Cinema Papers #106 October 1995

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AFC Low-budget Conference
By ALISSA TANSKAYA
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MARKET-DRIVEN
Under the Gun
By MICHAEL HELMS
An on-location look at an unusual side of Australian cinema: Under the Gun, an independently-financed martial-arts actioner.

Taking the Piss Out of Auteurs
All Men are Liars is the first feature of Gerard Lee, who co-wrote Sweetie for Jane Campion. Lee and producer John Maynard tell MARY COLBERT why they think auteurs are overrated and why they want to make movies for the punters. PAGE 4
The **AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION** is engaged in the international promotion of Australian film and television programs, and is pleased to announce the following markets and events:

- **9 - 13 Oct, 1995**
  MIPCOM TV market, Cannes

- **27 Oct, 1995 - 15 Jan, 1996**
  **Strictly Oz**, Museum of Modern Art, New York. A 100 year feature film retrospective curated by Laurence Kardish

- **5 - 10 Nov, 1995**
  MIFED feature film market, Milan

- **Feb 1996**
  **Strictly Oz**, UCLA
  **Toohey's Australian Film Season**, UK

- **29 Feb - 8 Mar, 1996**
  **AFM**, feature film market, Santa Monica

- **17 - 24 March 1996**
  **Sheffield** International Documentary Film Festival, focus on Australian documentary

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**GILLIAN ARMSTRONG HONOURED**

Gillian Armstrong has been awarded the Chauvel Award for distinguished contribution to Australian feature filmmaking at the 1995 Brisbane International Film Festival. Previous recipients of the Award are Paul Cox and Fred Schepisi.

The Award was presented at a ceremony during the Film Festival in August by critic and Festival programming consultant David Stratton.

Stratton said:

Armstrong has fought many a hard battle to retain her very precise vision over her projects and her characters, and her intelligence and humanity shine through all her films, even her less successful ones. She has a keen eye, which makes her work visually beautiful, and she is very good with actors.

The AFC has also published the International guide for electronic media art distribution to assist those working in these fields to market their work internationally and to promote Australian new media work in international events. A guide to the current state of the sector has been prepared and distributed in the AFC publication, Multimedia Developments in Australia.

**CORRIGENDUM**

Austalian film composer Peter Best was incorrectly referred to as Bruce Best in the review of Dad and Dave On Our Selection (Cinema Papers, No. 105, August 1995, p. 49). Best not only scored the film but was a joint initiator of the project. Cinema Papers apologizes to Best for this error.

In last issue’s “Technicactivities”, the photograph on p. 27 is of Dr William Schneider, inventor of the Agfacoolor system.

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**INBITS**

**NEWS, VIEWS, AND MORE NEWS, ETC.**

**AFC & SBS INDEPENDENT ANNOUNCE LOW-BUDGET FILM ACCORD**

Five feature films will be made and distributed during the next three years under an agreement between the AFC and SBS Independent.

The ACC will provide development and production investment for the five features and SBS will provide a cash-flowed Australian licence fee and equity. Budgets will be capped at $900,000. Script development will take place this financial year with delivery of the last film prior to December 1997.

The initiative has been funded through the AFC’s Special Production Fund and SBS Independent’s Creative Nation funds. The accord allows for the films to have theatrical release prior to television broadcast.

**COMMERCIAL TELEVISION PRODUCTION FUND ESTABLISHED**

The Commercial Television Production Fund, announced in last year’s Creative Nation statement, is to be formally established under the AFC.

The Fund will provide $20 million each year for the next three years for the production of quality Australian drama. Half of the funds will be available for independent productions. The Fund will annually make available $3 million for each major network, $2 million for children’s drama, the remaining $9 million unallocated. It is expected that the panel will consider the first applications at its December meeting.

Programmes supported through the Fund will be additional to Australian content quota and will be assessed against selection guidelines to ensure a focus on quality.

A panel has been appointed by the Minister for Communications and the Arts, Michael Lee, to oversee the administration of the Fund. The panel consists of Sue Milliken (Chair), Ian Bradley, Vicki Jones, Alison Nisselle, Ted Thomas, Sigrid Thornton and Steve Vizard. The Chief Executive Officer’s position has been advertised and an appointment will be made shortly.

**BOB MAZA JOINS AFC**

Actor and playwright Bob Maza, AM, has been appointed as a part-time Commissioner to the AFC.

Maza is best known for his acting roles in numerous Australian films and television productions, and as the author of the play The Keepers. He is a part-time lecturer at the Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre at the University of New South Wales, and runs a media consultancy specializing in increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture within theatre, radio, television and film. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1993.

**FOX STUDIOS AUSTRALIA**

It was confirmed on 20 July that Fox Studios Australia, a major integrated facility for film and television production, will be constructed on sites at the Sydney Showgrounds. This follows months of speculation and alleged rival bids to base the Fox Studios in Melbourne.

This site will be shared between its present tenant, the Royal Agricultural Society, and Fox Studios Australia until mid-1997. Progressive site development will occur with a view to establishing six operational sound stages, associated production offices, construction and wardrobe workshops and post-production facilities for sound, vision and special effects by the third quarter of 1997.

In announcing the development, Peter Chernin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Twentieth Century Fox, stated:

This development comes at a time when Fox is securing a much closer association with a wide variety of Australian creators in its worldwide production and distribution activities. New projects with such filmmakers as Gillian Armstrong, Alex Proyas and Baz Luhrman point to the admiration, attention and enthusiasm we have for this country, and its remarkable range of talent and ideas. The studio is simply a logical product of that development and will provide a firm platform for our continuing association.

**MULTIMEDIA ASSISTANCE**

The AFC has published a 16-page document detailing its multimedia programmes of assistance. Through last year’s Creative Nation Cultural Policy Statement, the AFC will receive $5.25 million over four years to augment its existing programmes to create new opportunities for multimedia developers. Support will focus on content creation, especially prototype development, as well as developing key creative personnel.

To ensure that content creators are able to develop a full understanding of the multimedia industry, funds will also be allocated to market development and analysis, information collection and cultural development. Expenditure will be allocated over these four areas with the major proportion of funds devoted to project development and production. All the major interactive formats will be supported: CR-OM, CD-I, Interactive Laserdisc and any future optical disk formats.

**COVER**

Kate (Rachel Griffiths) in John Hillcoat’s The Small Man.
“A lie? ’Tis but the truth in
all men are liars
masquerade." Lord Byron

A night out so often turns out to be a dark experience. That didn’t seem fair to writer-director Gerard Lee and producer John Maynard.

Story by Mary Colbert
We thought that opening a film with a woman who doesn't speak playing a piano - already a proven success - would be a good way to start an Australian movie", says a tongue-in-cheek John Maynard about the first sequences of Gerard Lee's début feature, All Men Are Liars, which Maynard produced. Only an incredibly brave or irreverent filmmaker would dare touch the hallowed instrument that, since Jane Campion shared the Palme d'Or, has been treated with such reverence. But when that filmmaker is also the co-writer of Campion's Sweety (1989), and writer and co-director of Passionless Moments: Recorded in Sydney Australia Sunday October 2nd (short, 1984), and when All Men's piano is hocked by the woman's husband, taken away by removalists and accidentally smashed (literally giving new life to the phrase falling off the back of a truck) in the opening scene, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that there's some funny business going on here. “It was John's idea” is Lee's immediate response. “We're great friends with Jane and there's nothing personal in it, but I suppose it is taking the piss out of auteur filmmaking”, admits Maynard.

Gerard Lee: “Films to me are a conversation that one film has with another – an intertextuality”
After a year's stint at journalism on the reputation of his writing, Lee was accepted into the one-year writing course at the Australian Film Television & Radio School where, in 1981, he met the “gang”: Campion, P. J. Hogan, Jocelyn Moorhouse, Sally Bongers, et al. Lee became an integral part of the team:

On Peel [Jane Campion, short, 1982], it was my car they used and wrecked and I looked after the child—kept him off the street.2 It was fun and, for a while, I believed that making films was just that.

Lee wrote and co-directed Passionless Moments, and claims he acted as a sounding board on a number of decisions on A Girl's Own Story (Jane Campion, short, 1983): Should it be a linear narrative, for instance? Lee proclaims in typically tongue-in-cheek manner:

I suggested it should be disconnected, but, when I saw it, believed it should have been otherwise. It was during that I took up male patriarchal linear narrative.

I realized it was a far more powerful form and that the disconnected narrative was a joke and an illusion. The linear narrative was thousands and thousands of years old, and there was a reason for that.

On completing the course, Lee worked on script ideas and applied for Australian Film Commission funding. The knock-back came at a fragile black, black period in 1984. I had no money, I'd written a script but interest never translated into firm assistance and frankly the AFC broke my heart. I really lost confidence for years.

Added to that was the break-up of the relationship with Campion. Lee tried to pick up the pieces by moving to Perth and embarking on the cathartic journey of writing his second novel, Troppo Man, a contemporary young man’s psychological descent into a private hell in Bali.

The novel deals with a troubled central character searching for his own pure Paradise, only to find that it doesn’t exist. He tries to shut off from his own culture, but when you do that you divest yourself of personality as well, and that leads to a breakdown, a form of personal disintegration. You could have that and re-invent yourself in that other culture, but that isn’t his case.

Lee became so steeped in the subject that extensive reading of cultural theorists (his wife is one) only made it harder to write:

You lose your spontaneity. If you take an extreme ideological stance, you end up with a boring product and you lose a lot of the delicious truths that reality gives you. It's more dramatically powerful and more human as well to avoid that.

The experience of Troppo Man taught Lee that valuable lesson for All Men Are Liars.

I learnt about following instincts. Troppo Man was an intellectual exercise ... sometimes ... but it's a terrible way to write. After that, I loosened up somewhat.

A perfectionist, Lee is still critical of the book:

The protagonist is an inherently-tormented character—passive and self-indulgent in his sadness. I wanted to re-write the book to make the surfi character more complicated and create a kind of social engineering laboratory to enable us to look deeper into the protagonist’s private hell. I wanted to make it more heartfelt, mingling humour, pathos, satire and irony by moving the viewpoint of the dark gloomy character who, through this lonely process, finds out that grass isn’t greener on the other side. Bali was a happier experience for me than for that character, but you can’t write a novel about a happy experience.³

Lee's next collaboration with Campion on Sweetie, “sort of based on a true story”, continued his run of dark characters. Campion came to Perth to co-write:

"a good experience — we had a great time. We had a house down the coast, and, acting out the parts, wrote it really fast in two weeks."

What form did the writing take?

Jane’s got this really good ability — maybe it was just inexperience or feminine intuition — of not following a linear line which was worrying me at the time, but I just forgot about it. She’d say, ‘Oh, let’s have a scene where Louis comes in and sees Kay doing something’ and we’d just act it out taking different parts and go as far as we could. Then we’d write down bits that were funny or poignant.

Maynard produced Sweetie from a four-to-five line concept. Maynard:

John Maynard: “Gerard always covers stories from a different place, yet so ordinary and everyday...”
Maynard was impressed by Campion's early films, especially *A Girl's Own Story*, and Lee's idiosyncratic humour evident in his published work.

It's not straight humour, it's never on the nose - not silly or obvious. Gerard always covers stories from a different angle, a different place, yet so ordinary and everyday that, by the time he's finished with it, it's not absurd, and it's what we laugh at. Jane's directing added darkness to it.

According to Lee, who believes especially *A Girl's Own Story*, doesn't come across in a warmer way:

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Barry (John Jarratt), Tom (Jamie Petersen) and Mick (David Price); Michelle (David Price) and Angela; Barry and Angela; Angela. *All Men Are Liars*. 
```

Was Sweetie the catalyst that pushed him into directing his own work?

No, that made me not want to direct. It looked like a very gruelling experience, especially the strain it puts on people's personal lives. The things that interest me most are the structure of the story and the moral questions, and once they've been solved in a satisfactory way - which they hardly ever are to my satisfaction - it's all a bit anti-climactic.

I was talking to an architect the other day and she said she didn't want to do interior designing - just the basic structure; get the light and the form right and then let them do whatever they want. That's what directing seemed to me.

When I did that bit of directing on *Passionless Moments*, I used to get bored waiting around because it's not challenging enough. I realize now with *All Men Are Liars* that I've relied on my writing ability rather than directing. When things went wrong, I always returned to the fact that the basic idea is strong enough to handle problems.

For Lee, the script is the bedrock:

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If you haven't got $50 million and all the special effects, you've got to have something else. The idea is to make it look simple or flummery, but that takes a lot of work. 
The four drafts of the script took several years to "layer"; Lee studied a lot of drama, and carefully watched a lot of films. 
The Americans are really good at character development, I reckon, especially in making people incredibly sympathetic. Even in *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977), that little family of ranchers it starts off with - we get a strong emotional tie with them. 
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Of the films Lee looked at, two which particularly impressed him were *Amarcord* (Federico Fellini, 1974) - "I liked the idea of the little town" - and *Running on Empty* (Sidney Lumet, 1988), because it's the kind of social realism the director doesn't put a heavy hand on. I was trying to do that - if not be invisible as a director, or at least restrained.

Lee believes that most of us absorb a great deal from other filmmakers, consciously and unconsciously, as if by osmosis: "Everyone sees hundreds of films, and you take a percent of what appeals and say, 'I'll do it like that anyway' or 'I can't afford to do that.'"

Part of the jigsaw of *All Men Are Liars* was prompted by sexual politics of working in Sydney's Glebe.

I was being treated like a Jew in Germany. I thought it was shocking and actually felt a lot of pain at the time - just being a man in the wrong suburb. I never felt I could fit in. I felt like someone ostracized from both genders. That's where the lead character's dilemma comes from: not knowing what works. Then I reversed the whole thing and, instead of having a girls' town like Glebe or Leichhardt early in the mid-'80s, I decided to have the girls - in the form of an all-female band - coming into a boys' town for juxtaposition.

Lee has always wanted to do a project in North Queensland as he saw it, not what was shown in tourist brochures. He'd worked for a year on a newspaper in Bundaberg and was there during the sugar harvest and festival. It was pretty good background for the film. Besides, far North Queensland is where my extended family originates. The film presented a chance to show an exotic part of the country with an unsentimental

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**All Men Are Liars** is unashamedly commercial and populist in its appeal. The concept had its first genesis in the early 1980s with a long evolution for the four drafts of the screenplay. Lee:

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Originally it started with a father and son involved with the same girl, but it was very confrontational and dark. The son was based on a character I knew. I made up the father and kept playing around with the same story in which the son ended up getting the girl. 
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How important has time been in testing the strength of the screenplay?

**Vital.** It's like a game of chess because you're playing around with the pieces all the time, testing ideas against others.

But to be objectively ruthless?

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I'd say, I'm very good at that - in fact, sometimes too critical. It becomes too easy to destroy work as I did in *Troppa Man*. 
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and prosaic eye. *All Men Are Liars* joins my inner-city self to my Queensland no-bullshit self. The dramatic potential of these two worlds coming together was too irresistible to ignore.

On his return to Sydney from Perth, Lee completed the screenplay, at the time titled "Goodnight Irene." What caused the title change? "The original suggested focus on the mother and our screenplay shifted focus in the course of its writing towards the young guy."

Essentially, *All Men Are Liars* is a combination of "fish out of water", "strangers in a strange land", a family break-up and love-in-disguise stories.

When country rock star Barry O'Brien hooks his wife Irene's piano for $120, fed up with the state of the marriage, she packs up and leaves, hiding out in her brother's pub in town. It's up to troubled and sensitive 17-year-old Mick (David Price) and his younger brother (Jamie Petersen) to retrieve the piano and reunite the family. The only way he can raise the cash fast is to audition as the guitarist for an all-girl band that has had serious personnel problems. Mick's peers are already suspicious of his sexual orientation,
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so the last thing he wants to do is to cross-dress and play in front of the whole town. But he impresses the band’s dyke manager enough to get the job. With the disguise comes a series of complications.

The film’s targeted as pure mainstream entertainment. Maynard:

We definitely missed out on the arthouse audience this time. We completely ignored them – intentionally. They’ve been given far too much attention in Australian cinema, and both of us have been accused of giving it to them [Sweetie and The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey (Vincent Ward, 1988)]. So we decided to ignore the arthouse crowd for the first time and see if we could find a wider audience, preferably in the region where we come from. This is a film made for our families and the people we know best of all.

According to Lee, a lot of Australian films have made snide remarks about the working class, something that doesn’t happen in television and soap, but particularly in cinema:

There’s a lack of compassion, a sneering edge – both in stories and filmmakers. We undersell ordinary, typical townpeople. American films like Country [Richard Pearce, 1984] or Tender Mercies [Bruce Beresford, 1983] and others set in small rural communities have so much more affection for the characters. I also liked Breaking Away [Peter Yates, 1979]. All those films deal with ordinary people who talk simply and you feel this huge emotional theme being carried.

There are no losers in All Men Are Liars, according to Lee and Maynard. Says Lee:

Everybody has a warmth and generosity, especially the John Jarratt character. He’s my answer to what feminism says about Australian men. Women go to the film and think he’s a great guy.

There’s a lot of pressure on the family with much of the tension caused by feminism. Women’s quest for individual fulfilment – and I’m not saying it’s bad – is one of the pressures on the family. When the female band arrives in the town, they lend support to the mother, Irene, encouraging her to stay.

After the knock-backs from the Australian Film Commission, I thought the only way was to initiate a film about a woman character. But that was daunting because I thought I couldn’t do that – instincts and sensibilities come into play – so I cross-dressed the main character and succeeded in getting it through the funding process.

With the four drafts spread over a long period, Lee had ample opportunity to layer the script and sharpen its narrative drive. But what made him reverse his decision about directing the project himself? Had he made that decision from the beginning?

No. We looked around for other directors. We tried heaps. We sent it to the Australian guys in Los Angeles and here. I was interested in getting a woman to direct it. Jane read the script but wasn’t interested; it was probably too commercial for her.

For a lot of directors, it was aimed too much at the mainstream common folk, but John and I didn’t want to compromise on that.

There seemed a dearth of films where people can go along and just have fun. A night out so often turns out to be a dark experience. That didn’t seem to be fair to me and I wanted the family to get together. As we couldn’t find another director, John decided to take a huge risk because he knew it’d be following your feelings/instincts; you get a pretty good score that way.

With a début director, newcomer David Price in a lead rôle, a television soapie actress (Toni Pearen) in the other romantic lead, a number of other cast making film debuts and several conservative narrative elements (such as the wife returning to her husband), on paper at least it looks like risk-taking. “But that’s what cinema is, isn’t it?”, asks Maynard. Certainly, it’s far removed from his previous projects. But then look at the results: the first of many Maynard-Lee collaborations.

Judging by the warm rapport, All Men Are Liars is only the first of many Maynard-Lee collaborations. Lee says, “John taught me a lot about intuition and feeling. This has been like a light dawning – part of the spiritual experience of a major quantum leap.”

But while the directorial experience has obviously proved liberating, Lee insists that for him the really hallowed ground is the script.

Lee: “After the knock-backs from the Australian Film Commission, I thought the only way was to initiate a film about a woman character.”

I think people stories are very old and what’s worked before in a heartfelt way will work again. It’s just a matter of making it contemporary. I think you have to humble yourself before the history of narrative: you have to take into account that there’s been a long line of storytellers saying the same thing over again, because most wisdom has been told before. You have to struggle to be original and new, but you have to retain these elements as well.

I think originality is over-rated. I’ve seen what happens to someone who gets a profile … As a director, I really prefer to remain invisible.

1 The credits state “Director Jane Campion” and “Ex-director Gerard Lee”, with an “and” between the two credits, and “Scriptwriter: Gerard Lee, assisted by Jane Campion”. Lee is also listed as co-sound recordist under the name “Ged Boy Lee”.

2 Paul’s credits state: “Morbile booster and child amuser: Gerard Lee”.

3 Lee has subsequently published Eating Dog.
For New Zealand, as with Australia, the growth of a national cinema has been one way to lessen the foreign ownership of its consciousness. You won’t find any debate on that from Sam Neill as proven by Cinema of Unease. Co-written and co-directed with documentary filmmaker Judy Rymer, this trajectory through New Zealand cinema— from the brave pioneering forays by Rudall Hayward and John O’Shea to the triumphs of Heavenly Creatures (Peter Jackson, 1994), The Piano (Jane Campion, 1993) and Once Were Warriors (Lee Tamahori, 1994)— has been conceived with the passionate conviction of a Lindsay Anderson. Nor is this just a posture. I recall how Neill regarded Vigil (Vincent Ward, 1984) as a cinematic revelation. It was the reaction of someone who’d been waiting all his life for such a film, a film which showed the geographic isolation of New Zealand and what it meant to the people living there.

Vigil and Ward’s equally-disquieting The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey (1988) are two of around 20 films highlighted in Cinema of Unease, part of Channel 4’s documentary series made to celebrate a century of cinema. Neill and Rymer deserve credit for approaching their segment in a cinematic way: its expressiveness contrasts with the disappointing entry from Martin Scorsese, whose pedagogic approach, while confirming that he’s the most cine-literate of filmmakers, is hardly the work of a master auteur.

Neill cited Bad Blood (Mike Newell, 1981), a film ostensibly about the 1943 trackdown of multiple murderer Stanley Graham, but really an examination into Graham’s psychological state, as the sort of film that proves “you don’t have to be of the soil to have an insight”. (Newell’s best-known film, Four Weddings and a Funeral, 1994, is worlds removed from Bad Blood, causing Neill to speculate that it was something about New Zealand that caused Newell to make such a primordial tragedy.)

Neill is also fascinated by the way in which a sense of doing something extraordinary can elevate everyone involved in such a project to a new dimension. That happened on The Piano and from what he’s learnt of Bad Blood it happened on that too: “Jack Thompson [who played Stanley Graham] thinks it’s the best work he’s ever done.” Neill sees Stanley Graham as representative of many rural New Zealanders “who are quite isolated. In this case, isolation leads to paranoia, insanity and murder.”

The cosmopolitan New Zealand of today differs considerably from the New Zealand of Sam Neill’s childhood. He contends that murder and mad-

"I am an expatriate. Like those who are separated from their country, I dream of home; I dream of New Zealand."
ness were ways of escape from the tyrannical conformity that encased New Zealand society for most of its history, and regards An Angel at My Table (Jane Campion, 1990) and Heavenly Creatures as superbly-realized films which confront this problem.

Yet if today’s New Zealand claims to be freer and more diverse, the ghettos of poverty, so vividly captured in Once Were Warriors, make a farce of any claims to social justice and individual choice. The fact that New Zealand filmmakers are able to tackle such contentious subjects with real verve is, Neill feels, proof of the greater proficiency in the industry. In the last three or four years, it’s made a quantum leap. Our bad days of tax loopholes and opportunistic films are behind us, but we needed that experience to help define the type of industry we wanted to create.

I didn’t include any of the dodgy films made in the early 1980s in Cinema of Unease because they don’t deserve any consideration, and that’s the end of that story. Today, films are only made because there’s a genuine belief in the validity of the project. The aphorism that the English and Americans are divided by a common language could equally be applied to Australian and New Zealand films. While I like frothy, light send-ups like Muriel’s Wedding [P.J. Hogan, 1994], it’s difficult to imagine such a film being made in New Zealand. Conversely, it’s difficult to imagine Once Were Warriors coming out of Australia, although Geoffrey Wright had a go with Romper Stomper [1992].

One gap in New Zealand films is that, excepting Came A Hot Friday [Ian Mune, 1985], no one’s really given comedy a go, unless you count Peter Jackson’s films, which are terrified funny and delightfully subversive, but rather gruesome. They’re not the sort to take your children or parents to.

Neill made Cinema of Unease as a personal journey, looking back to his childhood of growing up in Christchurch, by selecting films which mirror his experience. But his own career also converges with the industry at two pivotal points. Sleeping Dogs (Roger Donaldson, 1978), Neill’s first feature as an actor, also signalled the emergence of New Zealand cinema, while The Piano is widely regarded as one of those rare films that had transcended claims of ownership to become, as François Truffaut once put it, something that belongs to the imagination and not to any nation.

Having witnessed close-up the imperenity of an infant industry makes Neill even more admiring of its achievements. He believes that any industry which can list The Navigator, Heavenly Creatures, Once Were Warriors, The Piano and Bread and Roses (Gaylene Preston, 1994) among its credits has to have confidence about its future. “So much created in so short a time”, he muses.

As an actor, it’s natural Neill should salute the distinctive work of such visible presences in New Zealand films as Ian Watkin, the late Bruno Lawrence, Martyn Sanderson, Grant Tilly and Kerry Fox as helping to carve out the unique nature of New Zealand films. But the experience of making Cinema of Unease has also whetted as-yet-unrealized ambitions to direct his own New Zealand film and realize a hope that New Zealanders abroad can help fertilize what is going on back home.

Whether it will happen I can’t say. But whenever I’m working on location in a place like Warsaw, I often start thinking of New Zealand. Its influence on me is quite inescapable. ©

1 For a brief history of New Zealand cinema, and a full list of its features to the end of 1993, see the New Zealand supplement in Cinema Papers, No. 97-8, March 1994.

Cinema of Unease

ulture that spawned them.
The Small Man is the story of Jack (Tcheky Karyo), an expatriate living in Papua New Guinea. He falls in love with Kate (Rachel Griffiths), a writer of romances who rekindles memories of his dead wife, Rose. When Jack takes Kate to his tropical home, she discovers that he has a past – a past that he can neither forgive nor forget.

In the words of director John Hillcoat, The Small Man is "a contemporary melodrama looking at the darker side of romantic love. It is a mix of neo-colonial characters and obsessive romantics."

It is Hillcoat's second feature, coming after Ghosts ... of the Civil Dead in 1989. In the intervening six years, Hillcoat has had a successful career as a director of music videos and been a worldwide traveller. Feature filmmaking, though, is his first love.

Did The Small Man take a while because you were busy doing other things or because it took that long for the project to mature?

A combination of both, plus the difficulty of financing subject matters like these. In Australia – and worldwide – it was pushed aside as "Who wants to know about Papua New Guinea, and about drunk and obsessive characters?"

But Papua New Guinea is an extraordinary country. The diversity and extremes within it are unique, in terms of the different cultures and languages and the landscapes, etc.

Within that are the expatriates who, like in many third-world countries, are a bizarre group that by virtue of the isolation enact fantasies of power and control.

What interested you most about the project cinematically?

Actually being there.

With Ghosts ... of the Civil Dead, it was reading very strong material that triggered the images. With New Guinea, it started the other way around. I went there and what lodged in my mind was the heightened reality of the way people live, the light, the contrasts, the heat, the sound, the insects ... all those sensory things.

Are these elements very important to you?

Yes, because they are the ingredients that can really work in any attempt at making a kind of powerful cinema.

Cinema can be a really powerful medium because it deals with all these senses, whereas other art forms are a singular sound, or just visual images.

Does cinema also need to explore extreme human conditions?

No. Some of my favourite films are ones that are minute in detail, like those of Ozu and Bresson. For me, they are the most radical filmmakers in terms of the way they reduce detail to such simple essences. Their films are so distinct and contrary to the way we are normally seduced by images.

What is interesting about those filmmakers is that they have this objectivity which becomes extremely subjective. The Hollywood tradition, on the other hand, taps in much more to the subjective world and heightened reality. Hollywood is interested in the inside of characters' minds, like how a character actually sees the world.

It is two perspectives which really broaden out to documentary versus the more subjective cinema.

I get passionate about both kinds of perspectives and I like to utilize them both. In Ghosts – given the nature of the material and my belief that the content needs to reflect the style, and the style the content – it was very appropriate to heighten the cold, clinical documentary nature of the drama. In The Small Man, it is the other way around. It is the more internal, subjective qualities that are important.

We are conditioned to both perceptions by the media. But they are usually completely separate and they don’t intersect. I find the intersection quite a powerful tool.

How did The Small Man actually come about?

From a love of films in the melodramatic tradition, such as Hitchcock’s Vertigo [1958] and Rebecca [1940], and Douglas Sirk’s work. I wanted to examine the the darker side of romantic love and the myths associated with it.

It also came from meeting expats in Papua New Guinea ten years ago. There is in the nature of isolation in the expat world a kind of new neo-colonialism. I felt there was a connection...
between that and romantic love, and I wanted to explore that.

To generalize, it has to do with the projective nature of love, where one person projects their ideas and ideals onto another person, and that person, in turn, projects their ideals back. At times, that intense infatuation and obsession can actually go out of sync with the reality of the two people involved. You can project your own ideals onto someone else and yet not actually be in sync with whom that person is.

This is very similar to the relationship of people from the western world with a completely different culture like Papua New Guinea's. They project their own ideals onto that culture and set up a projected system.

We have two characters – a man and a woman – the classic clichéd elements. The woman is a romantic writer, so she has her own fantasy and visions of what life is all about.

**So, Kate is a romantic writer and a romantic?**

And a romantic, yes. That's a good point, because there is a big difference. There are many Mills & Boon-type writers who are extremely cynical, manipulative and calculating people, whereas Kate and Jack are both romantics.

In a sense, it's a love triangle between Jack and Kate and Rose. Jack and Rose were a couple, but their relationship didn't go very well. In fact, it went very badly. Jack accidentally kills her ...

We pick up the story with Jack trying to put together the pieces and rebuild his life after Rose's death. He does it by denial, by not facing the fact that the relationship was severely wrong. He had this ideal which he tried to project onto Rose. That never worked, but it continues to be manifested in his new relationship with Kate.

Kate sees Jack as this dark, brooding, Heathcliff-of-the-jungle type and she senses – they both sense – the darkness that is part of obsessive relationships and which becomes a fatal-attraction type thing. There is a subconscious layer where people are actually attracted to each other's darker qualities.

This takes place with Kate, who has been very sheltered and escapist in her ideals and her writing. She meets this guy who adheres to this romantic myth she has been longing for.
The relationship then starts to break down. Jack takes her to Papua New Guinea and they both try to restore their own romantic beliefs, which gradually snowball.

The next cycle goes even further, a kind of spiralling of the same patterns. The desire of trying to fulfil this ideal, and projecting it onto somebody, gets more and more out of sync.

What rôle did Gene Conkie play in writing the screenplay?

It was a pretty major rôle. With Ghosts, there were five different writers and Gene ended up pulling the whole thing together. I wanted to work with him again in a more concentrated, focused relationship. So, Gene and I started working on The Small Man five years ago.

I basically fed him a lot of ideas, which he then translated and incorporated into dialogue and action. Once he'd done that, I gave him a hard time about what he'd written.

It was a constant ping-pong. I would get him to animate the words and the characters through specific and, at times, quite abstract ideas. Gene, of course, brought his own ideas to it as well. It was quite an involved relationship.

How often were you in contact over the five years?

It varied. Sometimes we'd spend a whole year together – not full-time, but regularly on and off. At other times, it was just a few months of the year. Often I was in different countries, because I travel a lot.

This is the sort of filmmaking that I love and live for – but I can't live off it financially! [Laughs.] I'd like to be able to reach that point where I can actually get by, even in a modest fashion.

Recently, I have found a happy medium. Since 1991, I've been able to enjoy making music videos and that is economically more lucrative. However, I would like to focus more on features, because that is really what I am consumed by.

Where did the title come from? Why is it called The Small Man?

It is a direct reference to Papua New Guinea. In their system, if you are a big man, it means that you have respect and kudos in the community. Jack is a small man in that sense, and he is also a small man in that his vision implodes. He is not a big, expansive person, but a small person.

However, the title poses quite a few problems of interpretation. Whether it really fits the film, I'm not convinced.

Why did you cast Tcheky Karyo as Jack?

Partly it has to do with the romantic myth. Kate has this thing about the whole romanticism of being French. Her first book is set in France. So, I'm playing with the cliché of the romantic French.

Also, Tcheky was in the right age group, with the particular qualities we wanted. Some actors are very rugged and very dangerous, while others are sensitive and attractive. It is very difficult to find all those qualities in the one actor, but Tcheky has them.

I also found New Guinea very interesting in its assortment of people from all over the world: Americans, French, Germans and so on.

What about Rachel Griffiths?

Rachel has some of these qualities that Tcheky has. They aren't afraid of just one particular image. Rather than just being attractive all the time, they have real variation as well as a screen presence. I love the way that both are real characters.

For me, what was great about the classical period of Hollywood cinema was that a lot of actors and actresses had real character to them.

Did you see Griffiths in Muriel's Wedding [P. J. Hogan, 1994] first? Is that what gave you the idea?

I'd seen her in Muriel's Wedding and I thought she was the best thing in it. She had, along with the mother [Jeanie Drynan], an extra depth that a lot of the other characters didn't have.

By doing further research about the characters that she liked playing, the challenging areas that she liked working in, Rachel sounded quite perfect for the part.

You have said that the film experience is only complete with sound, picture, emotion and so on. To what extent did you pre-conceived these other elements – music, for example?

One reason I like working with Dean Gawen [sound designer] and with the sound team – and they are basically the same people as who did
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In describing this film: passionate, obsessive, you have things like local church bells, choirs, voices, strings, a song... There is a Bob Dylan song brought up certain things that are very appropriate for the romantic myth as well as for obsession. Harvey has a very broad view and balances both those elements.

With the sound, it was part of the heightened reality and the nature of seduction: the accelerating excitement of infatuation and romantic obsession, plus the undercurrents of the environment, of insects, and the impression of sound. Part of the sound department is Nick Cave, Blixa Bargeld and Mick Harvey, who are doing the film score. What is great about them is that there is the full range. Nick particularly gets caught up in the melodies and the musical layers. Blixa is extremely involved in the use of actual sound as music. Mick Harvey has a very broad view and balances both those elements.

So, right from the beginning, the setting has brought up certain things that are very appropriate for the romantic myth as well as for obsession. You have things like local church bells, choirs, voices, strings, a song... There is a Bob Dylan song through it all the way, which we are hoping Scott Walker is going to sing.

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You have used a number of emotive words in describing this film: passionate, obsessive, romantic. Sexual and sensual you haven’t mentioned yet.

Oh, that was a big oversight. I always equate sexual and sexual with passionate and romantic.

In fact, that is what you get with an obsessive romantic relationship. It usually involves some form of sex and passion, and the combination is particularly potent.

What effect does the sexuality of the lovers have on the audience?

It brings the audience into it by deliberately utilizing certain cinematic traditions that are extremely effective for empathy and for a highly-charged effect. It is by using colour – like a red dress that is highly charged on many levels, psychological and symbolic – plus the use of camera with the sound.

With the music, there is going to be certain traditions of composition, movement, sound. Those stylistic devices are not cynically utilized, but actually try to get back to the classic idea of cinema in the sense of a language, of a powerful method of communicating.

At the same time, what I find exciting about the melodrama genre is that it has heightened colour and sound and movement in quite an expressionist sort of way. Getting back to Sirk, and also to Scorsese, it is the tradition of a heightened use of speed, movement and colour.

Would you call Scorsese a rôle model, or just someone you admire?

Someone I admire. I think it would be pretty bizarre trying to model yourself on someone else. But I do find his use of cinema inspiring, and very passionate.

With a lot of people who do take Scorsese as a rôle model, what is missing is the passion. I like Tarantino’s films. They are incredibly entertaining and also quite powerful in their own way. But a lot of people are calling Reservoir Dogs [1992] on a par with Scorsese. What I find missing is both a conscious cultural world that is not just second-hand cinema and the passion – that is, the passion of the film as opposed to the actual raw passion of the characters. That is a danger in post-modernism and completely self-reflective works.

This brings to mind your early years in cinema. Could you expand on those early influences, the things that made you sit up?

I hadn’t really thought about that until recently. It was going back to Canada for the first time in a long while that made me realize how this whole other world had been such a huge influence on me. Being in America during the 1960s and seeing the Kennedys on the news eight times a day, and going through the assassinations of all these leaders and the mass public grief, was a traumatic experience for a really young kid.

At the time, I was going to a Catholic school and, when Martin Luther King was assassinated, we had to be silent for 45 minutes to an hour in a show of respect. It was the same with Robert Kennedy.

So, it was seeing this adult world and images on black-and-white television of all this violence – that, plus the exhilaration of the music. That music was really a renaissance in the arts.

You then came to filmmaking via the fine arts.

Through animation. From a very young age, I was always doing drawings and going to art college outside of normal school and getting caught up in visual language. It was a big public school in Canada. It was incredibly well funded. They had photography, bronze casting and all that sort of stuff.

In high school, the teacher put me onto making these drawings into an animation. That led to more and more interesting live action, which I thought was always beyond me because I was so locked into the world of two dimensions. Even when I finally started film school, I was very involved in animation.

Since then, I’ve realized that people and faces are really the main interest of cinema. It’s what really brings cinema to life.

In Ghosts, you put part of the human condition under the microscope. You are doing the same with The Small Man. Do you have an editorial view about the human condition?

Well, I do. Even though Ghosts was so pessimistic, the thing that I think saves the film from being a complete downward dirge is the humanity that is found in the people, even at that level.

I couldn’t say I’m purely optimistic or purely pessimist. It’s just that life and death is optimism and pessimism as a constant circle. I sway between the two.

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On the second day of the Seminar, whilst heated discussions about the industry’s relationship with the unions occurred inside the Metro on George, the SBS Independent-AFC accord was announced at the Australian Film Television & Radio School (AFTRS) and, that night, the new Fox Studios were launched. What better time for the industry to attempt some serious introspection?

One of the general questions raised during the Seminar seemed fairly elementary, and yet no unambiguous conclusions were reached. What exactly should the budget be for a feature to be called “low budget” and how does making films in various countries affect the answer to this question? Why make low-budget features? What are the various possible processes one embarks on in order to make them? What is the impact of the conditions and regulations set by the various funding bureaucracies and the unions on these processes? What are the magic elements that make low-budget films successful? At what stage of the filmmaking process do we know these films to be successful? How and to whom do you sell these films? What should we be doing or not doing in order to maximize our financial resources in this country and achieve better results?

And the answers to these?

Well, no one really knew. But they could sure talk about it, share experiences, get inspired, explain their various grievances and hopefully create a better environment in which we can continue to make more successful and better films more often.

The Making of低预算影片

Although Peter Sainsbury’s keynote speech was entitled “Why make Low-budget Movies?”, the Seminar mostly focused on the “How” of the matter, which, as even Sainsbury himself implied, was perhaps the more appropriate question to pose on the occasion.

Low-budget features have much in common, but essentially a severely-restricted — and for some, perhaps, restrictive — amount of funds. In their discussions about the making of low-budget features, the majority of the speakers were surprisingly candid. And though the speakers often agreed, there were enough differences of opinion to keep all the options open and any clues to the secrets of success firmly out of reach.

“Writing a low-budget feature is the same as writing any feature at any level. It’s just, well, cheaper”, commented scriptwriter Michael Brindley during his speech. He advised that “a low-budget feature begins with a low-budget idea” and emphasized the importance of keeping the budget in mind from the earliest possible conceptual stages of a project:

What inhibits a writer’s creativity — that is, a writer of any experience — is working out of touch and in the dark, with a constant sense of apprehension, ‘Can what I’m writing actually be done?’

For Rolf De Heer, who was asked to speak about his experience of making Bad Boy Bubby, this has not been a problem:

For me, there is a tremendously important balance between the subject matter — precisely how you are going to approach it — the budget and the audience potential that it has. Now, these things have to add up. As the writer-director, and a producer, of his films, De Heer considers the concept, the cost and the execution of a project almost simultaneously. He sees no arbitrary demarcations of roles in the filmmaking process,

“For me, what is most important about being a low-budget filmmaker is that you are a filmmaker rather than a director.”

A passionate and intense speaker, De Heer was adamant about what he called “being rigorous” with the budget. This, in accordance with Brindley’s comment that no good comes from writing a script with more actors, locations, shooting days, etc., than can be afforded, seemed to be a crucial point. That is until the writer Mira Robertson, speaking on behalf of Ana Kokkinos about the making of Only the Brave, revealed that during the writing of the script they never considered the budget. And, though Kokkinos began to
have some nightmares about how to actually deal with so many different locations and cast, the writers ultimately believed that, as long as they had the strong basis of the story right, they would later be able to come up with creative solutions to whatever budgetary or technical problems the script may impose.

Considering that Brindley’s script for Shame (co-written with Beverly Blankenship) has been effectively filmed, and that both Bad Boy Bubby and Only the Brave reached a considerable degree of success, whose approach is best?

Robert Connolly, the associate producer of All Men Are Liars, partially drawing on his experience at the first-time producers’ conference, CONTACT 95, in LA, seemed to be in agreement with Kokkinos and Robertson:

Specific, well-told stories can rise far above the constraints of their budgets and scale [...] So, in seeking an appropriate idea for a low-budget film, questions of ‘How many actors?’ and ‘How many locations?’ are really of second importance to the strength and appropriateness of the story itself.

But as Alkimos Tsilimidos found out whilst making his first feature, Everynight ... Everynight, the film could not be done for the intended budget, something he did not know at script stage.

There were, however, a few less contradictory notions. Such key words as “collaboration”, “communication”, “clarity” and “control” entered the discussion many times. “Collaboration” is simply making sure that everyone is working on the same film. This can only be achieved by communicating with clarity to everyone involved one’s professional and creative needs and intentions.

An obvious point, perhaps, and yet DOP’s Toby Oliver and Jane Castle and production designer Sarah Stollman found the need to reiterate how necessary this is during and, especially, prior to the production of low-budget films. Recounting their various experiences, they gave examples of effective and ineffectve modes of working with others. However, as Brindley noted, while “low-budget films are made by teams rather than hierarchies”, it does not mean that “there is no team leader”.

This is where control comes in. Low budgets also mean low margins for error. Brindley:

The cheapest essential element in the making of any movie is thinking. On-the-spot inspiration, or improvisation or suggestion, can be included far more easily in the context of clarity about purpose and realization.”

If there was one thing all accounts of making films for very little money had in common, it was the meticulous planning and thinking involved in pre-production. Tight budgets often mean less shooting time and smaller crews, which means things having to be done fast. There is simply no time for anyone to be confused or lost during the process. Producer Fiona Eagger and Mira Robertson took the Seminar through a detailed case study of the ultra-meticulous preparations for Only the Brave. Tsilimidos and De Heer, in their different ways, were also true believers in putting in the hard work before principal photography begins.

All this may sound obvious, but it was amazing to hear what sort of things could be forgotten or unplanned for. Perhaps the reason for this is that low-budget films are, more often than not, made by people who are still insufficiently experienced. The film-making process involves a multitude of different aspects, but, often due to limited funds, there are only so many heads, and inexperienced ones at that, to consider them all. Therefore, it is perhaps not so surprising that low-budget filmmakers fail to think about and provide for some things that, in retrospect, would seem to have been essential. Even during a session on the making and marketing of short films – a terrific mini-event in its own right chaired by the ever-helpful Shane McConnochie and Hugh Short of the AFC – thorough preparation became one of the main points of discussion: “If my mother had been a film producer, she would have told me, ‘Plan long for your short’”, said Niobe Syme, the producer of Michelle’s Third Novel. The lesson in all of this is: The less you know,
the less money you have, the longer and harder you work before anyone calls "Action!"

Much preparation and thought should also be given to casting. But the question of to rehearse or not is a surprisingly-complex one. The rehearsal time can often be limited by the budget, but it’s also a matter of personal preference. For Only the Brave, Ana Kokkinos rehearsed with her hitherto-amateur actors for more than five weeks. Ken Loach, as reported by his producer, Sally Hibbin, does not rehearse at all, often showing the script to the actors the night before or a moment before they do a scene, even though he, like Kokkinos on Only the Brave, does not generally work with professional actors.

What both Kokkinos and Loach have in common is a meticulous casting process. Brindley noted:

Casting can and does supply sixty per cent or more of screen character. It isn’t just a question of being a good actor [...] but of being right for the rôle [...]. With a low-budget feature, with its likely emphasis on character rather than action sequences, with its likely greater reliance on dialogue, chances are there will be far more burden on performance than with a bigger budget feature.

All this practical advice from the speakers was great, but the least elaboration occurred on the subject which was perhaps the most important: How and where do you get your "low" budget when you want it (other than the obvious government funding sources, of course)? The only real answer to this question came from Karen Robson, an Australian entertainment lawyer who has been working in New York for the past ten years. Robson gave a detailed account of the multitude of possible funding sources in the U.S.; unfortunately, they are mostly unavailable to anyone working in this country.

De Heer tried to be helpful:

There is a word that I use about a project when I am about to try and get it financed, and that is ‘compelling’. What you have to do is make it is that you present to anybody compelling. That means many things, but ultimately what it means is that the temptation to invest in this has to be great, for whatever reason.

Once you’ve made your project “compelling”, De Heer suggested, a quite pleasant set of events would unfold. People with money will listen to you, they will phone you and it will be possible!

Good, but we already know that. What we really need to know is what exactly would “they” find tempting.

To confuse the issue even further, several of the speakers strongly advised that the process of trying to deduce what “they” may like or dislike was a useless one, of course. No wonder the FFC’s Trust Fund, the last of which had 138 applications but only three of which “compelled”, has been affectionately (or not) nicknamed the “chook raffle”.

Nevertheless, Peter Sainsbury, who has often successfully “compelled” “them”, tried to get to the truth of the matter: “Unless [low-budget] features habitually contain most of the following features, one must ask why make them at all?”

Sainsbury then offered a list which included an unfamiliar narrative premise; the ability to put the audience [...] in an unfamiliar territory that provokes and sustains [...] those truly entertaining expectations that are opened up by sheer surprise; [...] a distinctive exploitation of mise-en-scène; [...] a set of entirely appropriate, engaging and thoroughly-prepared cast performances. [...] There needs [to] be a lightness of touch [and] clear judgement in the pacing of scenes, the building of dramatic moments, the timing of cuts, the clarity of exposition between the necessary and unnecessary detail [as well as] a trust in one’s audience and respect for its dislike of discursiveness, its indifference to emptiness and its hatred of patronizing. Above all, there needs [to] be a mixture of daring and flair, whether it be demonstrated with quiet subtlety or noisy show.

And, Sainsbury advised, “everything on [this list] can be got for very little money.”

Add to that De Heer’s suggestion that “It’s easier now than it was then, in the sense that the technology is cheaper, easier to get hold of” and you can just about make your first low-budget feature with the budget you require, win several AFI Awards, a Palme d’Or and one of the Oscars, get your film distributed by Miramax, make a huge profit and wait for that phone call from Hollywood or Cify. As De Heer said to his young audience:

There are no excuses left for any of you. It’s up to you, to get that first substantial work done is within all your capabilities if you work at it hard enough and long enough and think about it and put it together.

The Big Sell

In her introduction to the session titled “Reeling them in: Marketing the low-budget feature”, Sue Murray, the AFC’s Director, Marketing, reminded the Seminar that the whole process of making films, be they low-budget or big-budget, does not finish with the release print.

But Brindley’s words somehow got lost in all that excitement of rehearsing with actors, collaborating with department heads, storyboarding and the minutiae of budgeting. Now we had to think about again “them”, the fickle mysterious creatures called “the audience”. Marketing consultant Sue O’Neill advised:

Don’t lose sight of your audience. Often films are completed and you think, “Well, what sort of audience were you aiming for? Who is this being made for? Why would you think an audience would want to sit through this? If you had $11.50, would you go and watch this?”

On the other hand, Tony Safford, Senior VP, Acquisitions, at Miramax, began his talk by asking the audience to raise their hands if they were “makers of low-budget feature films”. Many hands went up; Safford sighed:

See, I think it’s possible to argue that you shouldn’t be here, on the belief that marketing is not your concern. That is the difficulty of the sales agent or the distributor. The job of the filmmaker and of the independent filmmaker is to first and foremost, get your money and make your movie. And that should be your mantra. I don’t believe you should be anticipating the marketplace. I don’t believe you should be calibrating your thoughts and your script as to how your film will be received in the marketplace. I think that is enormously difficult and even quite dangerous to do.

Confusing? Well, perhaps it helps to know that the difference between these two opinions may derive from the difference in perspective. Safford’s job, as the title of his position suggests, entails the buying of films and the marketing of them to the community at large. O’Neill’s job, as sales agent, entails the selling of films – often to the likes of Safford – of taking a punt on a particular film, going through the tension of seeing whether it will do well and “pop” at a market like Cannes, or whether, after the film’s screening, her office would resemble what she called a “mumble-weed town” with not a buyer in sight.

Sales agents, acting on the behalf of producers, make their money from commissions: no sale means no income.

It is understandable, therefore, that O’Neill would encourage filmmakers to think about the marketplace:

“There is no magic formula but, obviously, there are

Beck row, left to right: Ana Kokkinos (writer-director); Robert Connolly (producer); Lizzy Atkins (Newvision); Sarah Stallman (production designer); Toby Oliver (ODP); Hugh Short (AFC marketing co-ordinator); U.S. Speaker Karen Robson; Sue O’Neill (marketing consultant); Shane McConnachie (AFC festivals co-ordinator); Jane Castle (ODP).

Front row, left to right: Sue Murray (AFC’s Director, Marketing); Michael Brindley; Antonia Barnard (producer); Gregor Jordan (writer-director).

Opposite page, top, left to right: Tim Heald (AFC’s Director, Film Development); Roll de Heer (writer-director).

Opposite page, bottom, left to right: Helen Linthorne (event co-ordinator); Nicki Martin (publicist); Jenina Lipscombe (AFC project assistant); Philippe Battman (AFC project co-ordinator and conference chair).
trends going on" and, according to O'Neill, the films that do well are up-beat, brash, energetic [with] a bit of a twist, a nice music track. Obviously, all the craft elements have to be there. The concept has to be good, relevant and fresh [...] Buyers are much more comfortable with films that have a positive message and have a bit of a redemption at the end [...] but, more and more these days, they want a film that they are going to emotionally connect with. If they don't come out of the cinema feeling like they have been through some sort of experience, they are just not interested.

Downbeat films about dysfunctional characters, where it's sort of more depressing at the end than at the beginning, are the biggest turn-off these days [...] If there is some kind of glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel, it helps a hell of a lot.

Or, as Safford put it, films should have "playability", which is how a film plays to an audience once they are in the theatre. Classically, most independent films in the U.S., and I suspect here as well, have very little "marketability" — they are not high-concept, they are not star-driven, they are not based on any great source material — but what they should have, and the basis of their success will be, is "playability". That is, "an audience enjoys them", and by audience I mean not only an arthouse audience, but what will drive an art-house audience, and that's critics.

Apart from the trends in the films bought, patterns in the buying practice itself emerge. According to O'Neill, it seems that at the moment there is a series of dichotomies going on. On the one hand, the arthouse circuit is expanding all over the world. [...] But, at the same time, the buyer is becoming much more choosy. Five years ago, you could have made a broad range of sales for not much money all over the world. Now you either burn or bust.

O'Neill went on to note that the market is becoming more and more polarized between the Hollywood blockbusters and the quality arthouse, and the distributors are taking much less risk.

Lizzette Atkins, Marketing Manager at Newvision Films, attempted to demystify the buyers' attitude even further:

When we are buying a completed film, the decision to acquire those rights is, first and foremost, an instinctive thing. Most important is that we have to either like or really love that film [...] As long as there is something to say to audiences and the story [is told] in a compelling manner — sorry to use that word again — the budget is largely irrelevant.

For both O'Neill and Atkins, "relationship" is a key word. "Selling films is actually a big relationships business", said O'Neill. The building up of good relationships between sales agents and distributors is crucial. It is also important for distributors to have a great relationship with the producer and director of a film in order to define the best strategy for the release. Atkins:

Wherever possible, plan these things early. As creators of the film, seize the opportunity to develop a productive and creative relationship with the distributor, and put forward your ideas. At the end of the day, the filmmaker can become the best ambassador for that film.

And there is more the filmmakers can do to facilitate the marketing of their films. Atkins:

Don't underestimate the value of a great trailer. Late research places its market penetration at about 70 per cent. It is the best possible way to create anticipation in an audience and, by the time your film hits the screen, there is that immediate recognition factor.

Trailers can be placed in cinemas months before the release.

Also, a set of good stills and colour transparencies is vital. It's really worth getting a good stills photographer involved at an early stage. A couple of outstanding images can receive wide placement in the media, and, as they say, an image speaks a thousand words. Film soundtracks are also a great marketing tool.

Another trend, increasingly, is to produce an electronic press kit. They are particularly useful for getting television coverage.

Obvious words yet again? Not at all, particularly when discussing low-budget films. Most low-budget films in Australia end up with poor quality stills, perfunctory trailers, or none at all, and, as for an EPK, what's that? It makes it very difficult for the media to aid the industry when they have little or no materials, and the filmmakers' reason for this lack, without exception, is that there was simply no money left in the budget. Perhaps when finding creative solutions in budgeting, some thought should be given to marketing also.

But not necessarily if one listens to Safford:

You're first job is to make an outstanding movie. If you make an outstanding movie — this is why we are in this business — then it will succeed. We all have to have that hope: that an original movie in any genre can find success in the market place. It will be championed by critics and it will be championed by its core audience, and it can break out beyond that core audience [...] All you have to do is make an original, bracing, provocative, fresh movie in whatever genre you're working within. It's up to us to figure out the 'marketability' of your film.

Sounds easy.

Feral or Fearful: Whither the Rules of the Game

Imagine you are a young filmmaker with nothing that can be perceived as "track record" and you cannot get your feature film funded, by anybody. Nevertheless, you have a great script, you've discussed the project in detail with your filmmaking friends and you are ready to do it.

One day, you buy a "scratchy" ticket and win $100,000. Immediately, you call up your filmmaking friends, secure necessary locations, arrange a great deal with a lab and cast a bunch of actors.

Of course, you cannot pay anybody, yourself included, as every dollar you have must end up on "the screen". You work out a system of deferred payments and points of profit, if and when the film becomes successful and makes a heap of money. Everybody in your cast and crew is cool with that idea, even though none of them is counting on the film making a great profit.

Being mostly young and inexperienced, except for a couple, your crew cannot believe their luck. They are des-
On an uncommonly-cold November night in Melbourne, the producer aims an unsettling-steely gaze towards a handful of his faithful cast members. There’s no doubt about it: he’s angry. In one swift movement, he sets upon the nearest actor who, after suffering what almost amounts to a manual tracheotomy without anaesthetic, is soon doubled over on the ground of the garbage-strewn alley. A carload of fellow performers quickly enters the scene. With no second thoughts, the producer immediately launches a kick to the face of the first arrival. A slightly-built woman with fair hair emerges from the darkness and also begins to go ballistic. Another shadowy figure huddled by a camera firmly yells “Cut!” This doesn’t entirely halt the proceedings: the boys from the car actually appear to be having fun and aren’t about to stop.
Norton describes his executive producers as just two distributor friends who had produced more than 90 movies between them. He goes on to say that Weintraub entrusted him with the responsibility of delivering Under the Gun with the following line, "Look, I know if anyone knows how to do this, as far as what the market will want, you do."

If you haven’t encountered a previous product bearing Richard Norton’s moniker, then chances are you haven’t entered a video shop for at least a decade, or perhaps ignored the action sector where you’ll often find entire shelves devoted to his work. A major star in the subgenre of martial-arts movies, Norton is mentioned with utmost respect by first-fight film enthusiasts, and spoken casually in the same breath as name exponents like Don “The Dragon” Wilson, Benny “The Jet” Urquidez, Conan Lee and Bolo Yeung, all of whom he’s worked with at some stage of his hectic work life.

A general martial-arts practitioner and one-time bodyguard to the stars, Norton recently established his career with assistance from action star and mentor Chuck Norris, with whom he still works. Norris got him a small part in one of his more fully-realized efforts, The Octagon (Eric Karson, 1980). From there, Norton has virtually chummed them out on an assembly-line basis for producers as dubious as some of the credits that he’s been awarded. For some of his better efforts seek out Ironheart, Kickfighter, Deathfight, Lady Dragon and Rage and Honour. The latter pair are but two of nine films in which he’s shared the billing with Cynthia Rothrock, herself a major attraction in the area of martial-arts action films. In fact, the world’s most widely distributed action-film periodical, the British Impact, recently dubbed the couple “the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers of modern action movies”, much to Norton’s delight.

From The Man from Hong Kong (Brian Trenchard-Smith, 1975) to Hurricane Smith (Colin Budds, 1991) and beyond, Australia hasn’t been shy to contribute to the burgeoning world tally of action features, though you couldn’t easily tell from the lack of critical attention often afforded them. With the exceptions of The Salute of the Jugger (David Peoples, 1989), the last Australian production he worked on, and the little-seen Brian Trenchard-Smith helmed Panther series, surprisingly few of these films bear the credit of Norton.

This was another reason I raced on a whirlwind tour of the truly impressive set, located inside the shell of a long-dead power station next to the Yarra River in inner-suburban Richmond. The ingenuity and scope achieved by art director Ralph Moser is readily apparent. Utilizing a budget that wouldn’t ordinarily cover the catering bill on your average full-length feature, Moser and his hard-working crew, including Brett Houghtron, the director of the excellent student action film, The Huntsman (1993), totally transformed the derelict building into a fully-functional and camera-ready up-market nightclub. Fifty to 55 daily set-ups were planned.

The plot of Under the Gun revolves around Frank Torrance (Norton), a former ice-hockey star turned club owner who desperately wants to walk out of his debt-ridden establishment and catch the next plane out of town. His flight leaves on the morning after the film begins, putting a time constraint a la 48HRS (Walter Hill, 1982) into the mix. In a brief moment of reflection, Norton considers the importance of the location on the development of the script:

After working the plotting of Matt’s script to contain a number of action scenes, we made the decision that the whole thing had
Designing the Interface (or how to learn to love my computer screen)

Phillip Dutchak examines the evolution of computer screen grammar and future trends in interface design.

There are notable films that have advanced the way cinema tells its stories. It might be enlightening to have a few semantic deconstructionists expound on this subject. But as most of us don't have a couple of years up our sleeves, let's just call it "good screen grammar" and be done with it. There is such a thing as good television. So, what about a computer screen grammar?

The Whys for Interface Design

Addressing a conference last April, David Court, editor of the Content newsletter, gave his take on the future for new media. Court concluded that whatever format or delivery medium was used for new media, "we'll all be watching screens of some description".

The forecast is that 1.4 million computers will be sold in Australia this year. A Special Report on Technology in the Small Business Sector by Yellow Pages Australia (and you thought all they were interested in were fingers) stated that "nearly three-quarters [of small business] or 71 percent have a desktop computer".

The Special Report went on to state "close to a third, 30 percent, own a modem, 26 percent have a computer equipped with a CD-ROM drive and 71 percent own a mobile phone". Added to this is the race by people to get online, be on the Internet, or surf the "net" or the web (worldwide web). People are invited to view short video-type files transferred to my computer via a modem) a 4.4 megabyte file. With any of the modems to your computer via a modem, 26 percent have a computer equipped with a CD-ROM drive and 71 percent own a mobile phone". Added to this is the race by people to get online, be on the Internet, or surf the "net" or the web (worldwide web).

What all these facts and figures indicate is that the supremacy of the television set and the home phone in Australian businesses and homes is being seriously challenged by computer and telecommunication technology. The "small screen" (traditionally the television) is increasingly coming to mean the computer screen or the liquid design on your mobile phone.

Mark Bergman, technical assistant to IBM's chief executive officer Lou Gestriner, while recently in Sydney gave weight to Court's prediction by stating that easily-understood, attractive computer interfaces — not technology — were critical to developments in the IT & T field.

Court's and Bergman's remarks may be stating the obvious. Wonderful technology providing such things as multiple channels or interactive services are not going to grab the mass market if the screens people tune into are not attractive, inviting or entertaining, or come across as plain confusing.

Basics

Screen design is based on how people communicate (the jargon is input or, even worse, inputting) to the computer. That is usually by way of a computer keyboard, and a "mouse". Users of multimedia packages on CD-ROMs especially know what it is to click themselves through a computer game.

Professionals such as graphic designers, engineers and architects use electronic boards or "tablets" and special pens for putting information back to the computer. Touch screens are appearing as public information kiosks at hotels, museums and sports facilities. A person touches icons or lettering on the screen to get things happening.

These input devices have caused designers to create the screen "pull-down menus", "dialogue boxes", icons, graphical buttons and boxes, and the subtle use of colour either as background or to highlight a screen object's status.

It is generally conceded that, apart from the trend to give screen objects more 3D modelling and animation, the objects of screen design are all in place.

The next evolution in screen design will occur with the appearance of new types of "input devices" like reliable voice recognition. Harrison Ford telling his computer screen in Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982) to "enhance" is not looking that strange nowadays.

Another key to this new medium is response time. Shots change instantly in films. Advertisements bombard the viewer with images. But with CD-ROMs, being online, even using programmes on your home computer, the rule is to wait. The trick is not to keep people waiting too long. Or if there is a delay, give them something on-screen to watch.

To multimedia developers, IT & T professionals, propeller-heads and net surfers — the converted — waiting, delays and screen freezes have always been part of the turf. For a growing number of people, the sheer novelty of new media or the promise of the next whiz-bang thing has enticed us into cutting new media slack. We won't stand for television channels not changing instantly, but new media is on a honeymoon.

Take the Disney Studio online web site. People are invited to view short video clips of such current features as Crimson Tide (Tony Scott, 1995). Sounds great, but first you have to download (transfer from the Disney site to your computer via a modem) a 4.4 megabyte file. With any of the modems available that should take, oh say, one hour or so.

It took me longer. When finally the video-type file was transferred to my computer, it didn't work because my PC software was an old version. I didn't care. By "surfing" web sites I got the right software, filled out electronic forms to be put on mailing lists I'll never read again, and generally lost two hours. However, more to the point: throughout this cyberspace I was watching a video; I didn't stop to go to the cinema and I was only half-watching television. There are estimates that Internet watching could cut into average television viewing time by up to four hours a week or 25 percent.

I finally viewed the Crimson Tide clip, all 20 or so seconds of it. The sound was poor and the motion of the video was jerky. I still love the web and...
Gene Hackman, but I'm not "in love" with it.

Screen Design

Concepts of falling in or out of love with the web or your computer screen are not all that tongue-in-cheek. People view computer screens close up and usually on a one-to-one basis. This sets up a different relationship to watching television or being at a cinema. Computer screen design is aimed at what the IT industry calls the "end user"—you.

People individualize their computer screens either by the arrangement of its on-screen icons, a screen's font, by the colour they chose or by what screen savers dot a large office. When they get tired of it, they change it. One screen doesn't fit all.

Customization is high on the list for Apple Computer's next operating platform, code-named Copland. Adam Samuels, Product Manager for the software's release next year, said Copland will allow users to "choose a set of appearances" for their screens:

Apple's lead in GUIs (graphical user interfaces) has been eroded by Windows. Presently, Apple is probably viewed as having a conservative interface. With Copland, there will be choices in screen styles and people will have the ability to create a unique style. This will extend to on-screen icons changing to match a particular screen's environment.

Samuels stated that Apple breaks good screen design into better functionality, scalability (the ability to scale the software through the design to the expertise of the user) and customization of the interface. Combined, Apple says good screen design equates to making people more productive using their computers.

Getting Down to It

According to Jakob Nielsen, distinguished engineer for Strategic Information Superhighway.
Technology at Sunsoft, a division of Sun Microsystems in California, computer screen clarity means that people read text on the screen about 25 per cent slower than a paper document. The present clarity of a computer screen, its resolution, is 72 dpi (dots per square inch). The resolution on most television sets is lower.

Nielsen reflected, “Folks get more easily tired reading screens. With that in mind, it is better to put about 50 per cent less information on a screen than you would put on paper.” Nielsen said that doubling screen resolution to 150 dpi plus using anti-aliasing technology would make screens as readable as paper. With that in mind, it is better to put about 50 per cent less information on a screen than you would put on paper. Nielsen suggested that the user should have a structure, a logic, to a web site, not just links to any and every where. In constructing a web site, it is about designing an information space for the user.

The need to avoid confusion is a strong theme in screen design. Betsy Zeller, Engineering Department Manager for the Entry System Division at Silicon Graphics Computer Systems (SGI), talked about the simplicity of the design to make the next choice obvious to the “end users”. Zeller: You can use the simple construction of language in screen design. The subject and verb in language is analogous to the object and the application of the computer; highlight an icon, initiate the [software] application.

Good screen design should also be a rewarding experience to the user. Web design emphasizes its visual rich environment. Customizing your computer screen is more a representation of yourself.

Icons
Screen icons bear more than a passing resemblance to company logos, or trademarks. Indeed, the corporate symbols for car makers – i.e., Ford – fulfills Zeller’s criteria for an on-screen icon. She states, “on-screen icon should be simple, easily recognizable, and have coherence and unity”. Silicon Graphics, as do most computer vendors, have guidelines for software developers as to the respective look for its on-screen icon sets. Part of the reason is to differentiate the company’s screen environment in the market. But screen icons also establish brand presence either directly by name or by style. If companies start licensing their logos for use as screen icons (i.e., Telstra to denote a communications computer file, the Commonwealth Bank for a finance computer file), the potential of the respective companies for market penetration would be serious. As a further aside, Zeller categorizes icons as a “cartoon-type style”. This may partly explain the link between the cartoon, animation and comic world with the computer field or why Bart Simpson’s face is better known than that of the head of the UN.

Most designers stress the need for icons not to visually interfere with the main task a person performs on screen. Peter Needham, ISSC Australia Manager of GraFXlab, which is the doing the touch screen design for the Sydney Olympics, says that icon design for IBM means clean and simple. “IBM has a policy of no more than seven icons on the screen, and the use of pale yellows and greys for icon colour.”

Web Design
For designers, the hottest thing at the moment is the “web”. A long time ago you were either off or on the bus. Now you’re either online, e-mailing (using
Apple’s new Copland interface will have undergone “thousands of hours of usability testing” by the time it is released next year.

Welcome to Object World Australia ’95

August 1-4. Convention Centre. Darling Harbour. Sydney Australia

Welcome to Object World Australia ’95, held in early August.

Sulphuric Solutions created this web Home Page to advertise and provide daily information for conference delegates attending the Object World Australia ’95 conference and exhibition held in early August.

URL is http://www.ozemail.com.au:80/objectworld

When designing interfaces for public access, the most immediate concern is to ensure the presentation is simple, the functionality is obvious and the path to the information is the shortest possible. The prevailing design premise is that anyone will be able to approach the screen and with no prior knowledge guide themselves through the programme. The design approach was to use the motif of “finger button” which incorporates a banner title in its length, ending with a “Fingernail” icon. Touching on the icon leads to information presented as text and video.

Tim Langford Graphic Artist. ISSCA Australia
Electronic mail, or net surfing (jumping from one web site to another). The promise of electronic publishing and marketing on the web has the power to make anyone engage in hyperbole. For example, I write this article for Cinema Papers and X number of people can read it. I put the article on the web, anyone connected to the worldwide web can read it. What’s the enticement to entice people into a virtual reality, increased communication bandwidth to allow more complex designs to be easily made web sites to evolve, as the online technology evolves, so an appreciation of what the technology is capable of is essential. That’s why we created our WebForce authoring software.

Another advantage of electronic publishing is the ability to author web material from anywhere. The company Sulphuric Solutions is a web-authoring business and consultancy currently operating from offices on the Central Coast and in Canberra. Debbie Smith, Project Coordinator for Sulphuric Solutions, relates that all its “page and system creation is done remotely. During the development of a web system or page, the client can preview and review the upcoming site via the web”. Web material is either posted or e-mailed by the client to Sulphuric Solutions and the company stays in touch with its customers by telephone, e-mail or fax.

Final Pics

There remains more to be said and shown on screen design. Concepts of virtual reality, increased communication bandwidth to allow more complex designs to easily travel over the web, interactive television, game design, new public display and presentations, animation and intelligent software agents to navigate a multimedia disc or a network are on the agenda.

Screen design is a balancing act between the ability or understanding to the computer code that makes it happen, graphic design skills, a sense of marketing, an understanding for what the people want (usability testing), and an eye to what the technology can consistently and reasonably do.

As a parting note, Jakob Nielsen tells the story that the present-day keyboard (and, for that matter, the key pad of the touch-dial phones) was designed somewhat backwards. It seems that when typewriters were developing, a more useful keyboard than the present QWERTY would have allowed operators to type in words so fast that the then mechanical keys would have regularly jammed. To solve the problem, the QWERTY layout was adopted. The other part of the story is the layout allowed sales people to type the word “typewriter” more quickly: the rumour is that when touch dialling was first introduced the switches in the phone network would never have been able to keep up if people could quickly dial in a number, so they designed the keypad to slow people down.

My sincere appreciation for the cooperation and time of all those involved in this story.
The keyboard and the keypad of the touch dial phones were designed to stop people typing or dialling too quickly. A more useful keyboard than the present QWERTY design would have allowed operators to type in words so fast, that the then mechanical keys would have regularly jammed. The touch phone keypad, was designed to stop people dialling faster than the then capacity of switches in the phone network could handle. Yet these are the way people access the information age.

Addressing a conference last April, David Court editor of the Content Newsletter gave his take on the future for new media. Court concluded that whatever format or delivery medium was used for new media, “we’ll all be watching screens of some description”.

The forecast is that 1.4 million computers will be sold in Australia this year. A Special Report on Technology in the Small Business Sector by Yellow Pages Australia stated that “nearly three-quarters [of small business] or 71 per cent have a desktop computer”.

The Special Report went on to state “close to a third, 30 per cent, own a modem, 26 per cent have a computer equipped with a CD-ROM drive and 71 per cent own a mobile phone”. Added to this popularity for online services.

These figures indicate that the television set and the home seriously challenged by telecommunications (traditionally by the phone).
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Watch what you're doing, and panic early...

Dominic Case looks at the highlights and issues of the recent SMPTE Conference, while Benita Carey examines the changing role of the assistant editor.

SMPTE '95 Conference Signals a Move Back to Film

Dominic Case

Filmmakers attending this year's SMPTE exhibition (Darling Harbour, July) might be forgiven for thinking that the rout is now complete. Nothing - but nothing - with sprockets was on show this time. But tape operators have no need to be complacent either, as the most noticeable trend was the number of disc-based editing and computer-effects systems.

Although film wasn't to be seen, there was plenty of interest in film at the concurrent conference. Six half-day seminars (instead of the traditional individual papers) dealt with a selection of topical questions: the technology being used for Pay-TV; developments in video file servers for television stations; compression and multimedia (the ubiquitous MPEG2); widescreen television (here the interface with film becomes crucial, as television programme-makers become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the different screen shapes filmmakers have worked with for 40 years); the issues surrounding non-linear editing; and high-resolution digital effects for film.

There were record attendances at each seminar, with more than 300 delegates registering for most sessions.

But what about the hardware? Kodak's absence from the exhibition last year seems to have sent a strong signal that Australia's future was not in film (surely not what we normally hear from Kodak), but the real reason was that, in view of the planned smaller size of the 1995 show, the two major film equipment exhibitors from last year - Sammy's/Barry's and Lemac - decided to stage their own mini-exhibits elsewhere. Each staged an "at-home" at their respective warehouses across the harbour in Artarmon.

John Barry's showed the latest Arri lighting, with units up to 20kW, as well as its range of tripods, lenses, batteries ... and Arri cameras, of course. APA Productions was also on hand to demonstrate D-Vision non-linear editing - a credible lower-cost alternative to the more well-established Avid and Lightworks. A couple of blocks away, Lemac displayed an Arri 353 camera fitted with the Aaton timecode system, the Thorne 1657 video camera (switchable between 16x9 and 4x3), as well as much other equipment including Cinema Products' Steadicam systems, demonstrated by CP's Product Manager, James Livingstone.

Back at the main show in Darling Harbour, the exhibition, although smaller than before, wasn't short of new products. Avid Australia launched itself with a demonstration of its latest Media 8000 system, featuring colour grading and powerful 3D graphics and effects. Yes, this is a non-linear editor! Other stands were full of non-linear editing systems - they seem to have become the word processors of the post-production business. Bridging the gap between linear and non-linear - and flying the Australian flag - was Digitez with its hybrid Shotlister Non-Linear, Direct-to- Disk Editing system, and the dAVE disc recorder. This clever approach allows the user to start editing from tape. Raw material remains on tape, and is only transferred to the hard disk when an assembly edit is made. Once there, one has all the fine cutting facilities of conventional non-linear editing, but the disc isn't filled up with unwanted trims. Much less disc storage is needed.

Silicon Graphics work stations abounded, running a range of software applications and technological innovations. A cm e P h o to V id e o , for example, showed its latest 3D animation package with a demonstration of its latest Media 8000 system, featuring colour grading and powerful 3D graphics and effects. Yes, this is a non-linear editor! Other stands were full of non-linear editing systems - they seem to have become the word processors of the post-production business. Bridging the gap between linear and non-linear - and flying the Australian flag - was Digitez with its hybrid Shotlister Non-Linear, Direct-to-

Computer Effects, Digital Masters, Future Reality, ISMT and Visualisation Solutions, as well as Silicon Studios. The other big kids on the digital block, Kodak and Quantel, both took the opportunity of SMPTE to announce a major installation in Sydney. Film resolution digital scanning, image manipulation and film recording is coming soon to a site near you, with Animal Logic opting for the Quantel Domino (Digital Opticals for Movies) system, and the Kodak Cineon system being chosen for a joint venture between Atlab and Acme Photo Video.

Work from both digital systems was shown at one of the seminars run during the week. Entitled "Featuring Digital Effects on Film", it brought together suppliers, and overseas and local experts to review the features of the two principal systems, and also to examine the challenges posed in developing a strong effects industry in Australia. The session was chaired by Kodak's Tim Waygood, who noted the generational change between the experienced optical printer's in the labs, and the much younger artists using computer graphics. Would the burgeoning Australian industry be able to afford for this next generation to achieve the same depth of experience as their predecessors?

Dale Duguid from Photon Stockman (whose paper, "The Digital Freight Train", appeared in Cinema Papers, no. 104) observed that Australia's flair for innovation and improvisation had led to a pride in achieving specified standards for the minimum cost or effort - but, perversely, the achievement never soared beyond that minimum either. He stressed that effects should be determined by the "D'artist", not by the hardware, and advised them to vary the techniques used from scene to scene - like conjurers - to avoid using the same trick too often. Duguid noted that nearly all the work done by Photon Stockman was for co- or U.S. productions, and urged local producers to grasp the technology now. He pointed out that there was scope for digital work in any film, and countered the common response: 'But there are no spaceships in my picture: it's not an effects movie, it's about a suburban couple in Frankston coping with a prostate problem.' Think again. Watch the credits on the next suburban couple picture you see from overseas. Increasingly, there are credits for digital effects artists in everything.

Peter Doyle, currently with Arri Digital Film in Germany (the first European Cinesite), has worked in Australia at AAV and developed Cineon with Kodak. He spoke of the differences between effects for television commercials, where speed is essential, but fast cutting and television resolution hide a lot, and effects for feature films, where the audience doesn't care how long the effect
took to render as long as it works. He also highlighted the importance of a broad perspective on techniques. In removing a scratch, for example, a conventional video house would go straight to a digital transfer and start painting out the scratch frame by frame. A better approach would be for a film technician to examine the scratch: maybe a rewash or a wet-gate print would remove or reduce the scratch, or it could be polished out. The lower-cost solutions are probably more satisfactory, but the video house — lacking its own film equipment and technicians — is bound to promote the techniques and equipment that it has available in-house.

Doyle showed a superb clip — a gothic and sensual primal scream sequence from an unnamed German feature film — which also underlined the power of a strong soundtrack (with plenty of use of the surround track) in achieving a dramatic effect. This was followed by a presentation by Steve Roberts of NYPD in Sydney, who explained his company’s approach to software design and application, having produced digital effects for a number of recent Australian features, most recently Billy’s Holiday (Richard Wherrett). Roberts ran a clip from a Kelloggs commercial.

Peter Owen, a director of Quantel, explained the technical configuration of the Domino system, claiming 6K resolution (6144 pixels from side to side) at the input scanning stage. He noted, however, that resolution was only as effective as the original source material, and, while a static resolution chart may demand the full resolution of the system — a massive load on scanning time, processing time and data storage — shots with camera or image movement, or on coarser-grained stocks, frequently contained no information finer than ordinary television resolution. After a demonstration of some shots from various users of the system, in which “before” and “after” sections were intercut and showed excellent matching, Owen showed a reel of restoration work produced for the “BAFTA/LA – 100 years of British Cinema” presentation. This tightly-cut collage of highlights from the British film industry — from Henry V (Laurence Olivier, 1945) and The Dam Busters (Michael Anderson, 1954) to Charitiats of Fire (Hugh Hudson, 1981) and A Fish Called Wanda (Charles Crichton, 1988) — required nothing more than colour restoration, descratching and dirt removal, but this resulted in “new print” quality throughout — a considerable enhancement to viewing.

The next local speaker, Ian Johnson of Conja, listed some of the recent advances made by his company: techniques of morphing, image stabilization and 3D painting. He also dealt with techniques of motion capture, where actors’ movements can be recorded as a series of white dots attached to knees, ankles, toes, etc., and the movements then followed exactly by digitally-drawn characters. This speeds up the process and allows for very subtle and precise movements, as well as for the possibility of applying different takes to the digital images.

Kodak’s Glenn Kennel, a principal architect of Cineon, was on next. He explained some of the features of the Cineon process, arguing that, despite Dale Duguid’s comments about conjurers, digital effects are not magic, but hard work. Film images are scanned in (to a resolution of 4K, and ten-bit log tone depth) using the Genesis or Lightning film scanners. Image processing can be carried out in a range of resolutions, so that a “draft” output can be obtained relatively quickly for approval prior to rendering at full 4K resolution and final compositing.

The Cineon system outputs onto Kodak intermediate 5244 film, unlike the other systems which use camera negative, usually fine-grained 5245. Some critics have complained that this automatically introduces a “dupe” look to all effects shots, but Kennel ran a comparison demonstration, showing typical Kodak test scenes and colour charts on original negative and then via Cineon. Except for a very slight difference in some dark green tones, I found it very difficult to pick the point at which the Cineon output negative was spliced onto the raw original.

The last speaker was Zareh Nalbandian, Director of Animal Logic and also of Animal Logic Research, whose Eddie software is acknowledged to be one of the world’s principal 3D animation tools. He acknowledged the need for the Australian industry to make a serious investment in digital effects, and announced that Animal Logic was to install a Domino system. Two clips were shown: the main titles for Gillian Armstrong’s Little Women (1994) and for Chris Noonan’s Babe – the Gallant Pig. Nalbandian explained that, for this type of work, digital techniques were combined with traditional optical printing methods wherever each was appropriate.

Once again, screening Babe highlighted the difficulties faced by the local industry. This production includes more digital-effects work than any other film produced in Australia (the crew’s working title was said to be “Jurassic Pork”), and yet only the main title was done in Australia, other work going to Rythm & Hues in the United States.

A discussion followed the presentations, moderated by producer and effects specialist Andrew Mason. Producer Sandra Alexander asked about the relationship between the producer and the digital effects team. Whom should she talk to? How does one set up the process? Peter Doyle compared the situation in the U.S., where effects houses took on the complete job and effectively became the effects supervi-
Non-linear editing, the solution—or the problem

There are ever-increasing concerns about “the way post-production is going”—enough to prompt editors to draw the wagons up into a circle and form a guild. It’s not often, though, that the specific concerns of the assistant editors are considered. Editor Benita Carey, drawing on long experience as an assistant, presented the following paper at the non-linear seminar at the SMPTE conference.

Some handy hints for those aspiring assistant editors when learning on film:
1. Don’t scratch the film;
2. Don’t let the film unspool off the core; and
3. Label picture rolls with a blue texta and sound rolls with a red one.

Some handy hints for those aspiring assistant editors when learning on [an Avid] non-linear system:
1. If you have used your projects bin setting to select double clicking a clip to load it into the source monitor, you can open a pop-up window by holding down the option key while double clicking;
2. To make a gallery permanent, use the make permanent command. The gallery will continue to exist until you delete it with the lightning bolt; and
3. If you should make a mistake at any point, your negative may be cut in the wrong place.

And those handy little hints don’t just stop there… We spend an awful lot of time reading manuals!!

At this point, before everyone gets me wrong, I should say that I absolutely love Avid! But that is because the job on which I am currently employed involves not only the loading of rushes into Avid, but also assembly editing. In fact, I have always loved Avid, I just haven’t really loved the way I’ve had to work on it!

This is a rare occasion where an assistant editor’s viewpoint has been sought in a public forum, and for this reason I have spoken to many assistant editors—all with quite different back-grounds, but all now working as assistants on non-linear systems. This research has shown to be surprisingly consistent throughout, with strong feeling expressed by all assistant editors with whom I spoke. [...] The role of the assistant editor is not just changing or evolving, it is entirely different. It is hard to say just how different and it is difficult to make blanket statements, as nowadays every job is entirely different, with different gear and different work paths. The conditions of a job often come down to whom you are working with and for.

Unfortunately, I will have to make some comparisons between film days and non-linear days. I know that our film days are numbered and non-linear is here to stay, but the differences between the two are largely the cause of our “grappling”—and therefore these comparisons should be discussed.

First and foremost, there is the relationship between editor and assistant.

In the “old days,” we assisted an editor who had a thorough knowledge of the job. We were doing as they too had done in the past. In these “non-linear days”, the editor has very little knowledge of the job done by the assistant (even though they very often share exactly the same piece of equipment), and this leads to the fear of the unknown element!

We feel that the editor chooses the assistant for different reasons now than they did in the past, and is happy to go with someone who will just keep the computer running smoothly. (That is, of course, if they get to choose an assistant, as many facilities have on-staff assistant editors, rendering the old “long-term, built-up relationship” between editor and assistant a thing of the past.)

This has repercussions for the assistant editor, too. In the past, we looked to the editor for advice and help, and whom do we turn to now?

A Hard Day’s Night

The general running and expense of non-linear systems means that very often you are sharing gear, not only with the editor, but often with other productions. This leads to possible permanent night-shift jobs (where there may be no technical support, so you may spend hours in the middle of the night trying to solve a problem). The physical, psychological and social repercussions here are enormous, not to mention what it has done to the traditional editor-assistant editor relationship—but so far employers don’t seem to have a problem with it!

We have always worked long hours and into the night when we’ve needed to, but, if we wanted to work night shift, we could have chosen to be security guards where at least we’d have a weapon.

When researching this, I spoke to one editor who had assistants who worked only on the night shift. He told me how increasingly bitter they had become.

The training aspect

On non-linear systems, assistants are often shoved in and told “Here, learn this”, and given enormous responsibilities with little experience. With never-ending software and hardware updates, something is always changing, and the set-up is different on every job. This is really “learning from your mistakes”—and in the non-linear world that is scary!

For those of us from film training, this is very different. We learnt our art of film-handling thoroughly and worked our way up to it, and the people we were working with had the answers through their own experience.

This next point is a little subjective, because it still depends largely on the relationship between assistant editor and
editor, but all assistants I spoke to expressed the following:

There's not much time spent with the editor, often due to night shifts or working on different gear - when synchroning, for instance - in an entirely different room.

As a result, there is little or no learning of the craft of editing, and little collaboration on the cut. Indeed, many said that the first time they saw the cut was when they were doing the auto assembly!

**Do-it-yourself editing**

Of course, if you can get onto the non-linear system, you can always cut your own version without upsetting anything the editor has done. No one I spoke to has managed to do much of this.

At present, although I'm sure this will change in time, we seem to have two types of assistant editor in the industry:

There is a feeling that many of the assistant editors employed on non-linear systems have a solid computer background but lack a thorough knowledge of the shoot, film, negative, processing, crew politics, lab liaison, and inter-relationships between director, editor, producer, and other crew members - a knowledge that was built up in the past over years of training.

These are not unusual, but frustrating, as the responsibility for spotting problems that may have occurred on the shoot or at telecine, and, once again, the assistant may not have the experience to spot these.

Now, I know that some productions are using splicing to fix mistakes, although they are cutting non-linear, and others have collective rushes screenings on an SP, but this is not necessarily the norm. It seems to be more convenient to view rushes at home on VHS.

**Changing responsibilities**

Firstly, rushes. In the old days, workprint was viewed first thing in the morning by highly-specialized lab staff who checked and made comments on various aspects of what they saw. Lab reports were read by a number of people on the crew. As a result of neg-to-tape transfers, the number of people who get to view rushes of any acceptable quality has been greatly reduced.

On some productions, the assistant editor may be the only one to view rushes on an SP beta tape, while the crew may view VHS dubs, and the editor sees only the digitized picture.

Unfortunately, the responsibility for this "stuff up" will most likely lie with the assistant.

**Lastly, the economic factor**

Non-linear editing systems require fewer assistants.

On features which might have had two or three assistants or more, there is now one. In a commercial post-production house where I worked a few years ago, there were three editors, four Steinbecks and four assistants - and we were flat out. The same company today has three editors and three non-linear systems.

And with the advent of telecineme, synching systems being used more often for non-linear systems, we will need no synchronizing assistant. Will all synch end up looking like it does in the commercials we are seeing on air at present?

Actually, there is one other point we would all like to make about non-linear systems: No Trims!

There is little doubt at the moment for assistant editors - that is, those who want to work on a creative apprenticeship to learn the craft of picture editing - non-linear editing systems are preventing more problems than solutions. Some of these are certainly short-term transitional ones, but others are not.

Are the non-linear assistant editors of today and tomorrow going to become editors, or will they be a new breed of employees interested in computers rather than creative filmmaking, who are happy to compromise on many aspects of life and work through the midnight hours?

Or, are we going to work towards change, where an assistant editor has a work station in a neighbouring room to the editor, and not only trains on the system, but, with the editor's guidance, learns the wonderful art of film editing?
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TECHNOBITS  Dominic Case

There seem to be some technical topics that create confusion whenever they come up – and they seem to come up again and again. This will be an occasional column in Cinema Papers’ “Technicalities” that sets out to cast a bit of light in some of these areas. Although Cinema Papers, as a bi-monthly, probably works a bit too slowly to offer a “Q & A” service, “Technicalities” would welcome correspondence in this area. Please feel free to raise topics that you feel need elucidation.

THIS ISSUE: timecodes and running speeds. The thorny problem of synchronizing this image with that EDL and the other sound seems as good a one as any to launch a new department.

Counting the Frames

Many editing systems boast that they are totally transparent to timecode: the editor never needs to worry about numbers, and so is completely free to get on with the creative job of editing. Fine. The same is true of telecine transfers, and of sound editing and mixing. Many productions are completed just as the manufacturers claim, with machines taking care of the numbers. But many aren’t. The differences between PAL and NTSC timecode, and the shades of difference in drop-frame, 24 fps transfers, and different styles of Edit Decision List or EDL, continue to create headaches for the technicians trying to match unmatched systems. Often a decision taken early in a production can lead to unnecessary – and expensive – problems later on.

So what’s it all about?

Timecode originally counted just video frames. In PAL systems, there are exactly 25 frames per second, and so timecode counts up to 23 hours, 59 minutes, 59 seconds and 24 frames. In NTSC, the frame count goes up to 29, as there are 30 frames per second.

So, by subtracting the starting timecode of an event or a programme from the finishing timecode, the running length or duration is easy to find. (The start is defined as the first frame after the end cut – not the last frame before the cut as in film edge numbers).

PAL Transfers

When film is shot and transferred to PAL video at 25 frames per second, there is an exact correspondence. Each frame of film relates to one frame of video. Timecode measures both, and runs exactly true to the clock. There is no ambiguity – unless, that is, you shoot your film at 24 frames per second, and your sound runs at that speed, or you are coming back to film for a cinema release, in which case it will be projected at 24 fps.

Transferring rushes negative to video for a non-linear (or off-line) edit can be done at 24 or 25 fps. At 24 fps, sound can be synched onto the rushes cassettes, the digital master, or directly into the non-linear system, at its true speed, and with meaningful timecode. An auto-compile of the edited result comes back onto video cassette at the correct speed, ready for sound tracklaying and mixing. The only drawback is that the video image frames don’t exactly match the film image frames. The telecine has had to find 25 frames to fill one second of PAL videotape, where only 24 are provided on the film. The answer – one frame each second is repeated. (Strictly one field, or half-frames, is repeated every half second.) This results in the familiar, but very slight, hesitation seen in very smooth pans or image movements when this technique is used. It also means that the non-linear editor may choose to cut on a frame that strictly doesn’t exist in the film, resulting in marginal compromises in the film matchback.

The major non-linear systems have all evolved an answer to this latter problem. Digital computer displays can display images at any frame rate they like, and are not beholden to the fixed 25 fps of PAL television. In “film mode”, scenes are therefore played at 24 fps, with no inserted frame. Time unfolds at the correct rate, and sound remains in sync. Naturally, if a video cassette auto conform is made of the final edit, it must run at 25 fps, and so the extra frame can be automatically inserted, to maintain the correct running speed.

Synchronizing the Sound

This is simple for 25 fps pictures, but takes a little more planning at 24 fps. For a non-linear edit, there are two good methods. Method one involves transferring both picture and sound at 25 fps, synchronizing them at the telecine stage. This works well using systems such as Aaton’s timecode on film. Sound and picture are digitized together into the non-linear system, which can then play back at 24 fps – the correct running speed. This is simple and straightforward and makes for simple negative matching, but causes difficulties in sound editing, as both the picture and sound data and the timecode lists from the non-linear system relate to fast-running transfers.

In method two, image is transferred first on telecine at 25 fps, and digitized. Sound is digitized at its correct speed (24fps), and synchronized at the digitizing stage. It runs in sync with the picture in the film mode of the non-linear system, at film speed. Because the sound is at film speed, non-linear sound editing can flow directly on from picture editing, using the same digital audio. The edited image can be output either at 24 fps (with the extra frame per second inserted for PAL) as a guide for audio mixing, or at 25 fps as a frame exact guide for negative cutting.

Because sound runs continuously rather than frame by frame, timecode has a slightly different meaning. Digital sound – for example, on DAT – can create its own timecode according to the running speed of the track at the time, simply by counting a given number of samples per second. So, in digital format, timecode can be what you want it to be. A powerful simplification, used wisely; another source of confusion otherwise.

NTSC presents a slight problem in durations, because the American television system runs not on a true 30 frames per second, but strictly at 29.97 fps. When the clock shows one hour exactly, timecode still has 3.6 seconds to run.

NTSC Drop Frame

NTSC presents a slight problem in durations, because the American television system runs not at a true 30 frames per second, but strictly at 29.97 fps. When the clock shows one hour exactly, timecode still has 3.6 seconds to run. This is a serious shortfall, as television programmers would find themselves either cutting the final credit from a drama show, or losing commercial time, in order to synchronize with network switching.

So, the solution is provided by changing the counting system. No frames are added or removed, but, every complete minute, two frame numbers are skipped. Timecode goes straight from 00:04:59:29 to 00:05:00:02, for example. This rule applies on minutes one to nine, but not on even ten minute codes. Drop frame timecode thus stays faithful to the clock, but moves apart from non-drop frame code by eighteen frames every ten minutes.

Film Timecode

Some camera systems – notably Aaton – are capable of exposing a digital timecode count on to the negative as it runs through the camera. The timecode generator for the camera is locked to any other camera covering the same shot, and to the sound recorder, conveniently providing a key to synchronize image and sound throughout post-production. In theory, no slate is needed. This may be convenient (for example, in wildlife documentary work), although editors often like to see a visual reference to label each shot.

When filming at 24 fps, naturally the timecode system follows the same system. This is different from video timecode, which follows the PAL requirement of 25 frames per second. Another noticeable difference is that a video roll of transferred rushes will normally have timecode running continuously from start to finish – corresponding to the running duration of the tape or of the film. However, in-camera timecode, often described as time-of-day code, follows the clock. At a camera stop, the clock still keeps going, so that the timecode sequence is interrupted between takes.

List management systems usually track both video and film timecode, where both exist, and allow EDLs to be traced back to the original shot.

Clearly, there is no single selection of timecode and frame rate procedures that suits all projects. Usually, the ideal decision in one area leads to significant compromises in other areas. It is doubtful if any one individual understands all the requirements of every area of production and post-production. The lesson? Before committing to anything, talk to everyone: sound, camera, telecine, picture editing and sound post-production. Once more: before you commit to anything. The answers you get may well disagree. Your job is simply to pick the solution that fits your own particular needs. Good luck.

NB: My thanks to Steven Smith of Frameworks, and Ian McLaughlin of Soundform, for recent illuminating conversations on some of the points mentioned here.
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CINEMA PAPERS • OCTOBER 1995
Australia’s First Films: Under Southern Skies (1902)

In part 15 of this series, Chris Long examines the largely unheralded and unrecorded two-hour documentary of Australia’s early history.

n the rush to hype The Story of the Kelly Gang (1906) as “the world’s first feature film” [sic], earlier Australian feature-length film presentations have been ignored. Melbourne’s Salvation Army Limelight Department first exhibited its two-hour documentary Under Southern Skies in August 1902. With 200 slides and 6000 feet (100 mins) of film, this illustrated lecture traced the whole history of Australia from exploration to Federation. Under Southern Skies was by far the longest and most complex Australian screen presentation made up to that time. Its absence from previous local film chronicles shows that this period of production has been under-researched.

Changes after “Soldiers of the Cross” (1900)

Before permanent cinemas existed in Australia, the Salvation Army was almost uniquely equipped to establish a commercially-viable film business. It already had an extensive network of suitable halls throughout Australasia. Its musical emphasis placed appropriate screen accommodation (and accompanists) at their disposal. Above all other considerations, the Army was a young and radical organization without prejudice against new media – and it had the most experienced film production unit in Australasia.1

Contrary to popular belief, Australian Salvation Army film production did not decline after it made “Soldiers of the Cross” (1900). The film’s author, the charismatic Herbert Booth, resigned as the Army’s Australasian Commissioner in 1901, but his replacement was no less supportive of the Limelight Department’s activities.

The new Australasian Salvation Army Commissioner was Thomas McKie (c. 1861-1937), who arrived here from a previous command in Germany in November 1901.2 McKie knew that he was no match for Booth as an author or an orator, but he was an excellent businessman. He saw the Limelight Department as a valuable revenue producer to support the Army’s social and religious work. He took no active rôle in scripting or directing Limelight Department films, but gave the Department the full support of the Salvation Army hierarchy to make the films commercially viable. Under McKie’s regime, the production emphasis shifted from religious epics to commercial and documentary commissions. The profits, the amount of film produced and the number of exhibition units all steadily increased. At that time, Australia’s film production saga was little more than a chronicle of the Salvation Army Limelight Department’s work.

Planning Under Southern Skies

By July 1901, the Limelight Department had completed three major government-funded commissions approaching feature length. For the New South Wales government it produced The Inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth (January 1901).3 Afterwards, the Department covered the 1901 Royal Visit for the governments of Victoria (May 1901)4 and New Zealand (June 1901).5 The accumulated profit from these commissions permitted the Department to purchase an impressive new production outfit.6 It undoubtedly convinced the Salvation Army’s hierarchy of the potential goldmine to be tapped from the Department’s secular film productions. With the businessman McKie at the Salvation Army’s helm, the Limelight Department’s chief, Joseph Perry (1864-1943), had unprecedented freedom to shoot any subject of his choosing.

A few films of rural locales were shot during the tours of Salvation Army “Biorama” film exhibition units after its debut in October 1900.7 Perry saw that the photo opportunities while on tour would permit him to progressively assemble a film “library” of Australia’s widely-spread natural and industrial attractions, with educational, patriotic and fund-raising potential.

The man who stepped into Herbert Booth’s shoes at this time as scriptwriter for the Limelight Depart
Late in 1901, Peart arranged to direct two Limelight Department productions. The first, "Salvation By Limelight", consisted only of "life-model" slides of biblical stories shot at the Limelight Department’s Melbourne studio.17 The beautifully-coloured slides of "The Syro-Phoenician Woman", "The Deliverance of Peter from Prison", "The Raising of Jairus’ Daughter", "The Widow of Nain", "Healing the Blind Man" and "The Raising of Lazarus" premiered at Richmond on 20 July 1902.18 They survive in the collection of the Adelaide Salvation Army historian, David Morris. No motion pictures were involved, so that this need not concern us further.

Peart’s other illustrated lecture was the historical documentary presentation, Under Southern Skies, a far more complex undertaking.

Using the Salvation Army’s commissioned film of the Federation festivities as a basis, from September 1901 Peart allowed cameraman Joseph Perry to step up film production activity during tours of his “Biorama” Company. Characteristic scenes of Australian life, industry and fauna were systematically filmed whenever opportunities arose. Their ambitious project collectively reflected upon the identity of the newly-Federated nation. Most of the six Australian states were eventually included in their filming. In their final assemblage, these scenes provided a narrative build-up to the signing of the Federation documents at Sydney’s Centennial Park on 1 January 1901.19 After Governor-General Hopetoun was seen taking the oath and kissing the Bible, a closing title slide provided a subtle religious “punch-line”: “righteousness exalth a nation” (“Proverbs”, 14:34).20 Perry’s filming for Under Southern Skies began in earnest on a Queensland Biorama Company tour following the initial appearance at Warwick on 6 September 1901. Biorama Company member John Brodie published regular accounts of the travels in the Melbourne War Cry, commencing on 5 October 1901, often giving details of the films they shot.21

The tour and filmmaking continued into New South Wales at Glen Innes on 24 October 1901, returning to Melbourne via Newcastle on 12 November 1901.22 Further film for Under Southern Skies was shot by Perry on Biorama Company tours of Victoria (January-April 1902) and Queensland (April-July 1902), for which regular reports were published in the War Cry by Company member (Miss) Lieutenant C. H. Crothers.23

Segments produced for Under Southern Skies

1 East Street, Rockhampton
Shot c.18 September 1901. Perry published his intention to shoot this in the Rockhampton Evening Record, 17 September 1901, p. 2.

2 Mount Morgan Gold Mine (Queensland): Setting Explosives at the Face
Shot 18 September 1901. War Cry, 26 October 1901, p. 3, states, “during our [Biorama Company] tour over the mine, the Major [Perry] took two kinematographic pictures. One subject was two miners drilling a hole preparatory to inserting a charge [...]”.

3 Mount Morgan Gold Mine (Queensland): Miners at the Face and Trucking Away Stone
Shot 18 September 1901. War Cry, 26 October 1901, p. 3, states “[the second Mount Morgan film is] a number of men working at the face of the Mount, and trucking away stone”.

4 Bowen (Queensland): A Kangaroo
Shot 23 September 1901. War Cry, 2 November 1901, p. 10, states, “The Major [Perry] took me out for dinner to his billet – Mr. Edgerton’s – where there was a kangaroo. After we had partaken of the good things provided we made tracks for the kangaroo’s den, and took a kinematographic view of ‘joey’. We took him in a variety of attitudes – eating bread, drinking milk, washing his face and doing a series of high jumps with the ‘boss’ hanging on to his tail – a rather unique picture in its way.”

5 Hughenden Sheep Station (Queensland): Unborn Sheep
Shot 28 September 1901. War Cry, 2 November 1901, p. 10, states, “On Saturday, as the train did not leave for Charters Towers till eleven a.m., we were permitted to visit Hughenden sheep station. The manager – Mr. Hammer – very kindly and courteously showed us over the premises, and the Major [Perry] took three kinematographic views [including this one].”

6 Hughenden Sheep Station (Queensland): Shorn Sheep
Shot 28 September 1901. First mentioned in War Cry, 2 November 1901, p. 10.

7 Hughenden Sheep Station (Queensland): Men Shearing by Machinery
Shot 28 September 1901. First mentioned in War Cry, 2 November 1901, p. 10.

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"The Saro-Phoenecian Woman" story from "Salvation by Limelight" (1902). The slide was produced in the Limelight Department's Melbourne studios. Courtesy of Emery David Morris, Salvation Army, Adelaide. (Refer "St Mark", 7:24-30; "Matthew", 15:21-26.)

"The Raising of Lazarus" from "Salvation by Limelight". Slide produced in Melbourne’s Limelight Department studios. Courtesy of Emery David Morris, Salvation Army, Adelaide. (Refer "St John", chapter 11.)


Colonel William Peart (1859-1948), left, scriptwriter from The Victory, 25 April 1903, p. 2 (Fig. A), and 16 May 1903, p. 16 (Fig. B).

19 Bayswater Boys’ Home: Sheep on the Farm

Showed by Perry at Richmond (Victoria), 5 February 1902. Possibly shown 26 December 1901. See War Cry, 15 February 1902, p. 7.

20 Bayswater Boys’ Home: The Harvester at Work

Showed by Perry at Richmond (Victoria), 5 February 1902. Possibly shown 26 December 1901. See War Cry, 15 February 1902, p. 7.

21 A West Australian Tree-Chopping Incident

Showed by Perry at Richmond (Victoria), 5 February 1902. Possibly shot in August 1899. See War Cry, 23 September 1899, p. 7; 15 February 1902, p. 7.

22 Street Scenes of the Australian State Capitals (series)

Showed by Perry at Richmond (Victoria), 5 February 1902. See War Cry, 15 February 1902, p. 7.

23 Outtrim, Victoria – Two Coal Mining Films

Shot c. 22-4 March 1902. War Cry, 12 April 1902, p. 15, states, "two local kinematograph pictures, taken by Major Perry while on the visit, were shown, and were received by the audience with great enthusiasm". Outtrim was a coal mining town in Gippsland, Victoria, 15 miles South of Korumburra, on a spur line from the South Gippsland Railway. It ceased to exist when government coal mines were opened at Wonthaggi around 1910. A weekly paper was published as the Outtrim News in 1902, which may have more information on the films. Approaches to the State Library of Victoria for access to March 1902 issues of the paper have been denied.

24 Port Fairy, Victoria – Barracouta Fishing Industry (second series)

Shot c. 29 March 1902. After taking a few initial shots of the Port Fairy
fishing fleet manoeuvring on the Moyne River in October 1900, Perry decided to expand the coverage into a full-length fishing industry documentary. Port Fairy Gazette, 28 March 1902, published Perry's intention to shoot the coverage. On 4 April 1902, the same paper said that he'd been "engaged in adding to his stock of films". War Cry, 12 April 1902, p. 13, states, "whilst at Port Fairy the Major [Perry] was enabled to secure some very fine kinematograph pictures of the fishermen unloading and packing fish, also pictures of the fishing fleet and other views, which will be reproduced in due season". Warrnambool Standard, 20 August 1902, said that the films included "Port Fairy fishing boats manoeuvring in the open sea in a fresh breeze after baracouta. The scene which elicited rounds of applause appropriately closed with the landing of the baracouta on the wharf at Port Fairy." The Hamilton Spectator, 18 August 1903, lists "boats going down the Moyne River, manoeuvring in the bay, returning and throwing out 20 baskets of fish on the wharf!". The Broadford Courier, 11 September 1903, gives the length of the film as 400 feet (7 minutes).

25 Barron Falls, near Cairns (Queensland)

Shot c. 1 May 1902. The War Cry, 5 July 1902, p. 11, states, "while at Cairns a visit was paid to the Barron Falls. This picturesque spot is beyond description; it is undoubtedly the most beautiful place yet visited in Queensland. Adjutant Knight was able to secure some fine pictures with his camera." This reference may be to "still" photography, rather than a film.

Note: Many other film segments were included in Under Southern Skies for which newspaper references have not yet been found. These include films dealing with Australian forestry; gold panning and sluicing in Victoria; cattle industry; mines at Ballarat and Bendigo; dairying and poultry farming; banana growing and shipping in Queensland.

Films unrelated to Under Southern Skies

Other Salvation Army productions from the period June 1901-August 1902 are listed below:

1 Fire At Anthony Hordern's Palace Emporium, Sydney
Shot 10 July 1901. The film showed "engines and firemen at work at Hordern's fire in Sydney" (vide Queensland Times, Ipswich, 17 October 1901), and was exhibited by the Biorama Company at Brisbane on 13 October 1901. It may have been produced by A. J. Ferrier of Baker & Rouse Limited, Sydney, as the earliest known reference to it is in its journal, The Australasian Photographic Review, 22 July 1901, p. 23. The film's length was 100 feet (1 min. 40 secs).

2 Slum Work by Salvation Army Officers

3 Arrival of Salvation Army Commissioner Thomas McKie at Spencer Street Railway Station, Melbourne
Shot November 1901. The War Cry, Melbourne, 30 November 1901, p. 8: "The new arrivals were conducted with much difficulty to an open wagenette, and a twisting and clicking sound drew attention to the fact that an up-to-date Army photographer was securing a biograph record of the animated gathering."

4 Visit of Commissioner McKie to Bayswater Boys' Home, Victoria
26 December 1901. The Biorama Company accompanied McKie on this visit, and Perry filmed McKie's reception. The War Cry, 4 January 1902, p. 6: "A pretty little reception followed, the boys afterwards being inspected by our leaders, who in turn were seized by the aviracious Perry for a 'kineo', which things he has on the brain, in the box and the studio [...]." The film was sent straight to their Melbourne studio, processed, and returned for showing the boys on the same night.

5 Staff Captain Stagg at the Melbourne 'People's Palace'
Shown by Perry's Biorama at Richmond, Victoria, 5 February 1902. Possibly the film of Williams directing Melbourne Metropole Unemployed Chopping Wood for their Breakfast wrongly identified. Refer: War Cry, 15 February 1902

6 Reception for Commissioner Howard at Spencer Street Railway Station, Melbourne
Shot by Sidney Cook, September 1902. The War Cry, 13 September 1902, p. 3: "One or two carters obligingly pulled up while Adjunct Cook snatched a living record of the scene with our Commissioner [McKie], the Foreign Secretary [Howard] and Mrs. McKie in or near the buggy, and a crowd of smiling, hurraking officers waving their caps, while the blood-and-fire flag was flying proudly in the sunshine." Howard, the Salvation Army's Foreign Secretary from London, was visiting Australia on a goodwill tour. A possible frame enlargement from the film was published in Melbourne's War Cry, 13 September 1902, p. 3.

A Complex Presentation

Was Under Southern Skies merely a programme of "shorts" rather than an integrated feature presentation? Which came first: Pear's lecture script, or did Pear only write narration to link existing films? We know that most of the films were specifically shot for Under Southern Skies, because advertisements for it stress that "many [films] were recently taken and have never before been exhibited." The War Cry of 8 November 1902 (p. 9) states that "the Colonel [Pear]
A Guide to What's in Stock

Number 1 (January 1995)

Number 2 (February 1995)
Peter Weir, Jenny Funnell, John Cass, Steven Prince, Richard Plancher, Despina Sotiropoulou, Andrew McPeake, J. Smith Robertson, Steven Prince, Nan King, Wendy Smith.

Number 3 (March-April 1995)
Peter Weir, Jenny Funnell, John Cass, Steven Prince, Richard Plancher, Despina Sotiropoulou, Andrew McPeake, J. Smith Robertson, Steven Prince, Nan King, Wendy Smith.

Number 4 (May-June 1995)

Number 5 (July-August 1995)

Number 6 (September-October 1995)

Number 7 (November-December 1995)

Number 8 (January-February 1996)

Number 9 (March-April 1996)

Number 10 (May-June 1996)

Number 11 (July-August 1996)

Number 12 (September-October 1996)

Number 13 (November-December 1996)
That Eye, The Sky is directed with great sensitivity and earnestness.

The film manages for the most part to present the evangelist figure effectively without lapsing into didacticism and portentousness; and it does convey with some force the notion that much suffering, anger and grief has been surmounted by these troubled and courageous characters.

Film

THE YOUNG POISONER’S HANDBOOK


To describe The Young Poisoner’s Handbook as a black comedy is something of a misnomer, not least because it is significantly more black than comic. Sometimes, comedy is entirely absent from this fictionalized account of the life of Graham Young, a man whose passion for chemistry developed into an obsession with fatal poisons, which resulted in several murder convictions and made him a tabloid celebrity.

Set in Britain in the 1950s and ‘60s, the film’s depiction of Young’s (Hugh O’Conor’s) violent, hateful family and his period in an institution for the criminally insane are sensitive portrayals of human tragedy. The gripping drama of Young’s slowly poisoning his unwitting victims places the viewer in the awkward position of vicarious sadism. But the film never loses its slightly offbeat tone, even in the closing scenes, where a funky bass soundtrack accompanies shots of Young’s stumbling along the sidewalk after trying to poison himself. Some of the comic touches are included in period details — the vintage soundtrack and retro interior décor are outstanding — but the main source of black humour is Young’s family.

When Graham is falsely accused of using his mother’s best china for his experiments, it is revealed that his older sister was the culprit, having used a teacup for a pregnancy test, Graham gleefully announces
that she used it to mix up depilatory wax for facial hair. If you didn’t laugh, you would despair at Graham’s being beaten about the head for a crime he didn’t commit.

As Quentin Tarantino has shown, humour frequently slides into place once morals are thrown out. At the cremation of his step-mother, his first victim, Graham comes to the realization that while being a good poisoner involves remaining undetected, becoming a famous one would seem to demand getting caught. Such were my thoughts as I watched my step-mother go up in smoke that day.

Scriptwriting deals with this so black it makes Tarantino look like Walt Disney.

The film includes a disclaimer in the opening credits that all characters, save those in the Young family, are entirely fictitious. Assuming the depiction that all characters, save those in the Young family, are entirely fictitious. Assuming the depiction of Graham’s family in this portrait of ’50s middle-class repression is close to the “truth”, it would appear that director Benjamin Ross and co-writer Jeff Rawle are searching for an involuntary description of Graham’s head, but that it died slowly during his incarceration, not before, as the authorities believed.

As Graham, Hugh O’Connor deftly portrays a wide-eyed innocence crossed with an amoral curiosity, a passionate chemist who is not deterred by the sight of his victims’ slow deterioration and violent deaths. Nor is he necessarily delighted by the gruesome spectacles of vomiting, hair loss and bleeding. He is simply fascinated, calmly noting these symptoms in his experiment records. Graham only shows emotion when his work does not go according to plan, in the cases of his initial failure to produce the diamond and when his elaborately-planned “final solution” is all but destroyed by something as fundamental as identical coffee mugs.

The Young Poisoner’s Handbook is a confronting film, both visually and morally. It is also a tale of great tragedy, of wasted genius and lost innocence, with a gritty realism tempered by surreal comic touches. The film ends with a note that Graham Young died in his prison cell in August 1990, adding that “the precise cause of death remains a mystery”. Despite the film’s best efforts to understand Young’s complex psyche, his life retains a sense of mystery, with the final question which can never be satisfactorily answered: “Why?”. 

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**LA SÉPARATION**


Concentration camps and bodily decay, alongside charts recording the details of each proposed victim in Graham’s plan of his own small-scale holocaust. We feel that there is indeed something “dead” inside Graham’s head, but that it died slowly during his incarceration, not before, as the authorities believed.

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T **hat Eye, The Sky is a brave book and it has yielded a brave film.** Tim Winton’s novel explored the discomfort that Australians feel towards forms of religious belief which cannot be readily sought out, purchased and consumed at one’s leisure at the
The Film is in many ways a true reflection of the novel. The visitor has also been damaged - he suggests that he has learned, one suspects in a traumatic manner, of the transience and frailty of life. But the film, like the book, also examines the issues such as forgiveness, hatred and acceptance. Certainly, Ort seems to represent the damaged/visionary figure who is familiar, for example, from the films of Andrei Tarkovsky, Krzysztof Kieslowski and Ingmar Bergman: he has spectacular extraordinary visions in purely visual terms is met vividly and imaginatively in the film, but, unfortunately, some viewers will find it difficult to avoid making associations with Steven Spielberg's iconography and pyrotechnics - a pity, for Ruane's film is anything but Spielbergian in content or style. Some viewers will find the no doubt accidental parallels somewhat intrusive at stages which are quite crucial in the film. Having said this, though, the film manages for the most part to present the evangelist figure effectively without lapsing into didacticism and portentousness; and it does convey with some force the notion that much suffering, anger and grief has been surmounted by these troubled and courageous characters. © Raymond Younus

Eye the Sky

nearest opportunity store. (Indeed, this is what Winton seems to regard as the post-modernist condition of religiosity in contemporary Australia.)

In this film a young boy, Ort (Jamie Croft), learns that his father, Sam Flack (Mark Fairall), has been involved in a car crash and is comatose. The father is brought home and the family members must care for him and attempt to reconstruct their shattered lives. A mysterious stranger, Henry Warburton (Peter Coyote), arrives and offers to help with the comatose man. His motives are unclear and his past is enigmatic, to the traumatized family.

The figure of the outsider who enters a hitherto closed circle of relationships and exercises a profound effect on its structure and its members is a recurrent archetype of this sort of film. Carl Dreyer's Ordet (1953) and Pier Paolo Pasolini's Teorema (1968) are two quite different versions of this sort of film. The Western offers a particularly rich body of work in this context: one need only think of films such as Shane (George Stevens, 1953), Pale Rider (Clint Eastwood, 1985) and the "Man-with-no-Name" series. Yet Dreyer's film combines simplicity of means with an uncomplicated view of faith at work. Pasolini's film attempts to reveal the liberating and corrupting effects of the outsider, but with emphasis on the dominance of sexual desire and the consequent disintegration of a bourgeois family structure which cannot be sustained once the barriers erected against the repressed begin to crumble. In this sense, Ruane's film is closer to Pasolini than Dreyer.

That Eye, The Sky offers a visitor who is dual in character. Certainly, he is not averse to sexual dalliances. He sees himself as a servant, though it is unclear in what sense he is such a person. He sees himself as a "good man", has lost everything, is devoted to the task of survival, and does not mind preaching a gospel. He has come, he says, to "open eyes". He also seems to be an epileptic (at least, he is subject to seizures).

Ruane, like Winton, is highly interested in damaged characters and lives. The family is in a sense damaged by the tragedy which has occurred: the father is comatose; Ort and his sister struggle to make sense of this event; the mother suffers but hopes for better things. The visitor has also been damaged - he suggests that he has learned, one suspects in a traumatic manner, of the transience and fragility of life. But the film, like the book, also examines the issues such as forgiveness, hatred and acceptance. Certainly, Ort seems to represent the damaged/visionary figure who is familiar, for example, from the films of Andrei Tarkovsky, Krzysztof Kieslowski and Ingmar Bergman: he has spectacular visions of light above the house and speaks of other worlds through the wardrobe. The presence of the visitor who also seems to be a dual figure (charlatan/evangelist) seems to intensify these visions. The two, boy and evangelist, form a bond. Clearly, the man offers the boy an alternative that partly fills the absence left by the comatose father, and gradually allows the boy to make some sense of the tragedy.

But the film clearly suggests that the visitor has failed in his quest to resurrect the broken father. He does not heal the father, but his influence has not been fruitless, even though there is some ambiguity in the book and in the film at the end. The process of healing takes place on other levels and it is suggested that the visitor's actions are not necessarily a matter of choice. In this way, the age-old tension between a type of cosmic determinism, which is coloured by a theological framework and the question of free will, is raised and not really dissolved (one can understand why: this is one of the most complex questions of metaphysics.)

The film, like the book, implies that the work of reconstruction, acceptance and understanding is facilitated and accelerated by the adoption of a creed which this evangelist embodies - but only to a degree. A number of his statements are not fulfilled, and he seems uncertain at times of whether the comatose man needs him or whether he needs the comatose man. For this reason, interpreters need to be quite cautious in their readings: there are ambiguities and uncertainties here which neither the book nor the film resolve. Indeed, it would seem that neither author nor director wish to resolve such issues - or, perhaps, they believe that such issues are unresolvable. At any rate, the film is in many ways a true reflection of the novel.

The film relies on well-known conventions of form and structure. But this should not prevent people from seeing it. It is directed with great sensitivity and earnestness, and yet does not flinch from gentle satire. The challenge of presenting Ort's extraordinary visions in purely visual terms is met vividly and imaginatively in the film, but, unfortunately, some viewers will find it difficult to avoid making associations with Steven Spielberg's iconography and pyrotechnics - a pity, for Ruane's film is anything but Spielbergian in content or style. Some viewers will find the no doubt accidental parallels somewhat intrusive at stages which are quite crucial in the film. Having said this, though, the film manages for the most part to present the evangelist figure effectively without lapsing into didacticism and portentousness; and it does convey with some force the notion that much suffering, anger and grief has been surmounted by these troubled and courageous characters. © Raymond Younus
but also serious. Anne joins them. She listens but says nothing until she suggests to Pierre that they leave. Pierre's efforts to talk, to engage, contrast violently with Anne's stillness, her silence, her distance.

They go to the cinema to see Roberto Rossellini's Europa '51 (1951). He wants to hold her hand while they watch the film, but she rejects the gesture — suggestive signs, broken conversations, a tragic scene, a hand not taken, a picture of a wolf at the door.

One night after a party, Anne finally tells Pierre the inevitable: that she has fallen in love, with someone else. He barely reacts. There are no sufferings, no crazed confrontations — just the inevitable: that she has fallen in love, with someone else. We never know this other man, or her love and happiness. We only see other children who would learn to cross the road whenever the television occupied the frame.

Everyone is longingly looking at each other — impossible, doomed conversations — the characters stranded within the frame. A pivotal sequence begins with Anne looking out of frame — apparently at a group of children. The next image is of Pierre looking — not at Anne but at film footage of Anne and Loulou on a television monitor. The image of the television occupies the frame and Loulou looks directly at us as if it were returning Pierre's gaze. Everyone is longingly looking at each other — impossible, doomed conversations — the characters stranded within the frame.

Julia (Angie Milliken) and Stephanie (Clarrissa Coote) are friends who work together writing and illustrating adult action comic books. Each creatively inspires the other to shape their vivid action comics. Stephanie is comfortable with her sexuality and leads a fairly happy and free life full of dates, parties and fleeting new friends. She's bright and breezy, and regulates an avidly attentive Julia with detailed reports of her exploits. Julia has a seemingly idyllic life residing in the country with her sweetheart, Mac (John Jarratt), and their daughter, Kelly. Although both envy aspects of the other's lifestyle, all seems to be crumbling. Julia is weathering an emotional crisis; she knows Mac is having an affair with a younger woman. Stephanie's is a shallow sort of happiness as she reveals she is longing to have a child but can't seem to connect with anyone special.

Into the women's cosy and confidential partnership appear two strangers. The incidental arrival of a gorgeous television repairman, Jack (Richard Roxburgh), who shyly yet unavoidably overhears Stephanie's explicit account of a recent sexual adventure, opens new possibilities for her. Curiously, it is Julia who observes his bemused, delighted interest while Stephanie is oblivious to him, at first. Julia is convinced that an unfamiliar Girl (Jacqueline McKenzie), observed at their local cafe, must be Mac's lover and her suspicions open the door onto the team's creative world. The comic book they are working on takes imaginative form; a detective story inhabited by another Julia and Stephanie, where Julia can project all her darkest fantasies.

The collapse takes place over three months, framed by two touchingly-sentimental home videos, both freely-narrated by another Julia and Stephanie, with Anne looking out of frame — impossible, doomed conversations — the characters stranded within the frame.

The drama is propelled by the frequent conversations between two close friends. These conversations are open and soul-searching, as female discourse often is, but best of all it is as if their relationship is one long stream-of-consciousness dialogue. Their conversation just picks up from where they left off each time they've been apart. Thus, the friendship has an energy that perseveres during absence.

Julia Strong (Victoria Longley) is excellent and confidential partnership appear two strangers. The incidental arrival of a gorgeous television repairman, Jack (Richard Roxburgh), who shyly yet unavoidably overhears Stephanie's explicit account of a recent sexual adventure, opens new possibilities for her. Curiously, it is Julia who observes his bemused, delighted interest while Stephanie is oblivious to him, at first. Julia is convinced that an unfamiliar Girl (Jacqueline McKenzie), observed at their local cafe, must be Mac's lover and her suspicions open the door onto the team's creative world. The comic book they are working on takes imaginative form; a detective story inhabited by another Julia and Stephanie, where Julia can project all her darkest fantasies.
coupled with a certain kind of sensitive integrity, and McKenzie with her composed mystery – without stealing too much attention from the two main players.

Lambert’s first feature film is brimming with female revelations, erotic conversations, and frank and funny disclosure. These are women who don’t simply talk but, as we see by the film’s conclusion, are empowered by their mutual support and easy confidence to act as well.

CINEMA PAPERS • OCTOBER 1995
in review

Books

RAY BARRETT
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY


I

you had to describe award-winning Australian actor Ray Barrett, the words “utterly dependable” might spring to mind. His list of credits across the media and on stage is quite imposing and, at 68, his services appear to be in demand as ever. His early despatch by Richard Franklin (or Hennie Rayson) to a watery grave arguably robbed Hotel Sorrento (Richard Franklin) of its strongest presence. More recently, Barrett can be seen alongside Leo Dwyer, in the latest filmic incarnation of Dad and Dave On Our Selection (George Whaley).

But did you know that Barrett compered a wartime radio programme entitled “Smokes for Sick Soldiers”, designed to induce cash contributions from listeners to convert to cigarettes for hospitalized Aussie troops? Or that Barrett “plays” John in The Thunderbirds? Or that he recorded two albums of songs for Fontana and Philips in 1969-70? Or that he was almost executed by fellow actor Bud Tingwell, from time to time, especially in relation to “them bleedin’ ‘oles” in his face. His funniest story in this regard concerns Barry Humphries’ use of Barrett’s countenance in close-up under harsh lighting to simulate moon craters.

In addition, Barrett’s mordant wit surfaces from time to time, especially in relation to Peter Finch, Dick Bentley, Bill Kerr, Bud Tingwell, Ron Randell, Michael Pate, Joy Nichols, Ruth Cracknell, Kirry Bluett, Rod Taylor, Lyndall Barbour, Gay Doleman, Dinah Shearing, Madge Ryan - the list of Australian “defections” at the time was quite staggering. It is just possible that, as the “Golden Age of Radio” continues to

not more sympathetic to the long-standing Equity line on foreign actors, given the “second class” treatment and pay rates he has personally experienced in the theatre and on film location.

I

was disappointed, actually, in the comparatively scant treatment he devotes to his post-1975 career on the resurgent local film and television scene. His “worthwhile work” in a number of television mini-series in the 1980s is summarized in a single paragraph, as are the nine films he made over the same period. We learn that Australian film and television crews, by comparison with their better-endowed overseas counterparts, are resourceful, efficient, non-hierarchical, gifted, etc., but this is hardly breakthrough reportage in 1995. In the light of this, the publisher’s decision to promote Barrett as “the father of Australian film” is especially puzzling. Equally, I could have done with less emphasis on his aquatic pursuits, his nesting and building proclivities, and his activities on the Spanish island of Formentera, but these accounts may well appeal to other readers. At the same time, the anecdotal approach and the emphasis on these ‘non-performance’ aspects lead to a certain “jumping around” in time, which the author acknowledges. This not only breaks the chronological flow – the ‘smoothness’ or ‘glossiness’, perhaps, which Corris endeavoured to bring to Barrett’s prose – but is also potentially confusing for the reader. For example, the text refers, without warning, to Gaye O’Brien, ultimately to become his third wife (in the context of the pleasures afforded by Spanish island life, p. 146) in a section predominantly featuring his second wife, Mirén. But we do not discover the nature of Gaye’s relationship with the author until several more chapters have elapsed. Earlier, we are told in successive chapters of the “lure of London’s West End” being responsible for his overseas departure in 1958.

For one so critical of language misuse, Barrett – or at least his co-writer and/or editor – is also not sufficiently attentive to the typo-graphical and factual errors which are scattered throughout the book. Some of these are indicated in ex-ABC staffer Charles Grahame’s perceptive review in the Weekend Australian (29 July 1995).

The section of the book which I found most cohesive and illuminating is the first, particularly that which deals with his early family life, coincided successes and radio career. Prior to leaving for England, Barrett had become an on-air radio presenter in Brisbane at the tender age of 16 and, by 1957, had chalked up an astonishing list of 89 radio programme credits, which included a four-year stint in Sydney and appearances in many of the then most popular serials, dramas, comedy and variety series, and one-off plays. Radio in those days, claims Barrett, “had a wonderful way of touching the emotions through the imagination. There has never been anything quite like it since I was a child” (p. 49).

In this context, Barrett’s opinion is most persuasive. The versatility, industriousness and sheer professionalism of Australian radio talent in the pre-television era – affirmed also by a host of personalities from Radio’s “Golden Age” interviewed in recent years as part of the commendable “Once Upon a Wireless” oral history project – is quite vividly conveyed by Barrett in these early chapters. Why was that band of actors of which Barrett forms a part so versatile? That most of them were equally at home on the stage and, subsequently, in film and television says much for the “on-the-job” training – if not for the rates of pay – that Australian radio provided over this period. That many followed (or preceded) Barrett in seeking better or more challenging career options overseas in the 1950s reveals equally as much about the diminishing range of opportunities for local performers in this country prior to the late 1960s and 1970s. Peter Finch, Dick Bentley, Bill Kerr, Bud Tingwell, Ron Randell, Michael Pate, Joy Nicholls, Ruth Cracknell, Kirry Bluett, Rod Taylor, Lyndall Barbour, Gay Doleman, Dinah Shearing, Madge Ryan - the list of Australian “defections” at the time was quite staggering. It is just possible that, as the “Golden Age of Radio” continues to
The problem of life in the valley is beautifully revealed in their way. The book is about because I have no idea what this project, see "Revisiting Radio...", Metro, no. 100, Education Supplement, Summer 1994-95, pp 24-7.

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celebrations. Despite what the title might imply, this book is not an overview, or indeed a "illustrated celebration". Rather, it is a collection of two-page entries (with one smallish still) on what Adair considers to be an important film from each of the past 100 years.

Obviously, such a structure invites debate and dissent. Not only are his choices often perplexing (and Adair's text does not explore one's doubts), but why opt for the arbitrariness of one (New Zealander) filmmaker Paul Winkler, the director given; 1897), he writes:

Paul Winkler Films 1964-94

Catalogue editors: David Watson, Brian Doherty, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney-based experimental filmmaker Paul Winkler, the Museum of Contemporary Art (where the retrospective screened in July) has published this impressive catalogue comprising brief essays (by John Flaus, David Perry, Peter Medie and Quentin Turnour) and detailed notations and illustrations of Winkler's oeuvre.

Filmmaker David Perry, with the help of intricate diagrams, presents an accessible explanation of the camera techniques that Winkler has perfected throughout his career. Interspersed with Winkler's personal statements on each of the 30 odd films represented, the catalogue presents an anecdotal, these reminiscences provide a strong sense of the times and social contexts in which Winkler's work has been produced. With its carefully-selected images to represent Winkler's films, the catalogue presents an enticing education for those unfamiliar with the work of this inspired experimentalist.

Books Received

Wild Strawberries

Odd Man Out

The Ghost and Mrs Muir

Things to Come

Four more titles in the acclaimed BFI series of medium-sized monographs on famous films.

Derek Jarman's Garden
Derek Jarman, with photographs by Howard Sooley, Thames & Hudson, London, 1995, 144pp., index, illus., rrp £49.95

Dad & Dave on Our Selection: The Screenplay
George Whaley, University of Queensland Press, Australia, 1995, 94pp., illus., rrp $16.95

The Cinemascope Revolution Part 1: Fighting Fox
John Howard Reid, Reed's Film Index, Woyong, Australia, 1995, 200pp., rrp $49.00

Jodie Foster: The Most Powerful Woman in Hollywood

Soviet Hieroglyphics: Visual Culture in Late Twentieth-Century Russia

Television and Screen Writing from Concept to Contract
(3rd Edition) Richard A. Blum, Focal Press, Boston, 1995, 300pp., index, rrp £36.95

are delighted to announce that Nina Stevenson has joined the firm on a full time basis.

Nina has, for 15 years, specialised in entertainment law primarily film production and financing including international co-productions.

Hart and Spira provides comprehensive legal services in all areas of entertainment and media law including negotiating, packaging and financial structuring, finance and distribution agreements, co-productions, music, completion guarantees, rights and service agreements, copyright, taxation, trademarks, multi-media, litigation and conflict resolution.

Hart & Spira


Contact: Lloyd Hart, Tom Spira, Nina Stevenson, Richard Silverston, James Cooper
To Fictionalize or Not!

Tom Spira examines celebrity rights in relation to factually-based and fictionalized works.

In the March 1995 issue of *Cinema Papers*, I examined the recent U.S. decision in the Elizabeth Taylor case which dealt with celebrities' rights ("What Happened When Elizabeth Taylor 'Slaps' Out and Falts?", pp. 44, 55). That article resulted in a lot of queries from readers. It seems that as Australian filmmakers become more aware of the availability of material which can be accessed from U.S., many are wondering about the parameters of the law.

The most common query was: Will the rules differ for a producer making a film using a fictionalization of a factually-accurate biography or using a purely-fictionalized biography?

In the U.S., a producer now does not necessarily need to seek the permission of the individual or his/her heirs to depict that individual in a film. Individuals do have access to some protection through a law known as the "Right of Publicity." This provides an individual with the exclusive right to control the exploitation of his or her name or likeness for commercial purposes.

In the U.S., there is no federal right of publicity. It is, however, at present under discussion in Congress. Thirteen states, either through statute or common law, do recognize the right of publicity and a number of those states have extended that right beyond an individual's lifetime. They are California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Virginia.

These states extend protection where an identity's name or likeness has been used for trade and commercial purposes. Trade and commercial purposes are narrowly defined to include instances in which a celebrity's name or likeness is used to advertise a product or service.

In Australia, the *Common Law and the Trade Practices Act, 1974* provides similar protection. In particular, filmmakers should be mindful of section 53:

> A corporation shall not, in trade or commerce, in connection with the supply of goods or services or in connection with the promotion of by any means of the supply or use of goods or services [...] (c) represent that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, performance characteristics, accessories, uses or benefits, they do not have; (d) represent that the corporation has sponsorship, approval or affiliation it does not have.

This means it is impossible for a producer in Australia to obtain the same advantages that now exist in the U.S.

In the U.S., the need to link "use" to trade or commercial activity falls within a state's right of "publicity protection" and is not a federal right. As a result, such protection is then derived from the now broad protection afforded to "freedom of speech" by the First Amendment.

The First Amendment allows names or likeness to be published without permission where matters of public interest are concerned. The position adopted by the U.S. Supreme Court is that commercial speech tends to be guaranteed a lesser protection. However, it is law in the U.S. that entertainment, not simply news reporting, constitutes a matter of public interest.

In 1987, in *Marcinkus v N.L. Publishing Inc.*, Archbishop Marcinkus claimed a violation of his right of publicity based on the fact that he was included as a character in a work of fiction. The novel contained a disclaimer saying that the Archbishop was merely used to make the work authentic. The Court found that some readers would not recognize it as merely a work of fiction. That decision, though not overruled, has since been ignored by the Courts.

The case the Courts follow is the earlier 1978 *Hicks v Casablanca Records*, a ruling by the Federal Court where it was held that the heirs of Agatha Christie could not assert a "right of publicity" claim for a fictionalized account of a true instance in her life due to the protection afforded to entertainment by the First Amendment.

A case which is often cited in trials is the 1979 decision of *Gugliemi v Spelling-Goldberg Products Inc.*, where the California Supreme Court took a broad view of the First Amendment and established the principle that the line between informing and entertaining is simply too elusive to be construed narrowly with respect to films. In that case, a fictionalized television programme on the life of Rudolf Valentino was held to be constitutionally protected due to the "enlightenment function" served by such an entertainment vehicle.

A useful device for producers has been to label a work "fictionalized". It appears that the U.S. Courts have taken the novel approach that a state's "right of publicity", balanced against the First Amendment, is contingent on whether the film contains deliberate falsifications or makes an attempt to represent disputed facts as true. The U.S. Courts take the approach that if a fictionalized account in the event of a life in the public figure is depicted in a film, and it is evident that the events depicted are fictitious, the filmmaker will generally not be liable to attack under the "right of publicity" legislation.

It is for this reason that in *Hicks v Casablanca Records* the court held that Agatha Christie's heirs could not recover damages for a fictionalized biography; hence, the added advantage of labelling a work fictionalized rather than true.

It is relevant to re-consider *The Estate of Elvis Presley v Russen*, discussed in length in the March 1995 issue. Suffice to say that it has become impossible for the Elvis Estate to stop the ever-increasing number of Elvis impersonators.

In *Joplin Enterprises v Allen*, the Federal Court recently applied the Hicks' principle. The Court found that a two-act play revolving around a day in the life of Janis Joplin, the second act of which consisted of the performer's imitating Joplin in concert, was protected by the First Amendment and therefore could not be held to violate California's "right of publicity".

In view of the trend, non-fictionalized biographies generally receive a higher degree of protection under the First Amendment than fictionalized works. In the recent case of *Rosemont Enterprises v Random House Inc.*, which concerned a factually-accurate biography of Howard Hughes, the Court held that a celebrity's "right of publicity" must be "applied to the public interest where it "conflicts with the free dissemination of thoughts, ideas, newsworthy events and matters of public interest"."
Sydney and Melbourne

Raymond Younis and Monica Zetlin look at the highlights.

Six Fragments of a Chronology of Disorder: The 42nd Sydney Film Festival
Raymond Younis

The 100th year of the cinema deserves a special programme. It deserves a retrospective glance from the time of the Lumière's to the present day. Certainly, the opportunity was there to feature some of the landmarks of film, some of the neglected films and some of the most memorable recent achievements. There were also opportunities to highlight the achievement of the Australian cinema, which is in no sense negligible. Fortunately, the director of the 42nd Sydney Film Festival took some of these opportunities. The Festival featured a number of highlights, including several retrospectives: one featured ten Australian films which have been somewhat neglected in one way or the other, including Backroads (Philip Noyce, 1977), Pure S... (Bert Deling, 1975) and Going Down (Haydn Keenan, 1983); one featured carefully-chosen (by Michel Ciment) French documentaries including treasures by the Lumière, Marcel Carné, Chris Marker, Jean Vigo and Alain Resnais; a section on directors at war including films by Frank Capra, Charles Chauvel, "Lt. Gregg Toland" and "Cndr. John Ford", William Wyler, John Huston and Resnais; a number of shorts by "The Sarajevo Group of Authors"; frame-by-frame analyses; special guests, including Marcel Ophüls and Andrew Sarris; and much, much more.

The Sydney Film Festival seems to be becoming more complex. Indeed, it is tempting to write about the labyrinthine networks of the Festival programme – or of the sense in which it cannot but exceed any brief attempt by a somewhat overwhelmed and harried reviewer to do justice to its multifarious and seemingly inexhaustible contents. Also, it is tempting to meditate on the extent to which the Festival, like a vast and intricate labyrinth, exceeds any single attempt to provide a concise map of its topography. However, one hopes that it will suffice to mention five or six highlights and some of the disappointments.

There were numerous highlights. A number of eagerly-awaited films did not disappoint; a number of not-so-eagerly-awaited films were no less impressive. One of the great pleasures of the Festival was the fact that it offered many people the chance to see highly-valued films from the early part of the century on the big screen. Three examples that come to mind are La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc (The Passion of Joan of Arc, Carl Dreyer, 1928), A propos de Nice (Jean Vigo, 1930) and Toute la mémoire du monde (Alain Resnais, 1956).

Dreyer's film is as striking and as forceful as ever. In 29 sequences, Dreyer provides an unusually-concentrated and -engaging film which encapsulates in one day the passion and agony of Joan of Arc. The technique still seems astonishing and direct – so much so that one cannot turn away from, or easily forget, the tortured face, the suffering figure and the harrowing ordeal. Dreyer's use of the close-up is almost unbinding and lends a particular intensity and purity to the images. One is also struck by the things that Dreyer does not show; this is a film which seems never to lose sight of the essential. The emotional is maximized through this strategy, and the interfacing of text and formalized image lends a constant tension to the film's rhetorical language. This was a timely reminder of Dreyer's capabilities as a bold and experimental filmmaker.

Vigo's A propos de Nice is a savage satire, a lyrical evocation and a celebration of sea, sun and the Riviera. The film is structured in terms of binaries: youth and age, rich and poor, joy and sadness, and so on. Through a highly-effective use of montage, Nice emerges as a place with dual aspects and many unresolved oppositions: shots of the leisurely middle classes are intercut with shots of penury and with shots of animals; shots of a joyful group of dancers are counteracted by more austere and sobering images; shots of gravestones are intercut with shots of angels which are made of stone; and so on. Vigo's Nice is a place of contradictions and stark divisions. Vigo's satire is razor-sharp and the bourgeois is mercilessly lampooned in parts. Yet, the film is a delight and it is full of reminders of Vigo's humour, skill and imagination.

The French National Library is revealed as a seemingly-endless labyrinth of corridors, stairs, passageways, desks and books. The restless camera constantly moves through corridors, passageways, rooms and spaces. It is constantly rising and descending. It is as if the camera is taken on a journey that is never-ending through a place where there are no exits but still more rooms and still more books, newspapers, journals and manuscripts. At numerous steps, it is suggested that there is always something more to discover, always something more to be preserved. The library and the camera, then, serve a task that seems to be more and more impossible: redeeming that which has already been consigned to the destructive passage of time. Indeed, Resnais suggests that the necessity and the impossibility of ordering the chaotic layers and the unmanageable amount of material – itself always increasing, though crucial and necessary – seems certain to end prematurely. There are always other stairs, levels, rooms and collections which cannot be shown, cannot be seen.

The library does not just become a metaphor of a vast memory which is figured as a place of unfortamtable depths and expanses, it also manifests a complexity which frustrates or defeats attempts to impose order upon it. This short and unusually-resonant film offers, in one sense, a delightful and, in another sense, a saddening end: what is salvaged is a number of fragments from the "universal memory" and there is, ultimately, we are told with great irony, not enough film to record all the treasures. The metaphors – exploring as they do the possibilities and limitations of filmmaking, the attempt to impose order, the desire to structure and classify the things of a domain which seems to be infinitely vast and intricate – are vivid and in places quite breathtakingly evoked.

A number of highly-praised films and filmmakers did not disappoint. Nikita Mikhalkov's Outonokonye Soltetsem (Burnt by the Sun), Hal Hartley's Amateur and John Schlesinger's Cold Comfort Farm are all distinctive and highly-assured films which deserve a wide post-Festival audience. Indeed, Hartley's film is one of his most satisfying: it is an amusing, intricate and

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sophisticated piece which provides some rather provocative thoughts on identity and social conditioning, on some people's desire and unwillingness to change ways of perceiving others, and on the anxiety which technology engenders.

Schlesinger is in very good form indeed. His film – about a somewhat eccentric family on a run-down farm – shows just how much can be done on a small budget. There are wonderful performances, extraordinary characters, a fearsome and overbearing matriarch, a fire-breathing preacher, ducks and cows, an aspiring novelist and laughs a-plenty. The technique is largely conventional, as befits a film of this scale, but there are some fascinating elements, especially in terms of the film's exploration of the extent to which the writer and the filmmaker are complicit in the process of transforming life into artifice and fiction. The film also has a great deal of fun with a number of genres such as the Gothic, romantic melodrama and social realism.

If an award had been offered for the most intriguing title, the main contender surely would have been 71 Fragmenten einer Chronologie des Zufalls (71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance, Michael Haneke). Haneke's film is a carefully-crafted reconstruction of an incident in which a young man storms into a bank and shoots a number of people. The build-up is fragmented and deliberately elliptical. Although the behaviour of the killer and others is carefully observed in other situations, the film does not avoid ambiguity and indeterminacy. The fragments suggest implicitly that filmmakers have been somewhat presumptuous in making claims about recording the "full story" and, in perfectly-intelligible or objective ways, the fragments are also used to make a number of telling points about the appropriation of images of violence and death as sources of entertainment in the cinema.

Haneke's film is deliberately and staunchly non-entertaining,
The lecture was divided into sections comprising history, progress, Aboriginal life, forests and animals, wool, mining, [fishing, dairying and agriculture, sheep and cattle, politics and Federation] etc., each portion being appropriately illustrated by the limelight and kinematograph. The marvellous growth of the cities of the Commonwealth was very forcibly pictured by a series of contrasts between Melbourne and other cities in early days and at the present time. Added interest was given by the kinos views of various streets, showing the rush and bustle of city life.

The Aboriginal section was especially interesting and instructive, dealing with the habits, customs and dwellings of these sadly diminishing people. A living picture of a native climbing a tree and bringing down another on his woolly head was a particularly spicy tit-bit [...]. while the contrast between the primitive style of fishing adopted by the natives and the modern method was very strikingly depicted by another kino film. This consisted of an admirable view of the Port Fairy barracouta fishing operations, showing the fishing fleet going out to sea, returning, catching the fish, and unloading into the large baskets. [...] Especially interesting was the section on mining, when the lecturer described the various methods of obtaining the precious metal, from the humble 'dish' to the elaborate and up-to-date quarrt battery. The fossicker washing for gold was seen in a living picture, and then another film revealed miners going down and coming up from a mine in the most realistic fashion.

Every section was dealt with in this way [...].

The dawning of Federation was briefly described, and views of the chief scenes in that historic event flashed upon the screen, while the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York [...] was illustrated by half-a-dozen films taken at various functions. [...]

The text ‘Righteousness exalteth a nation’ flashed upon the screen, afforded the Colonel [Pearl] the opportunity for a few final words on the supreme importance of recognising and yielding to the claims of God.

‘Let this Australian nation’, said the Chief Secretary [Pearl], ‘not only develop her magnificent natural resources, but be progressive in the higher realm of morality and religion [...]’ Thus closed the two hours of pleasure and profit [...].

After this premiere, Under Southern Skies was taken on a tour of 34 Victorian regional centres over the next three months. Pearl lectured, Staff Captain Ebenezer Jackson (later an independent film showman) conducted the accompanying orchestra, and Staff Captain Robert Sandall (later the official historian of the Salvation Army) was the projectionist.31 Cameraman Joseph Perry was abroad with another Biorama film exhibition tour of New Zealand.32 Perry never had the opportunity to exhibit Under Southern Skies, and, as most accounts of the Limelight Department’s work originated with Joe Perry’s sons33, this might explain the production’s absence from earlier chronicles.

The first tour of Under Southern Skies attracted uniformly favourable reviews from the secular press, and made £220 clear profit for the Salvation Army.34 It particularly made a hit in Victoria’s provincial cities. A Ballarat schoolmaster wrote to Pearl stating that it was “without doubt the finest thing of the kind ever given in the Southern world”.35 The Daysford Advocate’s reviewer was quite taken with it:

The views thrown upon the screen were remarkably good, and the kinematograph pictures of miners at work with their tin dishes, and others with their cradles were very realistic, as were also the pictures of shearing sheep, the cutting and loading of bananas etc. [...]36

The Northcote Leader also recorded the surprise of an audience unused to any serious usage for motion pictures, which were just emerging from their period of technical crudity and novelty:

That the lecture was highly appreciated was demonstrated by frequent rounds of applause. Although the lecture is a lengthy one, the interesting topic auxiliary by 200 slides and close on 40 living pictures, was so fascinating that there was not a dull moment. Special attention has been given to securing various aspects of Aboriginal life – in fact the pictures of fishing, opossum hunting, and corroboree are unique [...]. The hall was packed to its utmost capacity and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed.37

After a Williams-town (Victoria) show, Pearl wrote: October, 1903, Robert Sandall dropped out as projectionist to take up Salvation Army duties in South Africa.38 His place was taken for the final Victorian venues by Adjutant Sidney Cook. In the first four months of 1903, Cook sporadically exhibited Under Southern Skies in Victoria, and subsequently in Tasmania during May 1903.39

A second major tour of Under Southern Skies was inaugurated at Albury (New South Wales) on 27 July 1903,40 this time with Staff Captain Ross, Special Officer Tippett and Adjutant Knight as lecturers. The projectionist was probably Ebenezer Jackson. Again, audiences were captivated, as the Albury Daily News confirmed:

For over two hours a quick succession of capital life and coloured [still] pictures kept young and old interested, an intimacy to the younger fry at ‘half-time’ that they could go home if they wanted to be receiving with devious laughter. The lecture embraced the story of the Commonwealth from discovery to the present day, and a great deal of instructive information was imparted as to the growth of each of the States, the development of the principal cities, the advances of mining and other industries, the flora and fauna of Australia, and in other educational directions. It was the numerous illustrations by the ‘kinny’ as the lecturer familiarly termed it, teaching as much in a few flashes as a handbook in a twelve-month.

A very extended kinematograph view of the manoeuvres of the Port Fairy fishing fleet was a treat in itself. Among the many social problems the Salvation Army succeeds in solving appears to be that of pleasantly popularising educational themes.42

The second tour visited 84 centres throughout New South Wales, and lasted five months, concluding at Grafton on 15 December 1903.43 They exhibited the slide show “Salvation By Limelight” at their Sunday services44, while the movie presentation, Under Southern Skies, was shown to raise funds on every other night of the week.

Under Southern Skies: Music

Staff Captain Ebenezer Jackson apparently assembled an arrangement of popular tunes of the day to accompany Pearl’s lecture. The “eight piece orchestra”45 from the “metropolitan corps”46 led by Jackson received praise for their performance. It was a strong ally to [...] the lecture”, said the War Cry, and “the music seemed to pulsate in wonderful harmony with the views shown.”47 Sometimes the music was applied with a wry sense of humour, as the Ballarat Star indicated:

It was noticeable that while a kinematograph view of a number of pigs feeding at a trough was thrown on the screen, the orchestra played “The wearin’ of the green”.

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19 Under Southern Skies was underwritten by special contributions from F. M. Cook, Ballarat Star and Albury Daily News.
Three years later, Jackson and Sidney Cook resigned from the Salvation Army in tandem to form a commercial travelling picture show outfit. Not surprisingly, they specialized in the shooting and exhibition of local films.

Next Installment

The popularity of Under Southern Skies (1902) had the Limelight Department greatly expanding its filmmaking efforts between 1902 and 1904. This peak of their production corresponded with a dearth of Australian output elsewhere. Unfortunately, the films surviving from this period are few. The lack of systematic Australia-wide newspaper research results in the few survivals (which have no titles) remaining unidentified in the vaults of our film archives. Films not identified as Australian may already have been “de-accessioned” to archives abroad. Do these films survive? With this methodology, we may never know!

The Limelight Department’s importation of pioneering narrative fictional films like E. S. Porter’s Life of an American Fireman (1902), The Great Train Robbery (1903), and J. A. Williamson’s Attack on a China Mission (1901) influenced its filming style. Several one-reel dramatic films were made by the Limelight Department in this period, including Australia’s first bushranging drama (March 1904).  

Additional research material was supplied by Clive Sowry (Wellington, New Zealand); State Library of Queensland; State Library of Victoria; Prue Long; and Norma Wood (daughter of the late Sidney Cook).

Acknowledgements

Pat Laughton, Griffith University and the Australian Research Council provided financial support for the research published here. Sincere thanks!

The Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Westwood Place (rear 69 Bourke Street), Melbourne. This photo shows only a tiny corner of the vast print archives, including many records of the Salvation Army Limelight Department, Australia’s first corporate film producer.
legal ease

More recent, in Matthews v Wenzcraft, the Federal Appellant Court, covering a number of the 13 states referred to above, went as far as to hold that a specifically-protected status should exist for biographies.

Protected status should exist for biographies. As far as to hold that specifically protected status should exist for biographies? They do not have an actionable right to protect their publicity or privacy, provided that the depiction is factually accurate and that the depiction of the individual is reasonably related to the celebrity depicted in the work/portrayal.

Two classic examples were privacy claims brought by the widow of Ernest Hemingway in The Estate of Ernest Hemingway v Random House Inc., and a former husband of Janet Leigh in Carlisle v Fawcett Publications Inc. Neither was successful because the works were based on factual accuracy and because of the broad protection granted to matters of public interest by the First Amendment.

The same word of caution as in the March article: in relation to other state laws such as defamation, invasion of privacy and intentional infliction of emotional distress, these causes of action may afford protection for individuals if the depiction is for example defamatory.

44th Melbourne International Film Festival

Monica Zelina

When involved in the task of reviewing the Melbourne International Film Festival, there is one aspect which is often overlooked: the actual physical effect watching so many films has. There are the strained eyes, the bad backs, the pale countenance, the strange and varied mood swings, the exhaustion and, being Melbourne in winter, the multifarious colds and flu circulating. In fact, such Festival film-going is a unique physical experience which cannot be separated from the films themselves and, it must be admitted, adds to the pleasure. Perhaps it's the sense of working hard for your enjoyment that is so satisfying.

Having abandoned the idea that a fair and comprehensive selection of the films is possible, what follows is a brief overview of the most successful - in terms of audience numbers and critical popularity - Melbourne Film Festival yet.

The Festival was particularly strong in documentary, showing a playfulness and a popular awareness with many of its choices. Those dealing with music were particularly enjoyed by a large audience, especially Don Was' I Just Wasn't Made For These Times and Helena Solberg's Carmen Miranda: Bananas is my Business, both of which took on the iconography and myth-making apparent in the careers of Brian Wilson and Carmen Miranda respectively. Suzanne Ofertinge's Nico-Icon gives a fascinating insight into a neglected muse of the arthouse rock set, while Lisa Rose Aprahamian's Not Bad for a Girl continued to explore the themes of women musicians who chose lifestyles which rub against the grain.

The documentary form has clearly risen to the challenge of questioning its own conventions and restrictions, often taking the issue of the personal, subjective experience as its thematic impetus. An American short film, Annie Griffin's Out of Reach, is the most striking example. In this film, Griffin creates a documentary about herself, using talking heads with her family as the basis on which she creates an exploration of how she is constructed as an individual through their perceptions of her. It is a witty, original and engaging film.

Among other documentaries worth seeking out was the fabulous Crumb (Terry Zwigoff). So rarely is such a complex figure presented so truthfully. Robert Crumb is ridiculous, honourable, painful and talented, with such a psychotic family it is both pleasurable and excurciating to watch them. Also a highlight was the delightful The Morgan, King of the Cowboy Artists (Les Blank), about the talented pop artist who could offer a serious threat to Andy Warhol if only he wouldn't refuse to sell his paintings. The maitre's cowboy showdown with the artworks of Christo is truly inspiring.

Australian offerings were particularly strong in this area, with Pat and Eddie's Greyhound Racing Family (Brian McKenzie) and Hollywood Hotel (Fiona Hergert) standing out. The latter film struck me as the more progressive, as it gives such a fascinating insight into the overlooked inner-urban 'white trash'.

Australian filmmakers also provided some of the Festival's strongest short films. Marie Craven's enjoyable and imaginative short, Maidenhead, managed to confuse and confound. In animation, Sarah Watt's Small Treasures and Sue Stamp's Nan in a Box illustrated how apt the form is for emotional vignettes, and how ready the form is for a re-assessment from boy's stories and gags to developed narrative and sensation.

The films from the French series "Tous les garçons et les filles de leur âge" ("Boys and Girls of Their Time") were particularly well received. The two I managed to catch, Travolta et moi (Travolta and Me, Patricia Mazuy) and Trop de Bonheur (Too Much Happiness, Cedric Kahn), will remain in my mind for their brutal yet poetic insight into adolescence.

The Festival often offers a smattering of American independent films, which are often criticized as underdeveloped variations on either successful Hollywood fare, or rip-offs of European arthouse. The selection this year proved different. River of Grass (Kelly Reichardt, 1993) was a female take on the white trash on the road genre. This film takes a look at real losers, not the sanitized, hybrid blonde and pumped-up gym boys so common to the genre. Clean, Shaven (Lodge Kerrigan) can again be classified as a road movie, and, not unusually, concerns itself with a psychotic maybe-killer on the loose. Where this film gains its power and interest is in the perfectly-paced portrayal of inner life. Sound effects almost completely replace dialogue, and little is given in the way of classical narrative or explanation. The Glass Shield (Charles Burnett), a film about a young black cop finding out about bigotry on the force, was one of the more outwardly obvious "Hollywood" offerings, and was an insightful manipulation of the genre, offering a complex moral code. Also worth mentioning is Canadian Jeremy Podeswa's début feature, Eclipse, a beautifully-created study of modern sexuality.

The Festival offered many strong retrospectives this year, among them Humphrey Jennings' idiosyncratic documentaries of the 1930s and '40s; Philip Brophy's crowd-pleasing look at Osamu Tezuka's animation; and the "Century of Cinema", including Lumière shorts and the well-liked The Sentimental Bloke (Raymond Longford, 1919) for a spot of patriotic pride. One of the more high-profile retrospectives was that of Robert Wise. Watching a sample of his huge output, from the unsatisfying The Curse of the Cat People (1944) to the outstanding The Set Up (1949), Born to Kill (1947), and The Haunting (1963), was an education in itself.

Huge omissions in this overview include the Australian features. Aleks Velli's The Life of Harry Dane, John Ruane's That Eye, The Sky and Margot Nash's Vacant Possession are some of the films regretfully not viewed. However, one is sure to see them later.

One feature watched was Alan Madden's Mushrooms, screened on closing night. Consummately-acted and tightly-directed, the film nonetheless suffered from a predictable and banal script. It was rather a-ready ending to an exciting, frustrating, informative and highly-enjoyable Festival (once the flu medicine kicked in).
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Under the Gun

to be very self-contained.

That’s how the whole night-
club scenario came about. It
was purely a budgetary consideration.

What always drives up the cost of a
project is the logistics of travelling
to many different locations and the
set-up times. Our idea was to have a
location which we could pre-light,
and then do very selective lighting
and cutting when we got there.

Out of the old power station, we
were able to get an airline ticket
counter, an office, an alleyway,
and a courtyard, as well as the whole big
space we had for the club.

Rewinding further, Matt George
relates the discovery of their “studio”:

The biggest hold-up in pre-produc-
tion was finding locations that we
could afford to use.

Then Doug Petty, who’s a model
from Sale of the Century and knows
Paul, told us of this old abandoned
building in Richmond.

When we went in, I just knew that
this was it. It was huge. It looked like
something out of Alien [James
Cameron, 1986]. Transforming it
was probably the biggest thing that
Paul and Richard did. It took up to
the very last week to complete. The
art department did an absolutely
amazing job.

George goes on to speak about the for-
mation of the team with his fellow
producers and the film they almost
realized before Under the Gun:

I’ve been working with Richard for
date or five years and with Paul for
about seven. I met up with Richard
in early 1990, and I knew that with
his name at the right level we
could get a film up. So, we set about
writing a script that could cater to
what Richard’s market would be, plus
what would give him the character
and story that would elevate him
to the next level as an actor.

We went through a whole bunch of
scripts and a whole bunch of turn-
downs, but we managed to come very
close in 1992 with a script
called “No Easy Way”. We were on
the verge of signing contracts with
Cannon Pictures. We thought we
had it in the bag and just banked
everything on it, which was so stu-
pid. You should always have at least
four or five options.

With Under the Gun back in his sights,
George - who may indeed be the
youngest Australian to direct a feature
and who admits to feeling initially per-
titrified on set - expresses fear at having
his film regarded as exploitation of the
action area. “It’s not”, he claims; “it
was done with the aim of making a
story first, and then seeing how the
action fits.”

Whatever’s there, there’s no doubt
that besides the volatile mixture of youth,
experience and energy on display on
both sides of the camera, Richard Nor-
ton and his co-producers called in a
lot of friendships and favours to get the
film before the cameras.

Appearing in Under the Gun are
expat U.S. actress Jane Badler (vet-
eran of the series V) and Kathy Long,
who may yet prove to be the film’s
biggest coup after being dubbed a big
star of the future by Jean-Claude Van
Damme. (Long is currently being
wooed by Oliver Stone for his forth-
coming version of Marvel Comic’s
Electra Assassin after a walk-on in Nat-
ural Born Killers.) They are joined by
Sale of the Century co-host Nicky
Buckley, and Stan “The Man” Longini-
dis and Tino (father of Kate)
Cebearo. Although “Tino” was
sighted in the background of the early
1990s stateside production Angel
Town, the bulk of the Under the Gun
cast hail from the martial arts. (Tino
Cebearo, who plays an accountant,
was actually one of Richard Norton’s
formative martial arts instructors.)
Norton, in between deftly choreo-
graphing the “blockheads”, as they are
described in the script, explains the
edge this gives the production:

“We didn’t have the budget to blow
up buildings and cars. It was always
going to be the human element
action film, as I call it, where I uti-
lize my abilities and the abilities of
the people around me – people who
really know the fight game.

I needed a hand here to do a fight,
so I got them in and away we went.
They are tough boys – ones that
can take a lot of punishment with-
out crying.

In the scenes with Kathy, I told
them not to expect not getting
thumped, just because she’s female.
I needed the fights to look as real as
we could. I wouldn’t do that to an
actor, but I can to people I know are
martial arts orientated and can take
the impact.

The reality of the fights in Under
the Gun makes them different from
a lot of others. It shows in the eyes
and in the whole camerawork. It
doesn’t look like a little ballet
sequence. The net result has a nitty-
gritty feel where the person is going,
‘Wow, I’m really getting punched
and kicked here.’ That’s important –
least for the sort of films I want
to do.”

The Price of Passion

pay for film stock, lab costs
and equipment, but no fees.

During the Seminar, this
model was tagged as “feral film-
making”.

• The second is the genuine low-bud-
get one, where there is often money
to pay people’s wages as well as
other production costs, but not
always a sufficient amount to abide
by the rules of all the components
of regulated awards.

The second model was what the Semi-
nar geared its discussion towards, on
both sides of the debate. After all, the
entire Seminar was called “low-budget”
and not “no-budget”. However, the no-budget
model evolved as a topic of discussion,
simply because it was of importance
to many people present, something
perhaps not quite anticipated by either the organ-
izers or the speakers.

The intended discussion of the sec-
ond model, optimistically titled “The Art
of the Possible: Panel Discussion with the
Associations” – chaired by Tim Read (the
AFC’s Director, Project Development
Branch), with Marion Jacka (MEA),
Michael Gordon-Smith (SPAA), Lois
Randall (ASDA) and Chris Sharp (AWG)
as speakers – was wonderfully prefaced
by producer Robert Connolly.

In a detailed, honest and well
thought-out speech, Connolly brought
up a number of concerns and, unlike any-
one else who spoke up during the
conference, actually offered some solu-
tions. The major points covered in
Connolly’s speech were: aspects of the
award wages, as set by the MEA,
including the buying out of rights;
fringes; deferrals of fees; points of profit
for participation; approaches to de-
veloping and modes of production.

Connolly commented:

Fringe theatre thrives on what are
known as co-operative ventures, where
the cast and crew for a production get
gether [and] take no fees – as there is
no money to pay anyone – [but receive] an equal share of the profits.
This is outside the award, but is
absolutely essential if theatre is to sur-
vice outside the major theatre
companies. And the MEA seems to
turn a blind eye to this.

But no such luck for the low-budget
filmmakers.

Connolly then went on to comment
that

The issue of minimums gets more com-
plicated in the area of rights. When
paying an actor, for example, it is nec-
essary to buy a certain package of
rights [...] equal to 10 per cent of the
[basic negotiated actor’s rate], which
more than doubles the fee [...] The
award allocates a penalty for purchas-
ing these rights after the event, which
is usually double the amount paid up
front. Often, although the filmmaker
is required to purchase these rights up
front, the film never utilizes the need
for those rights. Therefore, the addi-
tional costs were unnecessary.

Connolly proposed a
pre-negotiated arrangement, whereby
the up-front production costs are
reduced to the minimum requirement
and [...] every available dollar at
the time can be seen on the screen, with-
out actually avoiding an ultimate
obligation to purchase these rights.

According to Connolly this can be done
if

the AFC could, perhaps, manage a pool of funds to be used to pay for
rights after a film has been made and,
in the event of the film’s securing a the-
amrical release or TV sale, that would
require those rights.

Then the production would only need to purchase a minimum package of rights in order to make the film
and the film could be tested before war-
ranting additional expenditure [...] This pool of funds could be available
to non-AFC-financed films as well, so
that the extremely low-budget films
that can only be made outside of the
budgetary obligations of the AFC can
also trigger this support once an
appropriate sale or release is negoti-
ated [...] As part of this arrangement,
the penalties for purchasing rights
after the event would need to be waived.

Marion Jacka of the MEA replied:

Certainly from the Alliance’s point of
view there is no compulsion on buy-
ing those rights up front [...] We
certainly don’t have an objection if
producers wish to enter into arrange-
ments where some of those rights are
not purchased until further down the
track [...] There is a penalty later on,
if those rights are bought later on, which
is a 100 per cent surcharge, which is a hedge against inflation.

Some of the audience burst out laughing
at this point. Jacka went on: “If you made
your film in the 1970s, for example, and
that goes to a market in the 1980s or
’90s, and you got 20 per cent of what you
went in the ’70s, that would be total
peanuts” – no doubt a likely and even fre-
quent occurrence! Nevertheless, a glimpse of hope fol-

In relation to the AFTRS films, we’ve
been able to come to an arrangement
about not applying the 100 per cent
cut-off and, also in relation to other
low-budget projects, we’re certainly
prepared to look at that issue, pro-
vided, of course, that people come and
discuss it through.

No reply, however, came from any of

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associations' members on the topic of "the huge cost of fringes specified in the award" raised by Connolly: "On All Men Are Liars, which was shot in far North Queensland, our cast payroll incurred what is defined in the award as the '10% climate loading.'"

Under the award, far North Queensland is one of the locations that falls under this climate loading. However, the cast of All Men, who were brought up from Melbourne and Sydney by the winner, affectionately referred to the climate loading as the "suntan loading" or the "Rayban loading." Moreover, "for the 95 per cent of the cast who actually came from the local area, who lived in far North Queensland most of their lives, the 10 per cent climate loading as per the award still applied." Being an "award film," "Rayban loading". Moreover, "for the 95 per cent of the cast who actually came from the local area, who lived in far North Queensland most of their lives, the 10 per cent climate loading as per the award still applied." Being an "award film," "Rayban loading".

We really do need to negotiate openly and up front with the unions rather than avoiding the issues here. But the success of this is dependent on the unions' ability to embrace the flexibility of approach required for low-budget films and further an openness to negotiate with filmmakers on components of the award.

Jacka: The answer is certainly not in reducing or asking the artist to subside to a greater extent what they do. [...] I think it's clear we don't think, and we wouldn't accept, that the answer for the low-budget area lies in expecting the cast and crew to work below award safety-net minimums. And, apart from the moral or humanitarian aspects of reasons for that, I think that [...] at some point it's going to become self-defeating for the goals of having good professional production values, and product, including in the low-budget area, that's going to be artistically and commercially successful [...] The award minimum is sort of sacred. We can't be involved in any arrangements or discussion, and we don't think it's sort of fair, (or) actually a positive or useful thing, for the industry to start talking about a 'slash and burn.' An "openness to negotiate", indeed.

On the other hand, what else could possibly have been expected from any of the associations' representatives? As they pointed out numerous times throughout the session, they must protect the interests of the people they represent. And though they may seem stubborn or even mean at times, they are merely doing their job. The question is: What is it that they are ultimately achieving in terms of the whole future of the Australian film industry and not just the current climate?

The Beginning, the Middle and Another Beginning
The Low-budget Feature Seminar was a valuable and important event, and Bravo to the AFC, and Philippa Bateman in particular. It should have had a precedent in Australian film history; it must have a sequel. The dialogue has been merely begun. The questions have been asked, but it would take many more such gatherings for any answers to be found.

Meanwhile, here are some heartening words from Rolf De Heer:

The process of making [a film] is living life. And if you don't enjoy it, you shouldn't be doing it. If you are just working for the result, you should not be doing it, because you are throwing your life away. If you find ways – and you can only do this with low-budget filmmaking [...] to make the process incredibly rewarding, then, my God, you're living life! And you're living it wonderfully well, and that's the thing that I like most about it.
FFC Funding Decisions

Following a Board meeting in June, the FFC has entered into contract negotiations with the producers of the following projects:

**Feature**

**DATING THE ENEMY**

**TOTAL FILM AND TELEVISION**

D: Mesan Simpson
P: Sue Milliken
EPs: Phil Gerlach, Heather Delville
W: Mesan Simpson

A modern comedy romance about relationships. She wants him to commit, and he still wants to play around. She makes a wish that he were in her shoes. When they wake up, he is. He’s in her body. She’s in his. He’s in her body. She’s in his.

**Television**

**HALIFAX F.P. P. 2 (100 mins)**

**SIMPSON LE MURIER**

D: Paul Mulloney, Steve Jobrell
P: Roger Le Murier, Roger Simpson
W: Mac Guidgeon, David Boltuland, Katherine Thomson, Rebecca Giney

These tele-feature follow the adventures of Jane Halifax, a forensic psychiatrist retained by both police and solicitors. Using her specialized knowledge of criminal behaviour, she helps unravel a series of mysteries involving a convicted rapist, a cop gone wrong and organized crime.

**Documentaries**

**IN A SMALL VALLEY**

**55 mins, FFC-SBS ACCORD**

**OPEN CHANNEL PRODUCTIONS AND BYZANTINE FILM & VIDEO PRODUCTIONS**

D: Dennis K Smith
P: Jack White
EP: Geoff Barnes, John Moore
W: Dennis K Smith

A unique minority culture exists in Australia’s desert community. Its history, culture, and linguistics are seen through the eyes of a profoundly deaf artist, Peter Adams.

**The Edge of Instinct**

**55 mins, FFC-SBS ACCORD**

**STEPHEN RAMSEY PRODUCTIONS**

D: Stephen Ramsey
P: Jane Ramsey
W: Stephen Ramsey

The documentary follows couples undergoing the IVF programme. It examines the emotional stresses of the procedure: the devastation after failure, the joy of success and the depth of the procreative need.

Following a Board meeting on 4 July, the FFC has entered into contract negotiations with the producers of the following projects:

**Film Fund Features**

**DEAD HEART**

**NEW TOWN FILMS**

D: Nicholas Parsons
P: Brian Brind, Helen Watts
W: Nicholas Parsons
P: Brian Brind

In a small community in the Australian outback, an unorthodox group of white fringe fringe dwellers administrators to a floating population of tribal Aborigines. A death in the police lock-up and an act of force make the local constable to balance the need for due process with traditional Aboriginal laws.

**IDIOX**

**CENTRAL PARK FILMS**

D: David Casser
P: Glenn Rose

An acrobatic story about two unemployed men bored by life and angry at the world. They spend their time drinking beer and watching videos until one day they actually decide to do something: rob a bank.

**FISTFUL OF LIES**

**JET PRODUCTIONS**

D: Monica Pellegrini
P: Julia Overton

Seventeen-year-old Mars Lupi is the only daughter in a conservative Catholic, Italian-Australian family. Struggling to come to terms with her sexuality, she clashes with her sexually repressed mother and her violent and philandering father. A comedy-drama about a young girl and her quest to be treated as a mature woman.

Following a Board meeting on 5 July, the FFC has entered into contract negotiations with the producers of the following projects:

**The Zone**

**55 mins**

**MEDIA WORLD FEATURES**

D: John Tatoulis

Telstra's The Missing Years

**NSW Film and Television Office**

Cultural Diversity
Facility Planning Capital Works
Getting It Right

**Wandering Winds**

Peak Performance

**Finders Medical Centre**

Brian Cusack
Hospital at Home

**Television Pre-production**

**The Bit**

**Fire II**

**The Thorn Birds**

**The Missing Years**

**Television Production and Post-Production**

After the Sleep
Basie Patterson’s The Man from Snowy River
Blue Heelers
Borderers
Echo Point
The Few
The Gettin’ from Down Under
Leete’s Library
Naked
Ocean Girl
Paxton
Rainbow’s End
Stuck in the Tunnel
The Silver Brumby

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A modern comedy romance about expectations. She wants him to commit, and he still wants to play around. She makes a wish that he’d fly. When she wakes up, he is. He’s in her body. She’s in his. Forced to live each other’s lives – through work, friends, and sex – they get to know each other as they never have before.

THE QUIT ROOM

Production company: Vertical Productions (Aus, NZ, US, UK)
Pre-production: 24/7/95...
Post-production: 18/9/95

PHILIP CRAWFORD

Director: Rachel Johnson
Production design: Mark Loxton
Production manager: Christopher Conner
Production secretary: Nicola Mill
Financial controller: Sharon Jackson
Inquiries: Russell Huls / Lee Dee
Complete precautions: Fiona Tew

BRYCE MERRISHOW-WHAKEN

Camra Film
Focus puller: Danny Wood
Capper/clipper: Corey Pifer
Key grip: Martin Kilgour
Assistant grip: Charles Kirdof

On-set Crew

1st assistant: Ben Goodchild
2nd assistant: Juille Brine
Continuity: Beverley Freeman
Hairdresser: Beverley Freeman

ART DEPARTMENT

Set dresser: Paul Swiryn
Wardrobe supervisor: Beverley Freeman

Post-production

Assistant editor: Simon Whitington
Make-up artist: Sarah Stavrianos
Splicer: Simon Whitington

Co-producers:

National distributor: Beyond Films
International distributor: MIRAMAX

Budgeted by:

Finance controller:

CINEMA PAPERS • TOTAL FILM AND TELEVISION

Principal Credits

Director: Megan Simpkin
Producer: Sue Milliken
Executive producers: Phil Gilmach, Heather Delville

A modern comedy romance about expectations. She wants him to commit, and he still wants to play around. She makes a wish that he’d fly. When she wakes up, he is. He’s in her body. She’s in his. Forced to live each other’s lives – through work, friends, and sex – they get to know each other as they never have before.

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National distributor: Beyond Films
International distributor: MIRAMAX

Budgeted by:

Finance controller:
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Features Post-production and Awaiting Release


LIEVS, a young university graduate, accepts a job directing a psychiactric ward. His control is usurped by Ray, a manic depressive who demands that they stage a play by Mozart, despite the fact that none of the patients can act, sing or speak Italian.


A woman of the unconventional lies of a legitimate flesh merchant who received Shakespearean dialogues for the dollar of Sydney and her life, hence the price of the price. Lillian's story is a celebration of a being alive. Based on a novel by Kate Grenville.

LUST and REVENGLE Production company: Illumination Films Production: 6/5–6/95 Principal Credits Director: John O'Mahony Producer: John Alexander Executive producer: Paul Wilmshurst Director of photography: Kevin Mayne Production designer: Robert Wilmshurst Production co-ordinator: Laura Graham Production runner: Belinda Ungar

The story of an expatriate living in Papua New Guinea, who falls in love with a woman who renounces memories of her dead wife. When he takes her to his brother, he discovers that he has a past – a past that he can neither forgive nor forget.

TRUE LOVE AND CAGE (AKA LOVE WAVE) Director: Emma-Kate Crogan, Steven Effendi


Graf is a southern tycoon who is forced to leave his wife and marry a rich, corrupt family. He decides to occupy her economic scat as to create a work in the vain of Michaelangelo's David.

RACE THE SUN Production company: Race the Sun Productions Production: 6/4–6/5/95 Principal Credits Director: Charles Kangas Assistant director: Martin Connor Music co-ordinator: Christine Woodropy Production designer: Richard Buis, Barry Mowder Executive producer: David Nicholas Script editor: Barry Mowder Director of photography: David Burns


The story of a young woman of an ambitious mother who is suddenly kidnapped by an inquest street gang during a bungled robbery. Confusion turns to liberation as she comes to realize her young captors offer her a first taste of personal freedom and sexual awakening.
**BORDERTOWN**
Production company: ABC TV
Production: 8/25/95–13/5/95
Pre-production directors: Kevin Hanlon, Steve Greaves
Production manager: Glenda McDonald

**ECHO POINT**
Production company: Producers: David McDonald, John Kenney
Production manager: Alena Mitchell

**THE FEBS**
Production company: Crane Productions
Production: 29/5–18/95
Pre-production directors: John Rautenbach, Chris Thompson, Kate Woods
Production manager: John Mannell

**THE GENIE FROM DOWN UNDER**
Production company: ACTF
Budget: $4.1 million

**PASSION**
Production company: Mise En Scene
Production: 4/7–10/19/1995

**THE SLIVER ZEBRAS**
Production company: Media World Pictures
Production: January 1996

**RANNI**
Production company: Hips Film and Video Australia
Production: Pre-production/Production: 2/16–12/7/1995

**RANZ**
Production company: Nine Network
Premiere: 7/10/95

**When Jack and his sister, Terri, the renowned international child of the foster family and the foster family, decide to follow Jack’s dream to find their father, Tom, a mysterious treasure from their past is pursued by their foster parents, welfare and the police. The ensuing chase leads Jack and Terri through a variety of cheerful adventures and mishaps. The action converges on the dream and concludes when the rainbow is successfully attained by all and everyone’s dreams are fulfilled.**

**SAMANTHA ALEXANDER**
Director: Chay Flannery
Based on the novel by: Dolly Thiele
Production manager: Chay Flannery

**SUN ON THE STUBBLES**
Production companies: ABC of Australia, ZDF (Germany)
Distribution companies: ABC Films, ZDF (Germany)
Production: 2/26–2/22/1995

**TROTTA**
Production company: Tales of Ireland
Director: Donal MacIntyre
Based on the novels by: Colm Toibin

**THE SILVER BRUMBY**
(Animated series)
Production company: Media World Pictures
Production: January 1996

**THE TROTTA**
Production company: Tales of Ireland
Director: Donal MacIntyre
Based on the novels by: Colm Toibin

**TV MAJOR**
Production company: Pro-Sale Networks
Production: 1994

**TT**
Production company: ABC
Production: 12/6/95

**UMBRELLA**
Production company: Nine Network
Premiere: 10/1/95

**UNICEF**
Production company: FFC Films
Production: Late 1994

**UTTER LIES**
Production company: Utter Lies Produktionen
Production: 1992

**UTTER LIES**
Production company: Utter Lies Produktionen
Production: 1992

**VODKA BONITA**
Production company: Vodka Bonita
Production: Early 1995

**WALPER**
Production company: Walper
Production: 1994

**WHEN JACIE**
Production company: ABC
Production: 1994

**WITNESS**
Production company: Witness
Production: 1994

**WOMEN ON THE WAY**
Production company: Nine Network
Premiere: 10/1/95

**WOLF’S WAR**
Production company: Nine Network
Premiere: 10/1/95

**WUNDA**
Production company: ABC
Production: 1994

**ZIP THE CHAP**
Production company: ABC
Production: Early 1995
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Note: "Nihil obstat" [Lat., "nothing stands in the way"] Words appearing on the title page or elsewhere in the preliminary pages [...], indicating that it has been approved as free of doctrinal or moral error.

A panel of nine film reviewers has rated a selection of the latest releases on a scale of 0 to 10, the latter being the optimum rating (a blank means not seen). The critics are: Bill Collins (Daily Mirror); Barbara Creed (The Age); Sandra Hall (The Bulletin); Paul Harris (BRB; "The Green Guide", The Age); Stan James (The Adelaide Advertiser); Adrian Martin (The Age; "The Week in Film", Radio National); Tom Ryan (The Sunday Age); David Stratton (Variety; SBS); and Evan Williams (The Australian).
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