).

YOU CAME ALONG

Cast: Richard Dix (Bill Shear), Gal Patrick (Jessie Gibbs), Anna Louise (Mrs. Reeler), Paul Henreid (Franz Horner), Carl Esmond (Mr. Gardner), Louis Jean Heydt (Judge Howard), Hobar Cavanaugh (Abbe Company), Charles Handler (Welsh), Abushoo (Frye McKechnie), Joyce Compton (Bonnie).

1946

KIDGLOVE

Cast: Alan Ladd (Raymond), Margaret Lindsay ( Tibby), Richard Arlen (Second Lieutenant), George Macready (Boardroom, Engineer), Dan Tobin (Ray Gordon), Eugene Morgan (Ham Sam), Robert Benchak (Ben). Prod., company: RKO Pictures. Colour. 35 mm. 97 mins.

CALIFORNIA

EASY COME, EASY GO

CAST: Ray Milland (Jonathan Trumbul), Barbara Stanwyck (Lily Bishop), Bruce Cabot (Michael Talley), Edward Gargan (Ralph Coffin), Dan Tobin (Ray Gordon), Eugene Morgan (Ham Sam), Robert Benchak (Ben). Prod., company: RKO Pictures. Colour. 35 mm. 97 mins.

BLAZE OF NOON

Cast: Alan Ladd (Raymond), Margaret Lindsay (Peggy), Robert Cabot (Ray Gordon), Eugene Morgan (Ham Sam), Robert Benchak (Ben). Prod., company: RKO Pictures. Colour. 35 mm. 97 mins.

CAST: Ray Milland (Jonathan Trumbul), Barbara Stanwyck (Lily Bishop), Bruce Cabot (Michael Talley), Edward Gargan (Ralph Coffin), Dan Tobin (Ray Gordon), Eugene Morgan (Ham Sam), Robert Benchak (Ben). Prod., company: RKO Pictures. Colour. 35 mm. 97 mins.
DONNA REED (Ann Daniels), George Macready (Maggie Mahoney).


THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES


52 IN CINEMA PAPERS 77


1949

ALIAS NICK BEAL

(U.S. contact: IM CASTING)


1950

COPPER CANYON


1951

THE BAD ONE


1952

A BULLET IS WAITING


1953

THE SEA CHASE


1954

THE MAGNIFICENT FALL

Last of the Pagans

These have proved difficult to trace. Principal sources are the various catalogues of the State Library, Victoria, and the U.S. The National Union Catalog. Pre-1956 Impressions.


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DAVID DENBY, NEW YORK MAGAZINE

JAMES SPADER ANDIE MACDOWELL PETER GALLAGHER LAURA SAN GIACOMO
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY STEVEN SODERBERGH

sex, lies and videotape

an outlaw production, ‘sex, lies, and videotape’
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music by cliff martinez

/J. executive producers nancy tenenbaum nick wechsler and morgan mason
produced by robert newmeyer and john hardy

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DEVELOPING THE FILM

THE CONTRIBUTION OF GEORGE EASTMAN

Although the debate will continue about who invented the first practical motion picture camera, Edison was one of the most influential inventors, though more for his application of what has been called the “American method”. This is a process of collective invention, maintaining and guiding a large and efficient staff to work by trial and error on his projects.

As history records it, however, the role played by George Eastman in providing Edison with raw film material was pivotal. For a supplier of photographic plates, making the emulsion was not a problem. His concern, and that of many of the early inventors, was in obtaining a flexible substitute for glass plates and something stronger than paper. While the development of the motion picture camera is widely known, the story of ‘film’ is less so.

CLEARLY SUPERIOR

Finding such a material had seemed an insuperable problem. Paper proved unsatisfactory because of its texture and lack of clarity. Celluloid, which had been invented years before, seemed a possible answer, but it was not made in strip form and was thick, uneven and insufficiently clear. Eastman recalled in a letter to F. H. Richardson (18 March 1925) that:

> About the year 1883 or 1884, in connection with William H. Walker, I engaged in an effort to create a system of film photography. Mr. Walker was a skilled mechanic and had had some experience in manufacturing cameras. I was engaged in the manufacture of dry plates and had had experience in the making and handling of photographic emulsions, as well as some mechanical experience...

Walker and I worked together on the mechanical problems, while I tried to work out the photographic and chemical side of the enterprise. The broad idea, of course, was not new. An exposing mechanism, called a ‘roll holder,’ for sensitized paper had been made as early as 1854, the year that I was born. In 1889 Eastman described those years of his research on transparent film:

> I first conceived the process of making transparent film by coating a support with a solution of nitro cellulose and then coating it with emulsion and afterward stripping it off. Early in 1884 not later than Feb. or Mar. ... I made many experiments in which I used both paper and glass as a temporary support. I used ordinary soluble gun cotton dissolved in concentrated sulphuric ether and grain alcohol equal parts, 10 grains of cotton to the ounce of solvent. I sometimes added a small quantity of castor oil to the solution in order to give it more body. I coated this solution first on glass prepared by rubbing with talc, I then poured on the glass as much of the solution of nitro cellulose as it would hold in a level position and allowed it to dry. I was unable with one coating to get a sufficiently heavy skin or pellicle to serve as a final support for the emulsion so I poured on top of the first coating a solution of rubber and benzine. After drying I poured on another portion of nitro cellulose solution and let that dry. I repeated these successive coatings 8 or 10 times endeavoring to get sufficient body to the pellicle.

I also made experiments by using paper as a temporary support and coating the cellulose immediately upon the paper, and afterwards coating it with the emulsion. I had no difficulty in stripping the cellulose from the paper, a reliable final support for the emulsion. I investigated various publications endeavoring to find a method for making a thick enough solution of cellulose in order to get a thicker coating but I was unable to find any directions for obtaining a solution containing more than 10 or 12 grains to the ounce. The experiments that I made produced films upon which I was able to make pictures by leaving the films upon the paper support itself in the plate holder. I also stripped the prepared film off from the paper in long pieces and carried my experiments far enough to satisfy myself that the process was a commercially practical one, if I could get body enough to my solution. I therefore continued my research for a suitable solution of cellulose and read everything upon the subject that I could find in the hope that I could learn how to make a solution that I wanted.

I continued my search until the month of September, 1888, all the time on the lookout for such a solution. About that time I directed our chemist, Mr. Reichenbach, to make some experiments with a new varnish which had been recommended to us for varnishing film negatives. It seemed to be similar to the nitro cellulose and castor oil that I had used only it gave a thicker pellicle when dried upon glass. Mr. Reichenbach’s experiments continued during October and November. Early in the month of December he came to me and said that he had discovered a method of dissolving 100 grains nitro cellulose to the ounce of solvent. I immediately told him that that was all I wanted to put my process into commercial form.
The use of fusel oil and amyl acetate solved the problem, yielding an flowed onto glass, gave a smooth, clear film. It tore easily, however, added strength, but it crystallized if not heated and dried perfectly. The use of fusel oil and amyl acetate solved the problem, yielding an even drying, flexible, transparent film. A varnish composed of wood alcohol and soluble cotton, described by Eastman as “very thick, like separated honey”, provided the ideal backing.

Eastman patented the formula in Reichenbach’s name (not an uncommon practice for the time, recognizing the contribution of the employee and keeping the rights with the company). The early years of American cinema was littered with patent disputes, since Edison sued as many individuals and enterprises as he could in order to protect his monopoly and his profits, until, in 1908, the Motion Picture Patent Company was formed from the major patent-holding companies precisely to achieve full monopoly control over the market in film in America.

In May 1889, the Eastman Dry Plate and Film Company began commercial manufacture of a product that he had been working toward since 1884. A small factory was outfitted quickly. The solution was spread on glass-covered tables 100 feet long and 3' 6" wide by a mechanism designed to produce a film of uniform thickness.

**VERY BEAUTIFUL, TRANSPARENT AS GLASS**

On 30 May, the Edison labs wrote the Eastman Co. for a quote on the discount that would be allowed on a Kodak No. 1 Camera, which listed at $25, and in getting it reloaded (processing, printing and reloading fee was $10 list). Knowing Edison’s reputation, he almost certainly had to buy the camera at list price, and it was used in designing the Kinetoscope.

The person entrusted to Edison’s motion picture project (it was called at first the Kinetophone because Edison was basically trying to add pictures to his already successful phonograph) was William Kennedy Laurie Dickson. It was Dickson who was responsible for recognizing George Eastman’s breakthrough and for applying it to his own experiments.

The photographic publication, *The Beacon*, reported in its issue of June 1889 that

> Just as we are about to go to press we have received from ... Eastman ... a sample of the new ‘transparent’ film for roll holders, and some further information ... We are promised, as soon as possible, a roll for experimental purposes, after the use of which we shall go more fully into the immense step in advance that has been made by the introduction of this film, and try to foreshadow some of the consequences thereof, and must, in the meantime, be content with saying that the film is very beautiful, perfectly structureless, transparent as glass, and that 15 square inches weigh only 17 grains. The transparent film seems to be indeed ‘the missing link.’

The film was demonstrated in September to the New York Camera Club. A fascinated observer was W. K. L. Dickson, who saw in the new roll film the possible answer to the problem that had balked the completion of Edison’s motion picture camera. In a letter of 10 December 1932 to O. N. Solbert of Eastman Kodak, Dickson recalled the occasion and its aftermath:

The lecturer showed his audience a small piece of the product, exulting on this great discovery ... Before leaving I interviewed the lecturer and begged for a sample to take to Mr. Edison, explaining the work we had in hand and the great necessity for such a product to complete our Kinetograph or moving picture camera, as we were forced [at that date] to use joined up short strips of Blair and the like celluloid.

When shown to Mr. Edison next day he was greatly taken with the sample and told me to ‘get on with it’.

**MAKING IT STICK**

A letter from Dickson received at Eastman Co. on the 21 November 1889 asks for six cut rolls “of your Kodac [sic] transparent film 3/4" wide and as long as possible ... you have spoken of 54 feet long – its well, but if you can make it double do so.” Written in the margin is a request for information on a “a good method of developing the strips”. The 35mm format had not been set and his problem in developing the strips was to continue, so he went to Rochester,

where I met Mr. George Eastman for the first time. After fully explaining to him what we were doing, he entered into the spirit of this great enterprise enthusiastically, and we never let up on the work of trying to get just the right thing ...

We made some headway before Christmas with each sample as produced, I rushed back to Orange [New Jersey], tried it, developed, hypo fixed – then washed off most of the film ... I returned to Rochester rather glum.

The problem was repeated while they tried different methods of treating the base materials and it appears that Eastman realized the importance of the project and trusted Dickson fully with his production methods. Dickson had the idea that instead of trying to coat the dry base, to coat it when it was fresh made and slightly tacky. Returning with a sample Dickson sent Eastman a one-word telegram: “Eureka”.

Shortly after he was to complain, “The emulsion used showed plainly on enlargement the coarse silver haloids and lack of super-sensitiveness so necessary, especially when projecting.” Both these faults Eastman was to overcome, but to Dickson falls the dubious honour of the first cinematographer to start the process of criticism and manufacturer response that has affected the artistic results to this day. Dickson went on to photograph most of the short films used in Edison’s Kinetograph, the peep show device that was first installed in New York on 14 April 1894 (usually limited to the fifty-foot lengths supplied and running at forty frames a second).

**THE CHEMICALS INVOLVED**

Celluloid (first used as a substitute for ivory in the manufacture of billiard balls and for primitive false teeth) was invented by Englishman Alexander Parkes in 1855, and given its name by Americans John and Isiah Hyatt.

Gun cotton was made by dissolving cotton or other forms of cellulose with nitric and sulphuric acids, and was a highly explosive substance. Sulphuric ether was a common commercial solvent for resins and fats, and is prepared by the reaction of sulphuric acid and ethyl alcohol.

Amyl acetate was known as banana oil, a colourless liquid it was used in flavourings and lacquers.

Fusel oil is an acrid, poisonous oil formed in the uneven distillation in flavourings and lacquers.

GAUGES

The Lumière’s format was 35mm wide from the start, Edison began with 34.8 mm and, when Eastman standardized on 35mm and exported the product worldwide, it became the standard. There were a number of 17.5 mm processes, but Kodak decided that any smaller format gauge that would be used by amateurs should not be cut down from nitrate stock. The introduction by Kodak of 16 mm in 1923 was so successful that there was almost no opposition, the 9.5 mm Pathé gauge being closer to 8mm in application.

**NOTE**

Next issue, due to space restrictions this time round, “Technicalities” will print the paper Dominic Case of Colorfilm prepared on the 100 years of film in Australia for the 131st SMPTE conference in Los Angeles in late October 1989. The emphasis in his account of filmmaking in Australia is one of ingenuity and innovation in the face of overseas monopolies that were extended beyond the more commonly known theatre and distribution constraints into equipment and filmstocks.

CINEMA PAPERS 77 • 55
Charles Bukowski’s writings were never meant for the meek or hypocrical. When L.A.’s king of gutter life met 32-year-old DOMINIQUE DERUDDERE, his incendiary introductory words were, “I hate movies and movie makers ... talentless bastards!”

Undaunted, Deruddere imbued Bukowski’s lucid, erotic meanderings with prosaic bleakness and restored the writer’s faith in filmland. CRAZY LOVE, Deruddere’s debut feature, has helped raise Belgium’s international cinema profile. It also so impressed Francis Ford Coppola that he co-produced Deruddere’s second film, WAIT UNTIL SPRING, BANDINI, adapted from John Fante’s novel of the same name.

It is a comedy drama set during the 1920s in Colorado and stars Joe Mantegna, Ornella Muti and Faye Dunaway. Deruddere’s infectious wit and rapid working style (15 shots per day on both features) earned him praise from the Zoetrope team. Says Deruddere: “They are organized in a completely different way from us. They are very strict about things. But towards the end of the first week of shooting, things became more relaxed. Some crew members said it was the first time they were not afraid of being fired all the time. The mix between American and European crew members worked very, very well.”

A directorial perfectionist with an interest in taboo, Deruddere is happy to work within the confines of other writers’ thoughts: “Other people express themselves better on paper that I do, so why should I try to force myself to be better? People like John Fante and Charles Bukowski express themselves in a way I would were I a writer."

Deruddere is presently immersed in researching his third feature, on Belgium colonization in Africa. He looks beyond the Bukowski experience into a panorama of celluloid dreams.

DOMINIQUE DERUDDERE

“I’m very happy to work their material into film. Direction is very natural for me. I was brought up with American films of the 1930s and ’40s, and filmmakers like Frank Capra, Billy Wilder and John Huston. They are the masters of simple cinema. I would like to master their special style.”

Profile: PAT GILLESPIE
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CRITICS' BEST AND WORST

Dirty Dozen

A panel of film reviewers has rated eleven of the latest releases, and one classic, on a scale of 1 to 10, the latter being the optimum rating (a dash means not seen). The critics are: Bill Collins (Channel 10; The Daily Mirror, Sydney); Keith Connolly (The Herald, Melbourne); Sandra Hall (The Bulletin, Sydney); Paul Harris (3LO; "EG", The Age, Melbourne); Ivan Hutchinson (Seven Network; The Sun, Melbourne); Stan James (The Adelaide Advertiser); Neil Jillett (The Age); Adrian Martin (Tension); Scott Murray; Mike van Niekerk (The West Australian); Tom Ryan (3LO; The Sunday Age, Melbourne); and Evan Williams (The Australian, Sydney).

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WORDS AND SILK
MICHAEL EPIS

WHEN DIRECTOR PHILIP TYNDALL set out to make Words And Silk, a documentary on Australian novelist Gerald Murnane, he gave himself a difficult task. How does one make a 60-minute film on a novelist without dredging out the visual cliches – the tweed-jacketed author in his book-lined study? And what does one do when both the author’s life and his books are remarkable for their uneventfulness?

Tyndall’s answers were to extend the documentary to feature length and to have full confidence in his material: if Murnane’s uneventful books are interesting enough to win a strong and loyal audience, then there is no reason to tart them up for the screen.

The strategy succeeds. The extra half-hour is the additional furlong needed to let Murnane, a writer whose investigation of the world proceeds by introspection after introspection, fully reveal himself. Not that Murnane is askance to do so. He is great ‘interview material’, as the phrase has it, but time is necessary to do his vision justice. A man who announces, with no visible sign of humour, that he doesn’t travel because he likes to be able to open the morning paper and read the Yarra Glen race results requires a little attention.

Despite the film’s being a profile of one of Australia’s most prominent writers – five books to Murnane’s credit, all still in print – Tyndall announces his three major centres of interest without a single word. Archival footage of Ireland – the home of those who, though only a minority of Murnane’s ancestors, have bestowed the bulk of his cultural inheritance – is the prelude. Immediately the audience’s expectations are upset: the first note is comic. The interplay between Murnane’s voice-over and the footage suggests bands of Irishmen migrating to Australia by row-boat so they could find a spot where they could lay down with their girlfriends or wives away from the censoring eye of the Catholic priests. The comedy is refreshing, Tyndall immediately expelling the stuffy air that is the legacy of previous documentaries on authors.

The boldness of opening with corny humour is a sign of Tyndall’s confidence. He knows his subject – his knowledge of Murnane’s work is sound, and they share a solid affinity, both being Bendigo boys well grounded in literature and deeply rooted in the daily culture of horse racing – so he has no fear that a discordant opening will lose his audience. That points to another of the documentary’s strengths. Tyndall trusts his audience to have an interest in the minutiae of his and Murnane’s perception, a trust no doubt bolstered by reaction to his previous work, Someone Looks at Something, winner of Best Documentary at the 1987 Australian Video Festival.

Part 1 of Words and Silk is subtitled “The Imaginary and Real World of Gerald Murnane”, Part 2 “The Real and Imaginary World”, and the balance of emphasis is carefully maintained.

Part 1 enters the author’s literary world by way of his first novel, Tamarisk Row, about a boy growing up in the Bendigo of the 1940s in a Catholic family with a father fascinated by horse-racing. The father’s fascination becomes the boy’s obsession.

Murnane’s childhood was very similar to the boy’s, but as he says vehemently in Part 2, “I hate the word autobiographical.” Tyndall respects this and the recreations delicately

ABOVE: AUTHOR GERALD MURNANE HOLDS UP HIS LILAC AND BROWN RACING COLOURS IN PHILIP TYNDALL’S WORDS AND SILK.
imply they are recreations from the novel, not representations of the author's life.

Documentary recreations often flounder by being neither fact nor fiction but simulations of fiction, not deserving the suspension of disbelief fiction deserves. Torn from its context, a randomly selected passage dramatized is often a dead loss on screen. But Tyndall chooses judiciously—there is usually only one character engaged in a private pursuit and, following the books, there is no dialogue. And the threads are maintained, so that the boy's game, with marbles (representing horses) rolled across a lounge-room floor, is the recurrent image binding Part 1 together.

In delivering this eminently literary material onto film accompanied by the sound of Mumane's reading from his novel, Tyndall maintains fidelity to his subject while also creating something in its own right. He eschews the heavy-handed, dexterously matching text to shot. "Number one, Monastery Garden, purple shades, solitudes of green, white sunlight, for the garden Clement Killea-

sage dramatized is often a dead loss on screen. Tom

mades (representing horses) rolled across the

suspension of disbelief fiction deserves. Tyndall

writes in the early morning and notes, again

his author's rights. I suspect this is a docu-

ment a culture will boast of when Mumane

is no longer here to give interviews.


**MY LEFT FOOT**

BRIAN MCFARLANE

The tos on the titular foot awkwardly (how else?) but successfully place a record on a gramaphone. This is the opening image in a film full of striking images, images of the intense physical effort which is the constant accompaniment of every act of Christy Brown. The camera gradually pans up to the tortured face, then cuts between cars making their way to and arriving at a stately home and the foot doing its work. Both the theme and the film's structure are announced in this opening sequence.

The theme is to be that of the overcoming of appalling difficulties—congenital cerebral palsy in this case—as a preliminary to a life of valuable achievement—as writer and artist. The film’s structure depends on our knowledge of this achievement. Its interest will not, therefore, lie in creating the suspense of will-he-or-won’t-he-make-it? *My Left Foot* begins with Christy Brown (Daniel Day Lewis) being wheeled into a charity benefit presided over by Lord Castlewelland (Cyril Cusack), assisted by Dr Eileen Cole (Fiona Shaw). While a string orchestra is playing Schubert, Christy is left in the care of a nurse who is reading his autobiography. She opens at the Munch-like painting of Christy's mother (Brenda Flicker) and this ushers in the flashback to Christy's birth in an austere hospital ward. The nurse tells his father (Ray McAnally) that there have been ”some complications”.

The rest of the film is structured in a series of flashbacks between the elegantly arranged benefit and the unsentimentally rendered facts of the Browns' family life in a drab street of Dublin council houses. Christy's father is a brutal, inarticulate man but (in McAnally's great performance) he is also convincingly vulnerable and capable of unbidden accesses of pity and pleasure in his children. There is a similarly remarkable performance from Brenda Flicker as the worn-out working-class mother with an unbreakable belief in her son's intelligence. The rest of the numerous brothers and sis-
ters, in their tolerance and love of Christy, in taking him for granted and including him in their activities, create with McNally and Fricker as potent a sense of family life as I recall in any film in years.

The family feeling is not a matter of a cozy domestic glow. This is working-class Dublin with the threat of poverty and an oppressively patriarchal system ("Don't you question me in front of the children"). Blusterers to the father to his wife when he is laid off); there is gossip and ignorance (Christy is talked of as a "moron"), but there is also accommodation to his situation. He is not hidden, not ignored; his family doesn't fuss over him nor is it ashamed of him. The film's flashback episodes fill in very satisfyingly, not only the major steps in Christy's development, but also the richly-textured world of feelings in which it takes place.

There have been plenty of films before about the overcoming of obstacles, physical and/or psychological, of a kind that would daunt most of us. One recalls such notable examples as Jean Negulesco's _Johnny Belinda_ and Alexander Mackendrick's _Mandy_ (both centred on deaf mutes), John Cassavetes' _A Child is Waiting_ (mentally retarded children), Lewis Gilbert's _Reach for the Sky_ (Douglas Bader's tin legs), David Lynch's _The Elephant Man_, and the two perhaps most relevant here, Arthur Penn's _The Miracle Worker_ (the story of Helen Keller) and Gil Brealey's _Annie's Coming Out_ (a physically disabled child). There is something irresistibly attractive, as a narrative line, in the idea of reading about or watching the huge normalcy in spite of them. In the case of Bader, Keller and Christy Brown, the achievement goes, of course, far past "normalcy": that would have been remarkable enough given the nature and extent of their disablement, but what they achieved, distinguished enough in any circumstances, becomes in _their_ little short of miraculous.

When the film is based on real-life cases, as several of these are, the narrative interest lies elsewhere than in the outcome. We know that these people have succeeded and this is followed by a finely-judged scene in _Reach for the Sky_, the best films which have taken such knowledge is in varying degrees awe-inspiringly, rather than life-like speed. As _One doesn't require films to be so, but they perhaps that matters. Not much though; the _film's_ flashbacks fill in very satisfyingly, not only the major steps in Christy's development, but also the richly-textured world of feelings in which it takes place.

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McBride succeeds on the level of narrative action, style, mood, performance and cinematography in establishing the totally redemptive character of Lewis' joyous music. This is McBride's chief concern as a filmmaker: to give his viewers an overriding sense of the importance that the music has for Lewis, not only as a professional musician, but, in the fundamental sense, of salvation. His stress on this side of the legendary rock 'n' roll artist colours the entire film. McBride is correct to see Lewis' life and music in terms of a great conflict between worldly sin and redemption. This conflict is what structures Lewis' public persona. Nick Tosches understands the either-or world view of heaven or hell that informs Lewis' explosive behaviour:

The Killer has been a constant inspiration to me, and I've always believed that he's the last man to have been touched by the Holy Ghost of Gnosis. The powers of his music - that loud, unspeakable philosophy of his Horus-Snopes soul; the search through the mania and excess for that unknown, unknowable sin without which there can be no redemption or damnation more thrilling than any redemption or damnation known to the gelt rest; the pitting within of good against evil without knowing, maybe even caring to know, or refusing to know, one from the other - are more than rock 'n' roll, or whatever you want to call it. They are powers of light and dark, wickedness and strength, and they are powers that can cure and heal and cause miracles. (Greil Marcus, (ed.), Stranded, 1979, p. 4).

Small wonder Lewis threatened Dennis Quaid's life when the actor wanted to perform the songs himself. The qualities that Tosches ascribes to Lewis' music are self-evident on the film's truly exciting and powerful soundtrack, which features the musician's original attacking style of singing and piano playing. Co-scriptwriter Jack Baran makes the accurate point that the lyrics of Lewis' songs are used in a dramatic context advancing the plot in a significant way.

To speak of Great Balls of Fire! and ignore Quaid's superlative performance as Lewis would be comparable to discussing a movie like Sweet Smell of Success without bothering to mention Tony Curtis' memorable kinetic performance as a slimy Broadway publicity agent. Quaid has excelled in capturing Lewis' cocky walk, his wild-eyed look and phrasing, and creates the overwhelming impression that he embodies an insatiable lust, the kind of lust that's viewed in the Deep South as downright ungodly. The amount of research that Quaid did for the role, like studying film and video footage of Lewis' performances of the 1950s and '60s, is clearly visible in the actor's ability to register all the expressive details and gestures of Lewis' lively body language. Quaid comes across through the entire duration of the film like Woody Woodpecker on adrenalin.

McBride has succeeded in creating not only the volatile, sexy and soaring sounds of Lewis' music, but he has also constructed a vivid and exciting image of the period which the music represents. The fluid camera style is notable for its suppleness to weave in and around Lewis' rowdy life, always mindful to keep the protagonist at arm's length. This avoids, according to the filmmaker, the pitfall of being forced "into a position where you have to betray your particular vision of the story you are telling". McBride's film is able to catch a markedly animated and plausible sense of the aesthetic, cultural and religious features that shaped rock 'n' roll in the 1950s. The conformity, abundance and vitality of the era are indicated in many key scenes and give a particular face to the American dream. One scene has Lewis in his convertible car going along a Memphis road to the catchy, celebratory lyrics of Jackie Benston's watershed car number, "Rocket 88". Another finely choreographed sequence, one that could have easily belonged to any worthwhile musical of the 1940s or '50s, unfolds around Myra's buying goods in a department store, showering the goods and the obliging salespeople with her money like confetti.

Stylistically, Great Balls of Fire! is an exuberant, stimulating movie that affirms the positive healing powers of rock 'n' roll. Its principal hyperreal look is suggestive of McBride's endeavour to create a movie that not only characterizes the redemptive nature of the music itself, but also makes a critical statement about the more conventional Hollywood kind of rock biopic. It's a movie notable for its visual and sonic dynamism. The gymnastic pyrotechnics of the "High School Confidential" sequence, where Lewis goes to pick up Myra at her school, is a central passage in this context; likewise, the similarly kinetic sequence where Lewis is
seen setting his piano alight with lighter fluid. Another extraordinary sequence, worthwhile for its sensitive modulation of human emotions, is the tender and humorous bedroom encounter between Lewis and Myra, where Lewis teases her (in a playful, caring manner) about her phobia about horror movies. There are several times where Lewis seeks comfort alone or spends some time with Myra beyond the paranoid reach of her father (John Doe). Here in the quiet of a nocturnal river locale, the inner forces responsible for the passion that Lewis exhibits in believing in his roots and music are graphically revealed. McBride never fails to signal to his viewers how, for Lewis, rock ‘n’ roll lies at the centre of human experience.

After all, Lewis has to choose between religion and rock ‘n’ roll when Swaggart (Alec Baldwin) challenges him to do so inside a Pentecostal church. Leaving the shocked congregation, Lewis walks out the front door of the church in his inimitable swaggering style, calling back to the fire-and-brimstone preacher, and his audience of worshippers, “Well, If I'm going to hell, I'm gonna go playing the piano.” You better believe it. As Marcus once wrote, “If the day ever comes when rock 'n' roll is just a memory, Jerry Lee will still be up on stage, playing it.”


**CAPPUCCINO**

SHELLEY KAY

*Cappuccino* attempts something worthy. In the press release, the publicist describes the film as “a new Australian comedy, as fresh and as light as its title”.

The plot is also singularly confusing over varying degrees of personal and artistic fulfilment.

Anna (Rowena Wallace) is a successful stage actress who wants more: she wants to be a director. Her friend, Maggie (Jeanie Drynan), would be happy just to land a role. Larry (Barry Quin) is a famous soap star who lives with the constant tension of self-justification. Celia (Christina Parker) represents flibbertigibbet youth in pursuit of opportunity—any opportunity. She dumps Max for “star” Larry. Max then inadvertently obtains a scandalous video, of the police commissioner in a pornographic performance, from nasty detective Bollinger (Ritchie Singer).

This is stolen by opportunistic Celia, presumably sensing the likelihood of remuneration. This supposedly warrants the licentious pursuit by the bubbling detective Bollinger and his youthful off-sider, Nigel (Simon Mathew).

Suggestive of the milieu and the point at which the characters converge and interact is an unnamed coffee shop. The shop is one of the film’s many competing threads, yet where is the coffee-inspired metaphor that sparked the film’s title? Moreover, the cafe proprietor, a potentially rich cameo figure, is never exploited: he is as flat as a very flat white. It is a case of script denial.

Like the people who tend to sit around in coffee shops all day, *Cappuccino* lacks direction. This film is flawed by its random devitalization and a lack of focused energy symptomatic of much independent Australian filmmaking.
THE HONEYMOON KILLERS
ADRIAN MARTIN

"Amongst gangster films, Inside the Mafia is an example of what edges nearest to the literal. Nothing in Inside the Mafia (until the last sequence) remains unexplained – no volitions, no competencies demand to be inferred, for they are spelled out explicitly, leaving the imagination nowhere to roam. Characters move stolidly without discernible intent through a series of mundane acts, about which the film says absolutely nothing except that they have occurred. Beside this, the films of Andy Warhol seem to seethe with undercurrents and connotations, not to say absurd pretenses and refinements. This is paracinema, art brut, a film from beyond cinema: raw film which pleases no one, which everyone calls 'bad' or 'boring', but which, despite that, is one of the few places where the cinema appears an art of the moment, all the protocols, value judgments and aesthetic standards of my culture, 'art forgets its very name', and for critics like me, in search of 'raw film', the amused regard of 'kitsch' – of the kind that greets a Robot Monster at the Valhalla or a campus film society – is a relatively straightforward, nakedly superior form of this cultural colonialism. More interesting and slippery, however, are those attempts by the educated to 'claim' naïve popular art in more generous, hopefully 'genuine' ways. Traditionally, the world of popular culture has offered such devotees of art (fans of 'popular film' included) a space of energetic 'vitalism' – a kind of divine release from the effete middle-class hell in which they have been 'cultured'. Allen S. Weiss once suggested that art brut is that cultural place where "art forgets its very name", and for critics like me, in search of 'raw film', the suggestion is truly intoxicating. Might not B-cinema allow me, at last, to forget, if only for a moment, all the protocols, value judgements and aesthetic standards of my culture, to truly take me outside of myself?"

The slightest chance for me to approach The Honeymoon Killers with a fresh or innocent eye has been obliterated by the fact that, over time, it has been thrust onto a certain stage, made to play a principal role in a seemingly unending cultural drama: the relation of 'cultured' folk (film intellectuals, art house patrons, young hipsters, etc.) to what is regarded as the 'uncultured' realm of B-cinema. To outline briefly this drama is not at all 'esoteric' (lately the mainstream press' favourite word for describing the re-view pages of Cinema Papers), for not one single published statement I have read about The Honeymoon Killers does not play out in, a symptomatic and largely unconscious fashion, the clash of cultured viewer with uncultured film.

In the quotation which prefaces this review, William Routt refers to a concept of 'raw film', and he might well be alluding to what the artworld calls art brut, meaning raw or rough art, but more particularly 'naïve' art, the art of children, the clinically mad and 'primitive' or unskilled Sunday painters. 'Bad' B-movies have long been associated with naïve art; indeed, for some commentators, it can seem at times that the whole of what is designated 'popular culture' is one vast well of naïve artefacts. Of course, as soon as something or someone is formally labelled naïve, we know that there is another world from whence this labelling comes: the world of the culturally sophisticated, of those in the know, whose preferred artworks are not 'raw' in the slightest, but very smooth and streamlined indeed. That is to say, the high-art patron, when he/she confronts the 'underworld' of popular art, can seem very much like a colonizer, figuring out how to relate to the 'natives'.

The amusèment of 'kitsch' – of the kind that greets a Robot Monster at the Valhalla or a campus film society – is a relatively straightforward, nakedly superior form of this cultural colonialism. More interesting and slippery, however, are those attempts by the educated to 'claim' naïve popular art in more generous, hopefully 'genuine' ways. Traditionally, the world of popular culture has offered such devotees of art (fans of 'popular film' included) a space of energetic 'vitalism' – a kind of divine release from the effete middle-class hell in which they have been 'cultured'. Allen S. Weiss once suggested that art brut is that cultural place where "art forgets its very name", and for critics like me, in search of 'raw film', the suggestion is truly intoxicating. Might not B-cinema allow me, at last, to forget, if only for a moment, all the protocols, value judgements and aesthetic standards of my culture, to truly take me outside of myself? Unquestionably, this is what many connoisseurs of B-cinema down the years have sought. Rather than letting art cinema 'forget its very name' in the process, however, what often happens is that B-cinema is simply 'negotiated' upwards so that it can be, in a sleight-of-hand operation, 'legitimated' as film art. The history of critical and adulatory responses to The Honeymoon Killers provides a remarkably clear example of this. I have already mentioned that Truffaut called it his favourite American film. In fact, he talked about the film often, in many interviews, calling it on one occasion "human and very anti-cliche; it is very real and at the same time very strong" (Filmmakers Newsletter, December 1973). Gerald Peary, in the first volume...
of his oft-consulted Cult Films book series, praises the film for its effect of documentary realism, and its expressive cinematic style—which it claims rather resembles Truffaut’s own style! Theme-wise, the film is for Kathe Boehringer in Filmnaue (November 1989) a classic ‘dark-side-of-the-American-dream’ type of picture (a veritable art-house genre), possessing a “solid sociological core”; for Peary it is also a celebration of good old l’amour fou—bringing it in line with the films the French Surrealists made (like L’Age d’Or), and also the American ones they admired (like Joseph H. Lewis’ Gun Crazy). Christine Cremen in The Australian (11 November 1989) reassuringly adds that, in contrast to those who might assume the film is “immoral” (cheap and nasty), it is “actually a very moral movie”. She quotes not only Truffaut but Antonioni to boot: “one of the purest films I’ve ever seen.”

Now, imagine in your mind’s eye this composite movie—realist, humanist, complex, moral, pure, true, stylistic, a strong tonic, like a Chabrol or a Brisseau perhaps—and then go see The Honeymoon Killers. Bear in mind the possibility that the B-movie you see will not necessarily correspond to the A-movie you have been primed for. For there are, it seems, a hundred ways of writing the B out of B-movie, and all of them have been performed on this film. But let us not downplay the ‘badness’ of this movie—neither by justifying it as ‘realism’, nor by minimizing it as secondary to the film’s ‘intrinsic’ thematic interest. Badness, and ugliness, are at the core of this film—ugly people, cheap sets, bad sound, chunky actions, and a mukuly undecidable (and hence truly amoral) narrational ‘point of view’. This very badness—arising from what Rout calls an excess of ‘literality’—is possibly what is most compelling about the film. This tale—of an oily man and a fat woman who travel about America finding rich widows to marry and then to kill—is also one that leaves the imagination nowhere to roam, and the ‘critical faculty’ no secure intellectual or ideological position to take up. The film is a mess—a crazy, confused, hysterical mess. It is on this level that I think it should be valued.

Is The Honeymoon Killers a ‘naïve’ film? Notwithstanding the evidence of Kastle’s occasional aspirations towards ‘culture’ (rather madly manifested by the occasional blast of a few bars of Mahler on the soundtrack; how ‘modernist’ this can sound to us today, after three decades of Godard) and ‘social comment’, the film does seem to possess that essential ingredient which so many true believers of the B-movie have searched for down the years: the quality that the Surrealists valued above all of an involunt­ary, spontaneous creativity, mad and sublime. This is perhaps what separates, ultimately, ‘cultured’ from ‘uncultured’ films. A filmmaker like Paul Morrissey can exploit (brilliantly) the properties of ‘bad’ acting in films such as Mixed Blood, but his work will always be, to those faithful to the B-cinema impulse, contrived, pretentious, too refined. Godard might try to emulate the flatness of B-cinema in order to depict the ‘existential banality’ of the everyday world in films like Vivre sa Vie, but Roger Corman’s Sorority Girl will always count as the real thing, the literal embodiment of modern alienation.

VIDEO RELEASES

* CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

VIDEO RELEASES

* CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

tyrannical matriarch (Jennifer Claire) who in another era would have been played by Agnes Moorhead; a fine man debilitated by an inherited disease, unable to produce a heir to the family’s fortune; hence, surrogacy; and two men in love with the same woman. Unfortunately, this period melodrama is out of B-movie, and all of them have been released in another era would have been played by Agnes Moorhead; a fine man debilitated by an inherited disease, unable to produce a heir to the family’s fortune; hence, surrogacy; and two men in love with the same woman. Unfortunately, this period melodrama is

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AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES: 1956 - 1981
Compiled by Albert Moran, Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Sydney, ph, 1989, 222pp., $19.95 (plus $2.00 postage and handling)

KEN BERRYMAN

It has been gratifying in recent times to have greeted the arrival of such useful filmographies as Nuclear Movies and Signs of Independents (reviewed in early-1989 editions of Cinema Papers). Now another timely reference publication has appeared: Australian Television Drama Series: 1956-1981. This is a checklist of information painstakingly compiled by Griffith University media lecturer, Albert Moran, over a number of years and finally released by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School.

Although Australian television enjoys an unseemly amount of press coverage, good reference books on the subject are rare (try obtaining a copy of Cinema Papers' own publication Australian Television: The First 25 Years (1981), for example). Albert Moran has already made a sizeable contribution to the subject with his Currency Press publications Making a TV Series: the Bellamy Project (1983), Images and Industry: Television Drama Production in Australia (1985) and (with John Tulloch) A Country Practice: Quality Soap (1986). This latest work in fact grew out of his research for the 1985 volume. It is designed, simply, "to promote greater awareness of Australian television drama series". Moran justifies the need for this checklist by comparing the output of Australian television over the past thirty years to that of the Australian (feature?) film industry since the grammes themselves.

Concerns over this problem.

For Moran, it has involved extensive research task commenced as long ago as 1977, by which time "black and white series had disappeared off our screens as quickly and completely as silent films once vanished from cinema after the arrival of talkies."

Given the attrition rate of much of Australian television output and supporting documentation, Moran found particularly useful source material in two perhaps unlikely places: the programme listings of the (now defunct) TV Times and in the basement at Grundy's where the company's "immuculate files" (if not their programmes) were superior to those at Crawfords. Overall, of course, the amount of information available to Moran varied enormously and this is reflected in what has been included in the final checklist.

The individual series entries range accordingly from less than a third of a page (Flash Nick from Jindawick, et al) to two or three pages (A Country Practice, The Sullivans). Entries are arranged alphabetically by title, with standard information (where it exists) for each series: a one-line synopsis; number of episodes; length; production company; date of first broadcast; format; and cast and crew details. In terms of chronology, the entries begin with Take That, first broadcast (in Melbourne only) in 1957, and conclude with Sons and Daughters (1982). The stray 1986 entry for Rita and Wally makes more sense when the date is rearranged a little. Moran's drama net embraces comedy series - such as the short-lived spinoff from My Name's McGooley - What's Yours?, and some children's programming, despite the frequent tendency to regard these as separate categories.

There are 162 entries in all and the book concludes with a 17-page personality index for cast and crew, arranged usefully by role: actors, art directors, editors, and so on. A quick perusal of the index reveals the extensive contribution to Australian television drama made over the years by such individuals as Oscar Whitbread, Howard Griffiths, David Harrison, and Ian and Henry Crawford, as well as the durability of actors like Carmen Duncan, Peter Sumner, Rowena Wallace, Harold Hopkins, Ken James, etc. It also provides statistical support for some of the views advanced by Moran in Images and Industry: for example, the Australian Broadcasting Commission's sustained commitment to indigenous drama. Of the 162 series listed in Australian Television Drama Series, no less than 77 have been ABC productions. By comparison, the 'Big Two' - Crawfords and Grundys - account for 39 series over the same period, with ATN7 the next best with a total of 10.

The pity is that such a handy publication is confined to drama series only: no listings of one-off dramas - the tele-features or short fictional works; nor reference to the more 'serious' fare of news, current affairs, documentaries, educational programmes - despite Moran's claims in Images and Industry for the ubiquity of narrative across the whole range of television output. The cut-off date of 1981 is also somewhat of a puzzle, given that Images and Industry provides a title listing of all drama series produced in Australia to the end of 1984 and the annual Encore Directory now carries similar information as well.

For any comprehensive study of the dramatic form in terms of its presentation on the box, of course, the more recent period (not covered by Australian Television Drama Series) is an important one, coinciding with the full flowering of the mini-series, the advent of new players (Bob Weis, the McElroys, the South Australian Film Corporation and, particularly, Kennedy Miller), and the gradual transference of subjects concerning national identity and mythmaking from the big to the small screen. The fact that a reference work published in 1989 contains a checklist which terminates in 1981 suggests the difficulties involved in preparing data of this kind.

It also points to the chronic need for publisher(s) to bite the bullet and commission a text (or series of texts) which provide researchers or media analysts with annotated lists embracing all forms of Australian television production over the past thirty years. One looks for a local equivalent to the three-volume Encyclopaedia of Television by Vincent Terrace (Zoetrope, New York, 1986) which covers all U.S. series, pilots and specials produced from 1937 to 1984. For the present, we can only commend Albert Moran for undertaking the initial spadework in this formidable research territory and the AFTRS for making it generally accessible.

AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS

ATTITUDES TO TELEVISION: A SURVEY OF ADVERTISERS
Gillian Appleton, with assistance from Kate Harrison, Communications Law Centre, and Catriona Hughes, Australian Film Commission, 32 pp., June 1989

Looks at how the television advertising industry works, and how advertisers, agency media buyers and stations relate to one another. It examines in particular advertisers' attitudes to issues, concerns and practices in the industry.
A detailed, annotated listing of world film festivals, with a handy section on "What You Need". The booklet clearly states what the festivals specialize in and short listings of previous Australian entries is a good guide to what they may select in the future.

**MARKETING DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMMES INTERNATIONALLY**

AFC Marketing and Communications Branch, 8 pp., stapled, October 1989

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**U.S. NON-THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTORS**

AFC Marketing and Communications Branch, 9 pp., stapled, August 1989

A listing of non-theatrical distributors in the U.S., with address details and name of acquisition contact.

**USA CABLE SERVICES: A GUIDE**

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CINEMA PAPERS 77
### FEATURES, PRE-PRODUCTION

**ALMOST ALIEN**  
Prod. co. Entertainment Partners  
Producer James Michael Vernon  
Director Scott Russell Hill  
Associate producer Penny Wall  
Assoc. producer Martin Martin  
Assoc. director Don Cranberry  
Editor Pippa Anderson  
Production manager Forstam Publicity  
Synopsis: A television weather forecaster goes through a mid-life crisis when he discovers, after 18 years of marriage and two children, that his wife is an alien.  
**Cast:** No details supplied.

### FEATURES, PRODUCTION

**DIINGO**  
Prod. company Geest Australia  
Associate producer Geest Australia  
Producer AO Prods SARL (Paris)  
Director Dedra Prods (Paris)  
Synopsis: A chance encounter with a legend of jazz begins a life-long dream for a young boy in the outback. Years later, he journeys to Paris to revive the dream.  
**Cast:** No details supplied.

**SENSAI**  
Director Scott Russell Hill  
Producer Scott Russell Hill  
Scriptwriter Scott Russell Hill  
Synopsis/Cast: No details supplied.

### PRODUCTION SURVEYS

**AYA**  
Prod. company Gosha Films  
Dist. company Ronin Films  
**Budget** $1,800,000  
**Synopsis:** A post-war story of love, marriage and friendship begun during the occupation of Japan, and set in 1950s and '60s Victoria. Here the cultural shift and new pressures force three people through inevitable change.  
Casting: Ari Ishida (Aya), Nicholas Eadie (Frank), Chris Haywood (Mac), Miki Oikawa (Jun), John O'Brien (Kato), Mayumi Hoskin (Nancy), Marion Heathfield (Lorna), Julie Forsythe (Mandy), Tim Robertson (Willy), Tava Stratton (Tina).  
**Government Agency Investment**  
**Development** Film Victoria  
**Production** Film Victoria  
**Music** Guy Gross  
**Storyboard** Ray Nowland  
**Prod. supervisor** Jeanette Toms  
**Prod. manager** Ross Bee  
**Length** 80 minutes  
**Gauge** 35 mm  
**Production Government Agency Investment**  
**Production** FFC  
**Cast:** Robin Moore, Keith Scott  
**Synopsis:** An enchanting story which borrows characters and events from popular fairy tales and weaves them into one charming and suspenseful tale of love, mystery and myth.  
**TILL THERE WAS YOU**  
**Prod. company** Ayr Prods  
**Principal Credits**  
**Director** John Seale  
**Producer** Jim McElroy  
**Line producer** Tim Sanders  
**Scriptwriter** Michael Thomas  
**Sound recordist** Geoffy Simpson  
**Editor** Gary Wilkins  
**Assistant editor** Bill Blok  
**Costume designer** George Liddle  
**Costumer** David Rowe  
**Music** Miv Brewer  
**Synopsis/Cast:** No details supplied.
BLOOD OATH
Prod. company: Blood Oath Prods
Director: Stephen Wallace
Producers: Charles Waterstreet, Denis Whithurn, Brian Williams
Co-producer: Annie Bleakley
Line producer: Richard Brennan
Scriptwriters: Denis Whithurn, Brian Williams, Russell Boyd
D.O.P.: Ben Osmon
Editor: Nick Beaman
Prod. designer: Bernard Hides
Costume designer: Roger Kirk
Planning and Development Casting: Alison Barrett-Casting

Production Crew
Prod. coord.: Bernadette O‘Mahony
Prod. manager: Helen Watts
Unit loc. manager: Hugh Johnston
Prod. secretary: Chris Gordon
Prod. accountant: Gill McKinnan (Moneyenny Services)

Accounts ass’t
Camera operator: David Williamson
Focus puller: John Platt
Clapper-laoder: Richard Bradshaw
Key grip: Ray Brown
Asst grips: Ian Bird, Warren Grieve

Gaffer
Brian Bangsro

Electricians
Paul Ganter, Colin Chase
Grant Atkinson

On-set Crew
1st asst director: Chris Webb
2nd asst director: Henry Osborne
3rd asst director: Linda Ray
Continuity: Georgia Loveday
Boom operator: Gery Nucifora
Make-up: Lesley Vandervelt
Hairdresser: Cheryl Williams
Special effects: Gery Nucifora

Catering
Feast Film Catering

Safety officer
Ken McClure
Still photography
Steve Rhodes

Projectorist
Karl Fehr
Press book
Ross Haefenhof

Art Department
Art director
Virginia Bienenman
Asst director
James Kibble

Props maker: Warren Kelly
Props buyer: Sue Maybury
Props stand-by: Paul Dulieu

Standby props: Harry Zettel

Wardrobe
Wardrobe supervisor: Mel Dykes
Wardrobe standby: John Shea
Wardrobe asst: Andrew Short

Construction
Scenic artist: Ray Pedder

Constr. manager: Danny Burnett
Constr. foreman: Philip Worth

Studios
Warner Village Roadshow Studios, Queensland

Post-production
Sound editors: Karin Whittington
Lab liaison: Nicholas Breslin

Editing assistant: David Grosu

Laboratory: Colorfilm
Length: 110 mins

Shooting stock: Kodak

Government Agency Investment Production: FFC
Synopsis: Frank Flynn, an American jazz musician, comes to Vanuatu in search of his brother and finds murder, intrigue and romance - it's a jungle out there.

Cast: Mark Harmon (Frank Flynn), Jeroen Krabbé (Viv), Deborah Unger (Anna), Shane Briant (Rex).
CINEMA PAPERS 77 • 73

THE GOLDEN BRAID
Prod. company: Illumination Films
Primary Credits
Director: Paul Cox
Producers: Paul Cox, Rolf Donner
Line producer: G. Berkes
Focus puller: John Duigan
Continuity: Virginia Doolan
3rd asst director: Steve Walker
Synopsis: A woman from Singapore who runs a successful business.

FLIRTING
Prod. company: Honeydew Productions
Primary Credits
Director: Tony Cavanaugh
Producers: Tony Cavanaugh, Paul Cox
Line producer: G. Berkes
Focus puller: John Duigan
Synopsis: A romantic drama.

A KINK IN THE PICASSO
Prod. company: Southern Cross
Primary Credits
Director: John Duigan
Producers: Tony Cavanaugh, Paul Cox
Line producer: G. Berkes
Focus puller: John Duigan
Synopsis: A romantic drama.

LINDA SAFARI
Prod. company: Southern Cross
Primary Credits
Director: John Duigan
Producers: Tony Cavanaugh, Paul Cox
Line producer: G. Berkes
Focus puller: John Duigan
Synopsis: A romantic drama.
WENDY CRACKED A WALNUT

Production Crew

Director: Michael Pattison
Producer: John Edwards
Scriptwriter: Michael Honey
Based on orig. idea: Michael Pattison
D.O.P.: Nicholas Wood
Sound recordist: Michael Honey
Editor: Leith Tiernan
Prod. designer: Bruce Snellman
Composer: Brian Rosen
Exec. producers: Sandra Levy
Assoc. producer: Ray Brown
Prod. coordinator: Sandy Stevens
Prod. manager: Susan Wild
Unit manager: Christopher Jones
Location manager: Maude Heath
Prod. secretaries: Janie Symonds
Budget officer: Bruno Scopazzi
Director’s ass’t: John Santucci
Standby props: Chris Webster
Wardrobe: Anita Seiler
Wardrobe super.: Ron Stigwood
Hints: Post-production ace: Lily Fitzpatrick
Lab. Manager: Atah (Australia)
Synopsis: The story of a ambitious young stockbroker who, after meeting an attractive stranger on a plane, finds himself ensnared in an ever-spiralling nightmare web of complications and intrigue which eventually leads to ruin and death.

Cast: James Healey (Gary), Anne Loboy (Anna), Melissa Docker (Rebecca), Tim Robertson (King), Jim Holt (Graham), Geoff Morrell (Frank), Mary Regan (Joanne), Paul Mason (Sergeant), John Clayton (Agent).

Wendy (Joanne), Paul Mason (Sergeant), John Edwards (Pierre), Betty Lucas (Mrs Taggart), Cate O’Donoghue (Ronnie), Hugo Weaving (Jake), Kerry Walker (Deidre), Doreen Warnecke (Ronnie), Desiree Smith (Cynthia), Debbie Harman (Elsie), Wendy Falconer (Pippa), David Nicholls (Mark Abraham), Gary Johnston (Ken Pembidge), Steve Arnold (Greg Allen), Robert Burr (Christopher Nilsen), John Price Jones (John Clayton), Will Soeterboek (John King), Don Page (Adrian Cannon), Mervyn Asher (Mervyn Asher), Helen Hooper (Helen Hooper), Ron Bassi (Ron Bassi), Rosemary Averett (Wendy Falconer), Eugene Intas (Leone Rose), Richard Kennett (Douglas Hedge).
A documentary on the history of Elvis is alive. He enlists the help of his Yuppie brother, Chad, to set up by narcodcs agents. A seductive woman convinces the man (via telephone) that he is sitting on high explosives. Posed to look Like a big city, the man is led to a city flophouse to face The Music. A high-flying cocaine dealer is taken to a city flophouse to face The Music. The film aims to normalize a country town in the early 1970s. A story about the Levi family. The parents immigrated to Australia from Italy with hopes for a better life for their intended family. However, as part of the following, their children try to escape from the restrictions of their family life. A documentary on the history and development of Dance in Australia.
SHADOWS OF THE HEART

(comeback again, to the Greek island of Kythera. They embark into contact with unusual circumstances, meet up again on John O'Connell

STREET WISE

Synopsis: A fictional, six-hour, mini-series drama which traces the path of an idealistic young Australian newspaper proprietor, and the repercussions of his personal and professional ambitions.

CINEMA PAPERS 77 - 79
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EXR 5245 film: EI 50 Daylight in 35 mm
EXR 7245 film: EI 50 Daylight in 16 mm

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