

FILM CONTINUED

## Why they shoot films overseas, and why saving money isn't why

Any saving in the cost of day-to-day shooting of tv films abroad is quickly dissipated by the added expense of doing business so far from home base, according to Philip N. Krasne, partner in the tv film production-syndication firm of Gross-Krasne Inc.

"Hollywood is the best place in the world to make tv films," Mr. Krasne declares. "Unless there's an overriding reason for doing the production abroad, it's much better, much easier and no more expensive to do it at home. Producers who think they can go anywhere else and get saleable product more cheaply are in for a big surprise."



MR. KRASNE

Last summer, Gross-Krasne entered into a co-production arrangement with Kenya Productions Ltd., British company with permanent production facilities in Nairobi, where two tv series, *African Patrol* and *The Adventures of a Jungle Boy*, are in production for American syndication by G-K. From this experience, Mr. Krasne notes:

**Actors:** Leads and main supporting players, cast in London, work in Nairobi under a portal-to-portal plan which, despite the lower salary scale, gives each London actor total earnings more than his Hollywood counterpart would get for the identical role.

**Casting:** Parts are cast in London under the supervision of Guy Thayer, executive vice president of Gross-Krasne Ltd., G-K's English subsidiary, and Donald Hyde, vice president who was producer of the *Lone Wolf* and *O. Henry Playhouse* tv series, to insure that characters and accents are of the kind that are readily accepted by American audiences. Messrs. Thayer and Hyde also supervise all scripts for the same reason.

**Production:** Kenya Productions does the physical production, but Hal Klein, formerly G-K production supervisor, has been in Nairobi since last May as the G-K on-the-scene representative.

**Editing:** All film is processed and edited by G-K editors and Mr. Krasne gives the films a final inspection in Hollywood.

**Transportation:** Round-trip plane fare, London to Nairobi and return, amounts to about \$1,000 per actor. Air freight costs for shipping equipment from here to there and for sending film back also add up.

In addition might be added a sizable item of executive supervision. Mr. Krasne went to Africa last summer to set up the physical operation, a task which entailed working out a sort of lend-lease arrangement for approximately \$150,000 worth of equipment. His partner, Jack Gross, has been spending about half his time in London,

as part of what Mr. Krasne calls "the insurance factor in getting the quality product we're after."

The authentic jungle backgrounds needed for these jungle tv programs provided the main incentive for going to Africa to film them, Mr. Krasne says. "We could have stayed in Hollywood and used stock footage and a stage jungle, but if we had we'd have wound up with "B" pictures broadcast at "B" times, before 6 p.m. or after 11 p.m., and we'd have to sell them at "B" prices. We're asking, and we're getting, top prices for *African Patrol* because it's a good enough show to play in top time. We couldn't do this with an African series made anywhere but in Africa."

Mr. Krasne predicts that this series on its first United States run will gross about the same as *O. Henry Playhouse* did, \$1.6 million. He does not expect widespread reruns, but does expect some, and rather quickly, in some markets. There is one economic advantage in filming abroad: the foreign-made films are not subject to the rerun fees required in contracts with the U. S. guilds, saving up to \$2,500 per episode by third rerun, Mr. Krasne estimates.

"To make top quality adult programs of the type we are having made takes the kind of budget that needs a worldwide market to be repaid. We couldn't absorb the entire costs out of the proceeds of U. S. syndication alone," Mr. Krasne states.

Films made under a British production set-up automatically qualify as "quota pictures" in the United Kingdom, he says, pointing out that 86% of tv film playing time in Britain is restricted to British-made

product, with only 14% left for imported pictures. "This means \$5,000 per episode in film rentals that would otherwise not be available," he says, noting that with only a limited amount of quality British-made tv films there's a "healthy sellers' market."

The situation is quite the other way for U. S. tv films, which are forced into intense competition for the limited amount of British air time available to them, he explains. "Our only U. S.-made tv series to get into the United Kingdom was *O. Henry Playhouse* and we got only \$2,000 an episode for it, which is the top price for American tv films as far as we know."

By providing most of the financing for the African films, Gross-Krasne receives the United Kingdom rentals on them, in addition to exclusive distribution rights in the Western Hemisphere, which so far means the U. S. and Canada, although G-K is planning to invade Latin America in the near future and eventually to get worldwide distribution for its tv films.

"We believe that adventure films with a South African background have a universal appeal," Mr. Krasne states. "In *African Patrol* there are all of the elements that make good westerns popular as adult escapist entertainment, played against a background that is more strange and therefore more exciting than the too-familiar western hills and prairies. *Jungle Boy*, which is being filmed in color, might be described as an African *Lassie*, only the boy's pet is a cheetah instead of a dog."

With no particular wish or intention of specializing exclusively on "adult Africans," Gross-Krasne believes that this is a field that can profitably be worked for some time to come. Production is now well along for a third series, based on the adventures of *Trader Horn*.



THIS SHOT of an Arab dhow at anchor in Mombasa harbor, Kenya, is an example of the authentic background material which draws Gross-Krasne crews overseas for the *African Patrol* series.



Robert Benjamin and Arthur Krim brought United Artists Corp. bouncing back from the dead in just a few years by gambling that Hollywood actors could be trusted with whopping sums of money.

## The Derring-Doers of Movie Business

Being tall, blond, and blue-eyed, actor-producer Kirk Douglas thought that a movie about the Vikings would provide him with a fine starring role. Being in the business of backing and distributing movies made by independents, Arthur Krim and Robert Benjamin of United Artists Corp. thought that a movie about the Vikings, which had never been done, might make some money.

Douglas was one of the growing group of independent stars, directors, and producers who had a "relationship" agreement with U.A.: i.e., a non-exclusive contract binding the independent only to give U.A. the sometimes dubious opportunity of financing and distributing his pictures. Douglas' production unit, Bryna Productions, Inc., had already made one picture, *The Indian Fighter*, for U.A., which had not yet been released. And so, after a very general conversation between Douglas and U.A. President Krim, a production to be called *The Vikings* was undertaken by Bryna for U.A. Here is part of the chronology of subsequent events—a chronology that would make ordinary businessmen blanch:

- *February, 1955*: After a couple of months spent by U.A. and Bryna executives searching for and reading material about the Vikings, Douglas found a book he liked. It was *The Viking*, by Edison Marshall. Douglas sent it to Krim. Krim thought it would take too much money to turn the book into a good screenplay. But he sent it on anyway to U.A. Vice President Max E. Youngstein, who was vacationing in Haiti. Youngstein recommended that it be bought "if the price is reasonable." The asking price was about \$75,000, plus a large percentage of the movie's net profits, which Krim didn't think was "reasonable."

- *October, 1955*: Continued reading of plays, books, stories, and even juveniles having failed to turn up a better vehicle, U.A. bought movie and TV rights to Marshall's book for \$30,000 plus 6 per cent of the net and transferred ownership to Bryna.

- *May, 1956*: Douglas got an O.K. from Krim and Robert Benjamin, U.A.'s board chairman, to hire Richard Fleischer to direct *The Vikings*. Fleischer was to get \$50,000 cash, a deferred payment of an additional \$50,000, and 5 per cent of the net.

- *June, 1956*: Bryna hired Noel Langley to write the screenplay. Another \$50,000 was thus committed by U.A., making a total of \$180,000 so far; and 11 per cent of the movie's take had been surrendered. There was still no formal agreement between Bryna and U.A. on *The Vikings*.

- *Summer, 1956*: Bryna representatives in Europe went looking for a location in Norway, studio space in Germany, a castle in France, and a shipwright who could build tenth-century longboats.

- *October, 1956*: U.A. had by now advanced Bryna \$75,000 in pre-production costs, was committed for \$105,000 more. Douglas estimated he would need another \$100,000 for pre-production costs in the next few months. Benjamin and Krim told him to go ahead.

- *January, 1957*: The screenplay was completed and read at U.A. Max Youngstein's verdict: "I think this can now be a very big money picture." Three longboats were under construction (\$16,000 each).

- *February, 1957*: U.A.'s total advance on *The Vikings* was up to \$250,000. (U.A. had also, meanwhile, loaned Bryna \$108,000 for three other movies in the planning stage.) U.A. had security for its money—Bryna's interest in *The Indian Fighter*, then being shown, plus *The Vikings* script—but there was still no final Bryna-U.A. contract on *The Vikings*.

- *March, 1957*: Douglas and Krim got together in Hollywood to draw up a contract. U.A. agreed to loan \$2,500,000 for *The Vikings* if Douglas were the sole star, \$3,250,000 if he enlisted a co-star (which he subsequently did). If costs went above these figures, U.A. would provide the additional money but would receive additional "protection": i.e., for





Here are United Artists' partners looking over some of their investments. The scene is the New York office of President Arthur Krim, who sits at his desk with Board Chairman Robert Benjamin (with pipe) beside him. Grouped around the two are six vice presidents, who are (left to right): Arnold Picker, Max Youngstein,

Charles Smadja, William Heineman, Robert Blumofe, and Seymour Peyser. Their investments—independent producers, actors, directors—are led by Mike Todd, with a determined grip on his dollar-laden balloon from *Around the World in 80 Days*. Next is Stanley Kramer, happily hauling a cannon from *The Pride and the Passion* on which

each \$250,000 in excess, Douglas agreed to make another picture for U.A. and himself assume a quarter of a million in initial costs. U.A. was to get 25 per cent of *The Vikings'* net profit plus its standard distribution fee: 30 per cent of the gross in the U.S., Canada, and England, 40 per cent elsewhere. (As Kirk Douglas said recently, "They make tough deals, but they talk my language.")

Krim sent his partner Benjamin—both of them are lawyers—a memo that reflected neither the devotion a lawyer is supposed to have for hard and fast agreements, nor the distrust that is traditional in Hollywood. "I realize," Krim wrote, "there are many loopholes, but Kirk said we could rely on the kind of people we are dealing with. We are therefore going forward in large measure based on moral considerations as well as the legal document."

#### Please, no beards

The money for pre-production costs had come out of U.A. funds. Now Krim and Benjamin started to line up bank loans for the rest. New York's Chemical Corn Exchange agreed to lend \$1,500,000. French and German banks put up over \$500,000 each in francs and marks. A loan of \$263,000 in kroner came from Norway; \$393,000 in sterling was borrowed in England. And Kirk Douglas was left to make the movie on his own.

Only twice did Krim and Benjamin break their self-imposed rule against interfering with production. Their first intervention—if it can be called that—took the form of a somewhat plaintive note from Krim to Douglas. Krim wanted to remind him that if either he or his co-star Tony Curtis wore a beard in the picture, their drawing power at

the box office might be weakened. Douglas met Krim's objection halfway: he himself would appear clean shaven; Curtis would wear a beard, which, Douglas reported reassuringly, was "his own—a short one—which we have tested and find looks very attractive on him."

The second time Krim and Benjamin tentatively stuck their noses into Douglas' business was last July, when a final budget estimate reached U.A. Broken down into seven different currencies, it came to no less than \$4,317,334. Krim, ready to leave for a vacation in Havana when these figures arrived, took a look, buzzed for his secretary, and told her to change his plane tickets from Cuba to Norway.

Krim found Douglas fully aware that it would take at least \$18 million at the box office just to recover some \$4,300,000, let alone make a nickel on the picture. (In all movie history fewer than twenty pictures have done that well.) Douglas' awareness was reassuring, at least; the two men chatted for a few hours, and did agree it would be a good idea to get the fantastically expensive production unit out of Norway as soon as possible. Without having seen any of the "rushes," Krim returned to New York to wait.

He is still waiting. The picture, actually completed for about \$970,000 less than Douglas had estimated, will have its première in July. U.A. executives saw it for the first time a few months ago and are convinced it is "a real blockbuster." But, as one producer explains, "Years ago this was a habit business, a picture would make money or it would only lose a little. In those days, I was able to sit here and make a pretty good guess as to how a picture would do. Today—you just can't tell any more." One of Kirk Douglas' associates puts it more succinctly: "At a time when the big





Sophia Loren and Cary Grant are seated. Waiting in the adjoining office, which is ordinarily occupied by Benjamin, is the production unit of James Hill, Harold Hecht, and Burt Lancaster. They are holding a net for Tony Curtis and Gina Lollobrigida, stars of their picture *Trapeze*, while Clark Gable, caparisoned for *Run Silent, Run*

*Deep*, watches dubiously. Perched on a corner of the desk, singer-actor-producer Frank Sinatra, all dressed up for his role in *Johnny Concho*, is pulling his guns on Kirk Douglas, who enters clutching a longboat and grinning because he brought *The Vikings* in at \$970,000 under final budget estimate.

grossers are *Around the World in 80 Days*, *The Ten Commandments*, and *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*, who's to tell what will sell?"

#### Doing without a commissar

The story of producing *The Vikings* reveals the essentials of how Krim and Benjamin work. As casual, even reckless, as it looks, it is a method they have used with success. They have revived a moribund company in a moribund industry and have done it in a few years, while the giants of the industry were steadily sickening. When Arthur Krim and Robert Benjamin took over United Artists in 1951, the company was more than \$1 million in the hole, and losing \$100,000 a week. Last year U.A. took in about \$70 million and made a profit of about \$3 million. For 1958 its release schedule is one of the biggest in the industry: forty-eight features, including no less than sixteen "blockbusters" with giant budgets and "name" casts, representing a total investment of \$60 million.

Krim and Benjamin began their climb upward by assembling a top staff of smart men and building a network of what they fondly refer to as their "relationships." They cultivated banks and the people that Hollywood lumps together as "talent" with equal diligence and suavity. When the time came, they were able to get financing from banks for the production possibilities that their relationships with talent brought them. Today they have working agreements with some fifty independents, including a large number of the best-drawing names in movies. Among their actor-producers are John Wayne, Frank Sinatra, Burt Lancaster, Gregory Peck, Bob Hope, and Robert Mitchum. Their latest catch is

Yul Brynner, currently the most sought-after independent actor in Hollywood. Their director-producers include William Wyler, Stanley Kramer, Joseph Mankiewicz, and Otto Preminger. And they have working agreements with such well-established producers as Hecht-Hill-Lancaster, the Mirisch brothers, and Edward Small and Arthur Hornblow.

To attract such a galaxy of talent U.A. needed more than just good manners. U.A.'s principal magnet was the independence of action that Benjamin and Krim offered to people producing movies for them. To the old-timers in Hollywood this policy was plain crazy. It was considered bad enough to give a producer money and let him spend it without sending a "commissar" to the studio to oversee his daily operations, and without seeing the day's take every evening, but to do this with an actor—Heaven forbid! ("An actor doesn't know the commercial side. All he knows is how to part his hair in the morning.")

Benjamin and Krim were happy to gamble large sums on projects cherished by their producers, even if they looked dubious because they were "downbeat" (*Marty*, *Twelve Angry Men*), or dealt with taboo subjects (dope in *The Man with the Golden Arm*, virginity in *The Moon is Blue*). On these movies they made money, as they doubtless expected to; on others of this kind (*Saint Joan*) they lost. Either way, the company promoted and exploited all its releases with imagination and vigor. If a film did better than anticipated, rather than sit back and reap the bonanza U.A. would frequently increase the promotion budget substantially and push harder.

All of this added up to an attitude that was new to Hollywood and "talent" responded to it enthusiastically. The





In the corridor of the U.A. offices, the money-making procession continues. Ernest Borgnine of *The Vikings* longboat is followed by John Wayne and Rossano Brazzi of *Legend of the Lost*. Producer Otto Preminger stands with the air of a vindicated man with a grasp on "the arm" from *The Man with the Golden Arm*, which dealt with the

once taboo subject, narcotics. Edward Small pushes the witness stand from *Witness for the Prosecution*, with Charles Laughton, Marlene Dietrich, Tyrone Power. Two of the Mirisch brothers, Harold and Walter, play horse for actor Gary Cooper, star of their *Man of the West*. Yul Brynner is carried on the shoulders of his fans, producer-

enlistments of independents under the U.A. banner became so numerous that the majors, who had watched U.A. skeptically, muttering predictions of disorder and early sorrow to come, felt obliged to follow suit, at least to the extent that their hidebound thinking would allow them. The result is that 65 per cent of Hollywood's movies are now made by independent producers.

#### "One s.o.b. is redundant"

Benjamin and Krim, the two men chiefly responsible for the new look in Hollywood, are rarely mentioned separately by anyone in the industry. No line separates their duties. One man picks up today where the other left off yesterday. They have adjoining offices at U.A. headquarters in a rather run-down building on New York's Seventh Avenue and they visit back and forth constantly.

Arnold Picker, who runs U.A.'s foreign distribution, once implied that this interoffice traffic wasn't really necessary. At a sales meeting in London, he remarked that each man knew what the other was thinking 5,000 miles away. Max Youngstein cracked good-naturedly, "We ought to fire one of these s.o.b.'s—one of them is redundant."

Benjamin, forty-nine, is a plump, ebullient man given to sweeping gestures and broad smiles. He worked his way through New York's City College and Fordham Law School at night. At U.A. he is referred to as "the team's balance wheel." When things go awry and Krim asks, "What are we doing in this business?" Benjamin leans back in his chair and replies, "You know any other?"

Krim certainly doesn't know any he'd like better. Forty-eight-year-old Krim graduated from Columbia with honors

in history and considered teaching as a career. He decided instead to go on to Columbia Law School, where he edited the *Review*. He is still an assiduous reader in history.

Six stockholding lieutenants, three of them lawyers, help Benjamin and Krim run U.A.'s unconventional operations:

Max E. Youngstein, forty-five, is vice president without portfolio and "the only man in the motion-picture industry who combines merchandising creativity with production creativity," Benjamin says admiringly. Youngstein usually does the preliminary work of assembling a "package"—story, cast, director, producer—before turning it over to B. & K. for final arrangements. His hunches on the potentialities of a proposed project are respectfully solicited by Benjamin and Krim as well as the producers. William J. Heineman, fifty-eight, is vice president in charge of domestic distribution. The outfit's, and one of the industry's, top salesman, Heineman has been in movie distribution since 1919, when he got a job selling films to theatres. Arnold M. Picker, forty-three, is vice president in charge of foreign distribution. For some reason known only to himself, Picker precociously decided at seventeen that he wanted to sell movies to foreign audiences. At thirty-one he was a vice president of Columbia Pictures International, and producers who work with him at U.A. describe him as the "most impressive foreign manager in the business."

Charles Smadja, forty-nine, is vice president in charge of European production. Tunisian-born Smadja speaks six languages, knows bankers, government officials, and distributors from the English Channel to the Red Sea. He is U.A.'s general handyman about Europe, cuts government red tape, worries about unblocking funds, and, when asked, helps find





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#### "No overhead and no Poppa"

In the literal sense, of course, United Artists is not a movie-production company. Essentially it is a worldwide movie-distribution organization. It began financing independent producers simply to guarantee that it would have enough good films to distribute.

To be sure, U.A. will, if asked, help a producer with mechanics: persuading New York's 21 Club to open its doors to a camera crew, for example, or borrowing soldiers from the Spanish Army to serve as extras in a battle scene. But the producer can shoot his film how and where he pleases—in rented studio space in Hollywood or in Europe, in city streets, or in the Libyan desert.

The major movie companies now emulating U.A. in wooing the independents cannot, in the nature of things, allow them the leeway that U.A. does. After all, the majors have a lot of money tied up in studio facilities, and they like to rent these to the independents they are backing. But what the majors consider a desirable arrangement can be a pain in the neck to an independent. As a New York banker who loans money to the movie industry explains, the independent working with one of the majors is apt to find his costs

inflated by a fee of 25 to 40 per cent of the total for studio rent: "And on top of that, at the studio, Poppa [meaning the studio boss] is too close, watching everything you do. At U.A. there's no overhead and no Poppa."

"Only United Artists has a system of true independent production," says producer Otto Preminger. "They recognize that the independent has his own personality. After they agree on the basic property and are consulted on the cast, they leave everything to the producer's discrimination. Most of the time, when the others make an independent contract, they want to be able to approve the shooting script and the final cut."

Director Stanley Kramer becomes almost poetic in his tribute to Benjamin and Krim. "This is the sunset phase in the movie business," he says somberly. "Right now, it's knuckle, knuckle, knuckle, and each picture we produce has to be a specific jewel in itself, made with talent and prayer. The creative people are the only ones who can do this. At U.A., they believe in letting the creative person create the film. As long as the climate there stays as it is, I don't want to be any other place."

"When we first started to finance," Benjamin says modestly, "we knew what we wanted and what we stood for, but it took some time to convince producers of this. Friends in the industry told us that we couldn't leave the producers completely alone, that we had to have a man watching them. This gave us a lot of food for thought, but we finally decided

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\*EDITORS' NOTE: The tragic death in an airplane accident of producer Mike Todd (*Around the World in 80 Days*) occurred after the plates for the cartoon illustrating this article were on the press.



# Economic Growth and the New Orthodoxy

by P. T. Bauer

Over the past two decades there has grown up on both sides of the Atlantic a new orthodoxy of thought regarding the ancient problem of economic development—an orthodoxy that is based largely on fallacy. The major tenets of this orthodoxy are by now well known. The modern world, it is held, is more or less neatly divided between the “advanced” nations such as the U.S. and the countries of Western Europe and the so-called “underdeveloped” regions of the world, which turn out to include most of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, or some two-thirds of mankind. These areas, it is asserted, are caught up in a “vicious circle” of poverty that cannot be broken by the normal processes of private trade and investment whether domestic or international. It follows, according to the orthodoxy, that the governments of the rich nations should make large grants or loans to the governments of the underdeveloped countries; and it also has been recently argued that these countries should adopt elaborate national plans for production, investment, and trade to ensure the best use of the funds advanced to them.

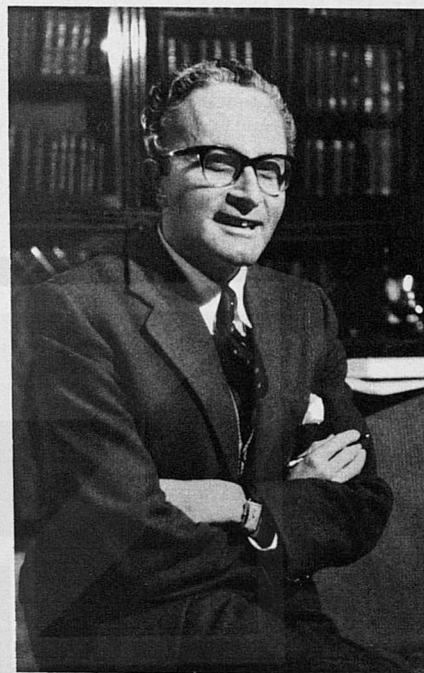
The general views of the new orthodoxy are now backed by a formidable body of academic writing, including the works of Dr. Gunnar Myrdal of Sweden and a number of U.S. economists. They have also achieved wide political currency. In the United Nations there has been prolonged debate about setting up an international development fund (SUNFED), which might command initial resources of some \$300 million. In Britain the Labor party is committed to the much larger proposal that advanced nations should devote no less than 1 per cent of their national incomes to such an international fund—an amount that for Britain would about equal the yearly capital formation of its iron, steel, and chemical industries combined. U.S. economic aid, which on some calculations is now running to over \$1 billion per year, is usually considered unsatisfactory by the more ardent champions of economic development. Thus, in their recent book, *A Proposal*, Professors Walt Rostow and Max Millikan of the Massa-

chusetts Institute of Technology advocated that the U.S. should commit itself over a five-year period to a \$10-billion development program. And more popular writers have tended to endorse this approach, and have also favored very large outlays.

In commenting upon this new orthodoxy it is not my purpose to condemn all government economic assistance out of hand or to minimize the possible dangers posed by Russia's latest economic offensive. I do believe that the new orthodoxy has tended to promote some very misleading doctrines and delusions. Specifically, I hold that the doctrine of an unbreakable vicious circle of poverty in the underdeveloped areas is largely a myth. Moreover, I believe that the adoption of comprehensive planning measures by these countries runs the risk of socializing if not Communizing them. Lastly, I would stress that economic development in a meaningful sense is not just an increase in the volume of goods and services a nation produces. It is an increase in goods and services that people want and have freely chosen. It is a widening of human options. This kind of freedom is obviously jeopardized by systems of statist compulsion, which are today all too frequently advocated.

## The not so simple pattern

These are flat conclusions calling for documentation. Let us begin by examining a little more closely what may be called the basic arithmetic of economic development and nondevelopment. As already noted, the current orthodoxy on this subject divides the non-Soviet world into two primary groups—the first including the U.S., Canada, most countries of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, and often Japan. The second group includes most of the remaining nations and areas of the world—a colossal aggregate including nearly two billion human beings. This division of the world into rich lands and poor, however, turns out to be arbitrary. True, using income per capita figures, it is possible to divide the globe into almost any number of different combinations. Thus the U.S., with average per capita income of over \$2,000, can be said to be more



P. T. Bauer

Among students of economic development P. T. Bauer has earned a special position through his willingness to challenge many popularly held beliefs. He has traveled extensively in West Africa and the Far East and is Smuts Reader in Commonwealth Studies and Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University. He is the author of the recent book *Economic Analysis and Policy in Underdeveloped Countries* and co-author of *The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries*. The accompanying article has been adapted by FORTUNE from a longer paper prepared for the magazine by Mr. Bauer. The article does not pretend to pass judgment on the question of U.S. foreign economic aid, now being debated in Congress. It does raise issues that need to be considered in framing any sensible long-range policy. Next month, in concluding its series on World Markets, FORTUNE will sum up its own conclusions and proposals in the field of U.S. and foreign economic policy.

developed than, say, Switzerland, with per capita income of \$1,100, and Switzerland is more developed than Britain, with per capita income of about \$900; and almost all European nations are richer than those of many parts of Asia and Africa where per capita incomes run from \$200 or so to much lower figures.

Yet all students of economic development, including those of the new orthodoxy, emphasize that such figures are subject to large qualification. Thus Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, in his little book, *Rich Lands and Poor*, while stating that the facts of international inequalities “fall into a definite and simple pattern,” defines this pattern in terms of *real* income per head. And real income is not subject to easy measurement, especially when human satisfactions are taken into account. Again, it should be obvious that no comparison of present





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The major movie companies now emulating U.A. in wooing the independents cannot, in the nature of things, allow them the leeway that U.A. does. After all, the majors have a lot of money tied up in studio facilities, and they like to rent these to the independents they are backing. But what the majors consider a desirable arrangement can be a pain in the neck to an independent. As a New York banker who loans money to the movie industry explains, the independent working with one of the majors is apt to find his costs

inflated by a fee of 25 to 40 per cent of the total for studio rent: "And on top of that, at the studio, Poppa [meaning the studio boss] is too close, watching everything you do. At U.A. there's no overhead and no Poppa."

"Only United Artists has a system of true independent production," says producer Otto Preminger. "They recognize that the independent has his own personality. After they agree on the basic property and are consulted on the cast, they leave everything to the producer's discrimination. Most of the time, when the others make an independent contract, they want to be able to approve the shooting script and the final cut."

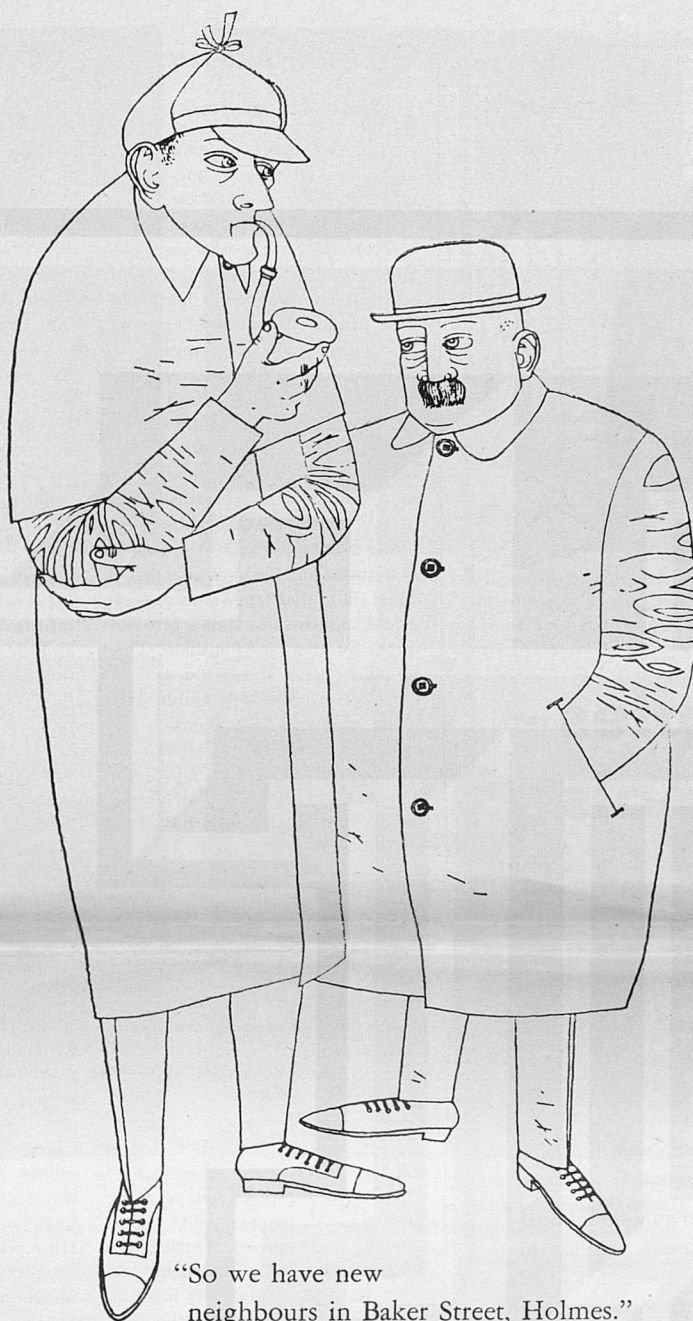
Director Stanley Kramer becomes almost poetic in his tribute to Benjamin and Krim. "This is the sunset phase in the movie business," he says somberly. "Right now, it's knuckle, knuckle, knuckle, and each picture we produce has to be a specific jewel in itself, made with talent and prayer. The creative people are the only ones who can do this. At U.A., they believe in letting the creative person create the film. As long as the climate there stays as it is, I don't want to be any other place."

"When we first started to finance," Benjamin says modestly, "we knew what we wanted and what we stood for, but it took some time to convince producers of this. Friends in the industry told us that we couldn't leave the producers *completely* alone, that we *had* to have a man watching them. This gave us a lot of food for thought, but we finally decided

*continued page 158*

\*EDITORS' NOTE: The tragic death in an airplane accident of producer Mike Todd (*Around the World in 80 Days*) occurred after the plates for the cartoon illustrating this article were on the press.





"So we have new  
neighbours in Baker Street, Holmes."

"Quite so, my dear Watson,  
Young & Rubicam, advertising agents.  
They sell things, I believe."

On March 31 our London office moved into new and larger quarters at No. 8 Baker St. Similar expansions in other Y&R International offices appear to support the deduction made by the perspicacious Mr. Holmes.

Young & Rubicam, Inc., New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Montreal, Toronto, London, Mexico City, Frankfurt, San Juan, Caracas.





## He Had Principles— About Principals

In London in the year 1810, a harried insurance broker was called before the Parliamentary Committee to give evidence about his profession. With almost frightening candor, he said—

*"The labour, the agitation of mind, the perpetual vexation is not to be described. I would rather begin the world over again and pursue any other line. It is painful to a degree; we can hardly ever satisfy our principals."\**

If there was ever an endorsement for *not* going into business, surely that must be it. But despite such gloomy portents, Messrs. Johnson and Higgins founded their insurance brokerage business in 1845 to fill a vital place in the American economy.

Since then, Johnson & Higgins has developed into an international organization offering complete insurance brokerage service to business and industry. Modern facilities, a staff of specialists in all phases of insurance, and the benefit of over a century's experience are probably why—unlike our 19th-century friend—we can almost always satisfy *our* principals.

\*From Lloyd's of London, by D. E. W. Gibb, St. Martin's Press

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## United Artists

*continued from page 141*

that all we really wanted was to keep out and to give our opinion only when it was asked for."

Their high resolves were put to a severe test on the first big movie they financed entirely: *Apache*, starring Lancaster as a heroic Indian, produced by Hecht-Lancaster. The script called for Lancaster to bite the dust in the last reel.

Now, in the golden days of the old-time movie mogul, anyone proposing such a doleful ending—*kill the hero*—would quickly have found torn-up bits of his contract, together with vitriolic abuse, fluttering around his ears. And indeed, Benjamin and Krim were worried. They felt that the hero's death would reduce the movie's gross receipts by at least \$1 million. They thought "Burt should be alive at the end—wounded possibly, but living." Should they mention this to Burt? Should they tell him his demise could cost them all \$1 million in the gross? They decided—no. (Would Harry Cohn have held his peace? Would Louis B. Mayer?) Some of Lancaster's associates came to Benjamin and Krim and pleaded with them: "Tell Burt to live." Again they pondered, again bravely decided they must not intervene.

As it happened, Lancaster changed his mind anyhow, and the hero at the end was in the condition B. and K. desired for him: wounded but, thank God, alive.

### Pints of blood

In February, 1951, when Benjamin and Krim assumed control of U.A., the company desperately needed new management talent, money, and movies. During the long negotiations before their takeover, they had tentatively lined up the men who now make up the executive staff, so the management problem was quickly settled.

For money they turned first to the Chicago commercial-finance company of Walter E. Heller, which agreed to loan U.A. \$1,500,000 for prints and advertising plus \$2 million to help finance new movies. The company was able to borrow another \$500,000 from Twentieth Century-Fox by agreeing to give its print business to Fox's DeLuxe Laboratories.

Now the problem was movies. Virtually no new ones had been put into U.A.'s distribution system for eight months, mostly because few producers cared to entrust a picture to an outfit so visibly coming

apart at the seams. The new managers got hold of five that had actually been made for U.A. but withheld by their producers. A search through film vaults in Europe supplied a few more.

Then, with a promissory note for half a million dollars, Benjamin and Krim bought distribution rights to the inventory of the short-lived Eagle Lion company, which the late Robert Young had organized in 1946. There were 300 features in the inventory, and even though most of them had been around the circuit once, they would give the new managers a breathing space for the rest of 1951.

Then two big ones came over the transom. Stanley Kramer, a U.A. director-producer for many years, had gone to Columbia just before the new management took over (he returned in 1955). Kramer had an almost completed picture that he had begun for U.A. Columbia thought it "a western without action," and was happy to let U.A. have it. The picture: *High Noon*. The worldwide gross: \$12 million.

Soon after, Walter Heller learned that independent producer Sam Spiegel was making a movie with British money and needed a loan to cover dollar costs. Heller put up the cash and got U.S. distribution rights for U.A. The picture: *African Queen*. The domestic gross: \$4,300,000.

By the end of 1951, U.A. was out of the red, and showed a profit of \$313,000. But the future was far from certain. Heller's \$2 million had been thinly spread to provide financing for ten small pictures. The Chemical Bank had put a little money into U.A. productions, but there was still no money for major financing. So B. and K. spent their time cultivating bankers and scrambling to get funds for low-budget films. Recently Krim looked over a list of U.A.'s releases during this period and sighed: "Every time I see these titles, I think of all the pints of blood they represent."

### Over the hump

In 1953, after U.A. had completed a second profitable year, Bankers Trust of New York agreed to finance two Hecht-Lancaster pictures, and Chemical took on an Otto Preminger. All were hits; the three movies cost \$2,900,000 and grossed \$20 million. Krim and Benjamin were over the hump.

The partnership of Krim and Benjamin dates back to the early Thirties, when they went to work for the New York law firm of

*continued page 162*



# GENERAL ELECTRIC: *These capitalists come from all walks of life*



**GROCERY BOY**

Larry Cichy is learning early how America's capitalism works — his parents gave him his first shares of General Electric stock on his eleventh birthday.



**REPORTER**

Amy Jane Bowles is one of a growing number of women who own America's businesses. More than half of General Electric's share owners are women.



**WELDER**

Leopold Arbour was one of over 14,000 new share owners of General Electric in 1957. The number of G-E share owners has increased 50% since 1952.



**MULTIGRAPH OPERATOR**

Mrs. Longine Furman is typical of people who participate in our "People's Capitalism" by regularly investing part of their savings in shares of stock.



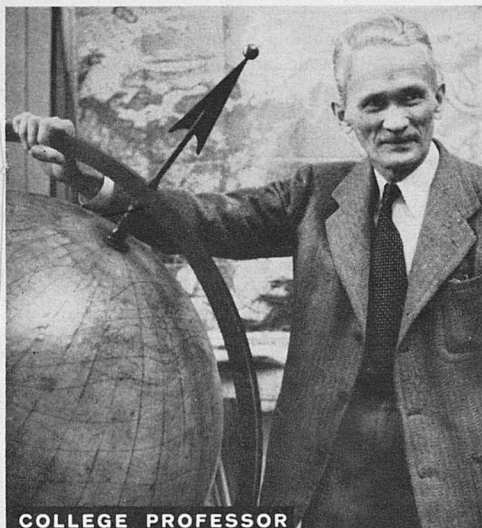
**TRUCKING-COMPANY PRESIDENT**

Share owner Arthur Gallagher is also a General Electric supplier. His firm is one of 45,000 which furnish the company with vital skills and services.



**GENERAL ELECTRIC EMPLOYEE**

Mrs. Ann Shem is an employee-share owner — one of over 133,000 employees who are participating in General Electric's Savings and Stock Bonus Plan.



**COLLEGE PROFESSOR**

Joseph Doty, Professor of History, teaches his students about the past — and invests in the future by owning shares of General Electric stock.



**PENSIONER**

Mary Hammond supplements her retirement income from the General Electric Pension Plan with dividends from the General Electric stock she owns.

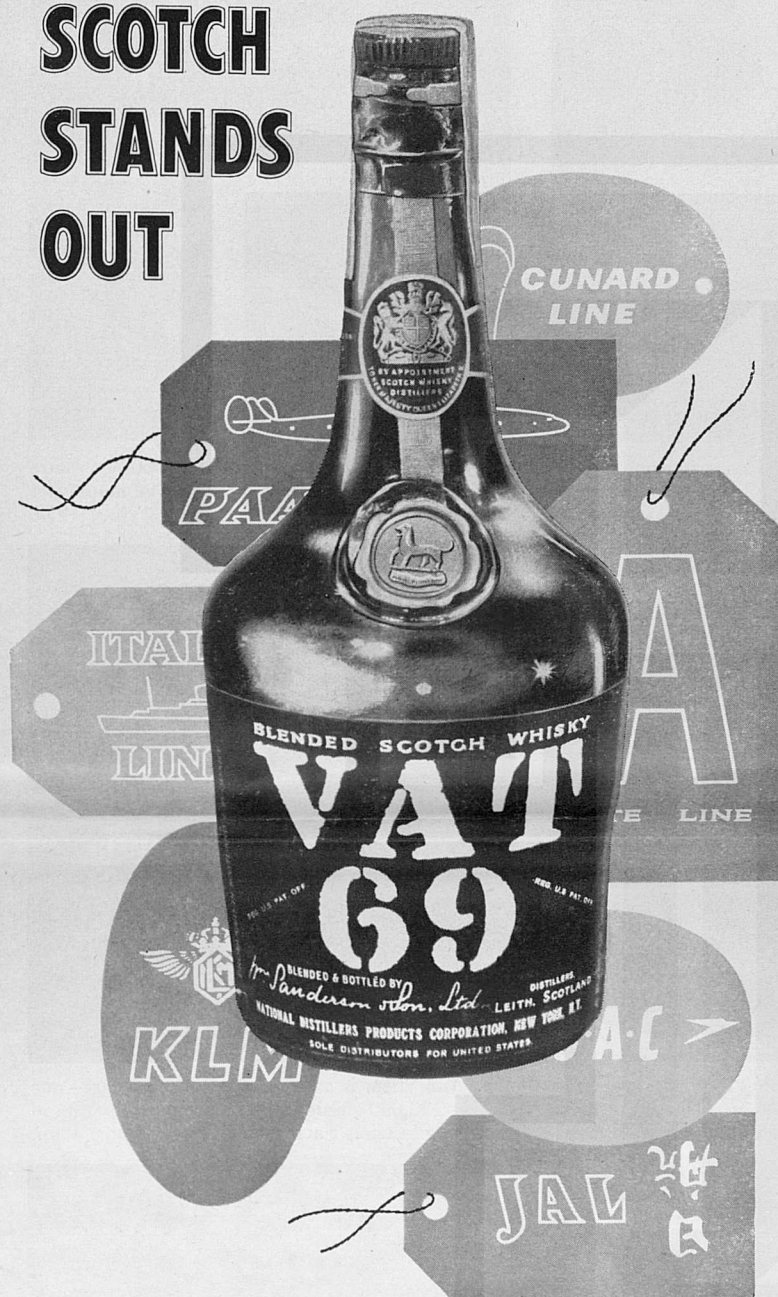


**GENERAL ELECTRIC DEALER**

Long-time share owner Allen Merriam also owns one of the more than 400,000 independent firms which sell and service General Electric products.



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Wherever you travel, you'll find VAT 69 is the one Scotch that stands out. For it is Scotch at its smoothest...driest... and lightest. Tonight, enjoy light, dry VAT 69—you owe it to your taste for Scotch!



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## United Artists continued

Phillips & Nizer (now Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin & Krim). The firm specialized, though not exclusively, in movie business, and still does. By 1936, Bob Benjamin and Arthur Krim were partners in the firm. In the succeeding years they became more and more enmeshed in movie business, not only as lawyers but as company directors and officers as well. By 1942, Krim was a director, treasurer, and general counsel of National Screen Service, a producer of commercial "trailers." Benjamin was a director, vice president, and general counsel of Pathe Film Corp., like Eagle Lion a subsidiary of Robert Young's Pathe Industries, Inc.

Both men joined the Army that year. Benjamin spent three years making indoctrination and historical movies for the Signal Corps. Returning to civilian life in November, 1945, he soon expanded his movie-company connections, becoming a director or officer of four firms in addition to Pathe. One of these was Robert Young's newly established Eagle Lion company, from which Benjamin and Krim were later to buy the library that kept them going in their first parlous year at U.A.

In the summer of 1946, Young was looking for a president for Eagle Lion and Benjamin recommended Krim, who had just been demobilized after his service as special assistant to Army Under Secretary Robert Patterson. Young liked the idea, and Krim went to work. Krim had taken the job with the understanding that it would be financing and general management. By the time he arrived, however, the company had already been committed to a series of high-budget pictures that subsequently flopped. Krim soon found himself in Hollywood, wrestling with production problems. He finally wearied of the daily bickering with Young by long-distance phone, and in 1949 he returned to his law practice in New York. There he and Benjamin, together with everyone else in the movie industry, watched with fascination what seemed to be the long-delayed but inevitable death throes of the "Tiffany of the movie companies"—United Artists.

## Imperious luminaries

United Artists Corp. was founded in 1919 by Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks Sr., and D. W. Griffith. The idea was to provide a medium for the distribution of movies made as independents

by these four luminaries of the silent screen's great days. Later, other independent producers joined U.A. as partners. As might have been expected from the imperious temperaments of the partners, the company's history was marked by a series of stormy clashes. At one point each partner would attend board meetings only if accompanied by a lawyer. Nevertheless, the company got along through the Twenties and Thirties, and its releases were generally considered fine prestige pictures even when they were not spectacularly profitable. By the early Forties the internal squabbling began to have its effect on the management; and the firm began to suffer from a chronic lack of pictures to keep the distribution channels filled and pay for overhead. By the middle of the Forties all the owners but two—Chaplin and Pickford—had sold their shares back to the company, the treasury was empty, and the movie industry as a whole was perched on the brink of decline.

In the dismal years that followed, the fortunes of United Artists steadily declined. In 1948, it lost \$517,000, and in 1949, \$209,000. Then, in July, 1950, Pickford and Chaplin, who had not been helping matters by huffily refusing to speak to each other, made up and announced that a new management team would revive U.A. and that it would be headed by Paul V. McNutt, prominent Democratic politician and former Governor of Indiana.

## Bizarre interlude

McNutt's reign was brief and somewhat bizarre. He came into U.A. with high expectations and a two-year option to buy 90 per cent of the company for no less than \$5,400,000. Within a month, he was looking for help or a way out, and at this point, he was introduced to Benjamin and Krim.

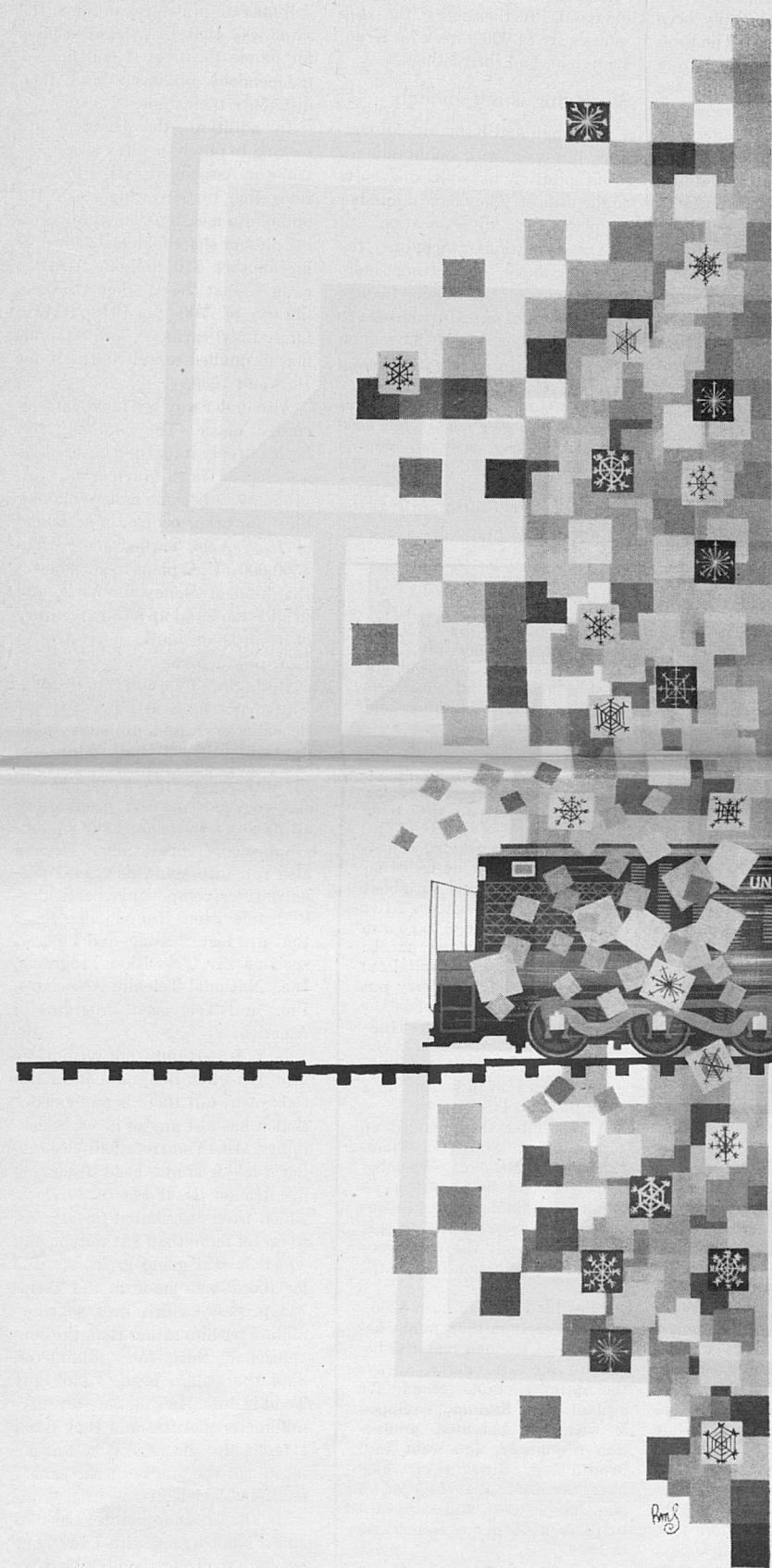
Benjamin and Krim thought U.A. could be saved. The company, they thought, needed two things: a share in ownership of the films it distributed, to give it a continuing asset base; and some way of assuring a constant flow of important movies. Financing independent producers seemed to be the solution.

"Both of us," says Krim, "felt that it could be a strong, healthy company. Its real weakness was lack of management. So we had an interest in seeing whether we could work out some arrangement to put our feelings into effect at some advantage to ourselves."

They felt that McNutt's option was worthless, and they were soon

*continued page 164*

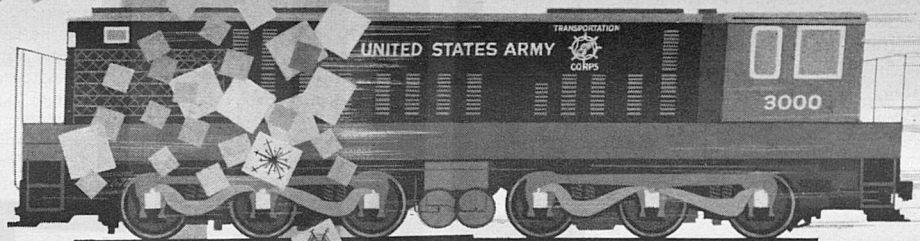




## AT 50 BELOW— THIS STEEL SAYS ROLL!

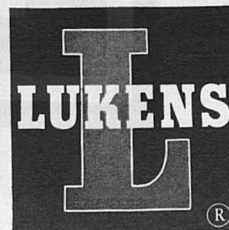
Not even crackling Arctic cold and jolting roadbeds can break the back of this modern Army "mule," developed to follow our forces virtually anywhere in the world. A versatile new diesel-electric locomotive, its main structures are made of cold- and shock-resisting Lukens "T-1" alloy steel. It keeps going in cold where impact can crack and split ordinary steel.

Locomotive builders—and fabricators in many other fields—have long come to Lukens for its special steels and technical teamwork. In fact, when America's first successful locomotive, the Tom Thumb, took to the rails in 1830, Lukens was already a well-established plate mill.



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## United Artists continued

involved in direct and drawn-out negotiations with Chaplin and Pickford. The two stars persisted in thinking the firm was intrinsically worth millions and that Benjamin and Krim should pay for the privilege of trying to revive it. But the two lawyers insisted that they must have "equity rewards for management contribution"—to be paid for managing rather than paying for the privilege. Not until February, 1951 (after a 1950 loss of \$871,000 for U.A.), did the four come to agreement.

The arrangement was a unique one. It provided that if the new management could show a profit in any one of the next three years, 1951, 1952, or 1953, Krim and Benjamin would thereupon acquire 50 per cent of the company's stock for \$8,000. At the same time, a voting-trust agreement would give them full control until 1961.

As we have seen, U.A. ended 1951 with a profit of \$313,000, and B. and K., together with the members of their management team, duly became half-owners of the company.

Intermittently for the next three years there were separate discussions with Chaplin and Pickford about selling their remaining 50 per cent, but agreement seemed hopeless. Then, in February, 1955, Krim received a phone call from Switzerland, where Chaplin had exiled himself. Chaplin was ready to sell for \$1,100,000—but the check had to be in his hands within five days. Krim called Heller in Chicago, got the response he hoped for, and the deal was closed.

A year later, Pickford too at long last agreed to sell. Her price: \$3 million. U.A. borrowed \$2 million, gave Pickford a debenture for the rest. Benjamin, Krim, and partners owned the company.

They held full control for twelve months. In the spring of 1957 the partners placed on the market 350,000 shares of common at \$20 a share and \$10 million in 6 per cent convertible debentures, and soon after the company was listed on the board of the New York Stock Exchange. U.A. class A stock has been paying a quarterly dividend of 35 cents per share; no dividends have been paid on the class B shares held by the managing partners. The class A stock has gone as high as 25%, in mid-March stood around 18.

## Un-Hollywood frugality

Despite Benjamin's and Krim's belief that film ownership was one of the answers to U.A.'s difficul-

ties, the fact is that the company has so far made very little money out of film ownership: profits on a money-maker have generally been offset by losses on a dud. The profits have in the main come from distribution fees. However, the partners consider the company's holdings of shares in the movies it financed a valuable asset: each picture has a residual value that can be realized by re-issue, rental to TV, or outright sale.

The movie industry as a whole has never considered distribution a very profitable part of movie business. U.A. has made it pay by operating with a frugality unknown to Hollywood. U.A.'s overhead is minimal, and, for reasons of frugality as well as flexibility, the partners steadfastly decline to buy studio space or other facilities even when these are practically thrust on them, as they have been, at very low figures. The staff, which shrank

in numbers during the sad years before Benjamin and Krim took over, has been kept lean. Nobody is overpaid, furthermore; the top salaries are \$1,000 a week for Krim, Benjamin, and three others.\*

## Squeezing is not enough

Benjamin and Krim are not content, however, with maintaining a profit position by squeezing costs to the utmost. They have a number of plans for "diversification" of U.A.'s operations, including the obvious move of getting more money out of television. Income from the rental of feature movies to television amounted to \$2 million

*\*By an arrangement that is somewhat unusual, U.A. pays the president's and chairman's salaries to their law firm, of which they remain full partners though they work full time on U.A. business. The company also pays Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin & Krim an annual retainer; in 1957 this was \$128,700.*

in 1956, rose to \$5 million in 1957.

Last fall the company formed United Artists Television. U.A.TV will operate in its area in much the same way that U.A. handles films for movie theatres: it will finance independent producers and then distribute their films.

In addition, the partners are seeking to purchase a television distributor, Associated Artists Productions, Inc., by borrowing nearly \$10 million for a cash payment and giving present shareholders debentures for another \$10 million. A.A.P.'s main assets: the Warner Brothers library of 700 pre-1948 feature films, 1,500 cartoons, and \$25 million in unfilled rental contracts for 1958 and 1959.

Also under way is a move into recorded music. The company has been a deeply interested observer as a string of songs taken from U.A. productions became money-making hits—for other people. (*The Ballad of High Noon* earned more than \$500,000.) U.A. plans to get some of this kind of money for itself, and in addition build up a full inventory of records of music unrelated to U.A. productions.

Both in TV and in records United Artists is arriving with little experience and probably more than a little late. In both fields U.A. will meet some old competitors: all the major movie companies are engaged in TV production; all have or will soon have phonograph-record operations. It will also run into some new, and perhaps stiffer, competition, particularly in television, from smaller firms that are fast, flexible, and hungry, such as Ziv Television Programs, Inc., National Telefilm Associates, Inc., and Television Programs of America.

U.A. is certainly not so hungry as it was when Benjamin and Krim took over, but there is no evidence that it has lost any of its early flexibility. Mike Todd recalled overhearing a major studio head discussing his *Around the World in 80 Days*, which U.A. distributed for a gross, so far, of more than \$31 million and which is still going great. *Around the World* was made in the Todd-AO process, which uses seventy-millimeter film rather than the conventional thirty-five millimeter. Said the studio head, "This guy Todd is nuts. He's making seventy-millimeter pictures and they don't even fit into the cans. How's he going to get the film to fit the cans?" Said Todd, "That's what's wrong with the motion-picture business and it's not wrong with U.A. They get the cans to fit the film." END

## Perry's Translucent Panels

The newest craze in building materials is translucent plastic paneling. The panels, made of rotproof, polyester resin, and nylon, come in various colors, can be nailed, sawed, set in concrete. Builders and do-it-yourself homeowners have been using the panels for factory wall glazing, carports, awnings, interior room dividers, exterior screens, and free-standing walls. (Price per square foot: about 60 cents.) Leader in this new field is David Perry, of El Segundo, California, an entrepreneur who has been successful in textiles and zippers, as a manufacturer of women's slacks, and in apartment-house building. His company, Filon Plastics Corp., is one of the three largest in the young industry (it claims to be the biggest). Last year his sales were \$3,500,000 and the net after taxes was \$214,000. Industry sales, which were next to nothing in 1951, were an estimated \$50 million last year.

Perry (born Poznansky in 1910) is a refugee from the Russian Revolution. He arrived in New York in 1939, aged twenty-nine, with eleven years of business experience in textiles in Europe. He worked briefly in New York and then moved to Los Angeles, where he sold slide fasteners until war allocations put him out of business. Then, with \$4,500, he began manufacturing women's slacks and utility-type sportswear and before long was grossing close to \$400,000 a



year. Soon after the war ended he sold out and started constructing office buildings and apartment houses.

In 1951, when his income was some \$400,000 a year, he read about the reinforced-Fiberglas industry in the *Wall Street Journal*. The article interested him so much that he called on Owens-Corning to find out about markets and applications. After this briefing he decided to go into the business of making panels. The company was capitalized at \$150,000, of which Perry put up \$75,000 and two friends the rest. He persuaded George Huisman, of North American Aviation's reinforced-Fiberglas division, to join him in setting up a small plant in Los Angeles.

A year later they teamed up with Calhoun Shorts of Fiberpane Corp., Bellevue, Washington, who had developed a pilot installation for a continuous manufacturing process. Together they worked out the first semi-automatic production line for the panels.

Sales for 1952 had been \$260,000, and early in 1953 public acceptance of the new material began to increase. Perry, always the optimist, broke ground for a plant at El Segundo, equipped it with the patented production machinery, and went into production. Since then sales have increased an average of 35 per cent per year, and Perry anticipates a 25 per cent increase in 1958.



CARROLL **BAKER** CHARLTON **HESTON** BURL **LIVES**



**ANY BIGGER!!!**

**COUNTRY**

Co-starring

**CHARLES BICKFORD**

with CHUCK CONNORS • ALFONSO BEDOYA • Screenplay by JAMES R. WEBB, SY BARTLETT  
and ROBERT WILDER • Screen Adaptation by JESSAMYN WEST and ROBERT WYLER

Directed by **WILLIAM WYLER** • An Anthony-Worldwide Production • in **TECHNICOLOR®** in **TECHNIRAMA®**

THRU  
**UA**



## "Me and the Colonel"

**Business Rating** Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ

**Funful and sophisticated comedy with Danny Kaye in less frenetic role. Curt Jurgens adds marquee weight. Top-drawer Goetz production. First rate for class situations.**

A new Danny Kaye, for the first time delineating a full characterization without reverting to his familiar clown and capers act, scores happily in this classy comedy from Columbia. Based on a charming Franz Werfel play, "Me And The Colonel", an intelligently conceived William Goetz production with a wartime French countryside backdrop, is a warmly human, ironic and occasionally rollicking enterprise. Mark it down as one of the season's best comedy entries. It should roll up good grosses in metropolitan areas. Class audiences will be delighted. Its basic conceit, that of pitting a resourceful Polish Jew and an aristocratic, anti-semitic officer together on a mad escape from the conquering Nazis, is highly original and provocative. With Kaye as the plucky proletarian and Curt Jurgens as the swashbuckling Colonel who lives, drinks and makes love in the grand style while bombs fall all over, the viewer is regaled during the film's high moments with sparkling shafts of acting and rib-tickling revealing dialogue. Director Peter Glenville and scripters S. N. Behrman and George Froeschel, while ably establishing a tone of civilized fun and fancy, allow the pace to lag at times, and there are a few heavy portions of schmaltz and sermonizing. But, for the most part, it moves at a fast pace. Noteworthy is the make-fun-of-the-Germans angle, running counter to the now-fashionable tolerance bit. Filmed overseas, smartly photographed in black and white with a sterling supporting cast including such foreign luminaries as Francoise Rosay and Martita Hunt, "Me And The Colonel" is a very cosmopolitan affair, another in the increasing list of Hollywood films made for the world-market with the built-in international outlook. Lissome Nicole Maurey makes a piquant mistress for Jurgens and Akim Tamiroff is splendidly befuddled as his orderly. These three and Kaye romp over Nazi-occupied France in a Rolls borrowed from the Rothschilds—just one of Danny's amazing feats. At any rate, in every adventure or escapade it's always the refugee Jew who quietly but shrewdly gets his begrudging Colonel out of trouble. There is even some nonsense of duelling over Mlle. Maurey and some plot-suspense of secret papers. Finally, Jurgens engineers a fantastic plan to save Danny from the Nazis, the two reach the safety of the British and their comradeship is now forever.

Columbia. 109 minutes. Danny Kaye, Curt Jurgens. Produced by William Goetz. Directed by Peter Glenville.

## "Andy Hardy Comes Home"

**Business Rating** Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ

**Andy returns with many members of Hardy family. Should please the family trade. Grown-up Rooney good.**

Andy Hardy is back in basically the same sort of All-American schmaltz and refreshing-as-ice-cream humor which delighted the family audience during the late Thirties. It should receive a hearty welcome from the middle-aging generation who enjoyed Andy so much in the past, and from the younger element who have followed him of late on their TV screens. Sporting a mature (and subdued) Mickey Rooney, now married and happy, responsible father of two kids, M-G-M's "Andy Hardy Comes Home" has a breezy plot that floats along on all the home-life-in-small-town gimmicks that made the famed series

so endearing. Sadly missing is Lewis Stone, the memorable Judge Hardy, but still around are Fay Holden (Ma Hardy), Cecilia Parker (sister Marion) and Sara Haden (Aunt Millie). They, along with Pat Breslin as Rooney's pretty wife, and Mickey's son, Teddy, and Gena Gillespie as his frolicsome progeny, spread a warm and winning glow over everything, shining with both tears and laughter. The Red Doff production is in the Hardy tradition, the direction of Howard W. Koch is strictly for the tender-minded and the script by Edward Everett Hutsching and Robert Morris Donley is just about as complex as a main street hardware store. A novel flashback works in Judy Garland, Esther Williams and Lana Turner when Mickey dreams of his stripling days: these cut strips from old Hardy epics are agreeably nostalgic. Then there's a heart-lifting encounter between Rooney and his son, recalling the man-to-man talks he used to have with the Judge. Johnny Weissmuller, Jr. and Jerry Colonna are added starters. Plot has Mickey return to boyhood town of Carvel, meet resentment from townspeople when he tries to persuade them to let an aircraft plant be established there, get in some romantic entanglement wholly unwittingly, finally exonerated by everyone, offered his father's famous bench, etc. This leaves the way open for continuation of the series, if the paying public proves its interest.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 80 minutes. Mickey Rooney, Patricia Breslin. Produced by Red Doff. Directed by Howard W. Koch.

## "A Tale of Two Cities"

**Business Rating** Ⓢ Ⓢ PLUS

**Dickens' classic comes thru as heavy, pedestrian melodrama. Should hold interest of those who enjoy historical adventure.**

That sprawling novel of the French Revolution by Charles Dickens is on screen once again, this time under the Rank banner, in a faithful but hardly stirring adaptation. Starring Dirk Bogarde in the role of the tarnished hero, "A Tale of Two Cities" should fit the bill for those who enjoy plots of revenge, conspiracy, highly romanticized love affairs and the like set against handsome historical fripperies. Director Ralph Thomas has managed to invest the storming of the Bastille with color, bounce and excitement, and he manages some sharp tension during the Tribunal sequences, bringing the spectator into gritty confrontation with the heat and hate of a mob out for aristocratic blood, but the pace generally is pedestrian. And the Betty E. Box production in black-and-white is heavy-handed. Scripter T. E. B. Clarke doesn't succeed in transcribing a good on-the-page episode into viable cinematic terms. The exhibitor's best hope is to sell this to the family audience and to student groups seeking "culture". Bogarde fails to grasp the character he is playing, so much so that at times we get the Noel Coward version of Sidney Carton. His support, for the most part, is competent. Dorothy Tutin makes a charming heroine and French star Paul Guers is appropriately dashing as the Marquis who loves her. It is about this character that the involved plot pivots. One turn has him the scion of the hated feudal family, the St. Evremondes; another twist has it that the young noble's villainous older cousin had imprisoned Miss Tutin's doctor-father for many years to prevent his revealing the horrible murders and perversities done by the ancient regime. The well-known climax comes when Bogarde, the soused, dejected lawyer, helps Guers to escape, takes his place on the guillotine, happy to redeem his life by self-sacrifice in order to bring happiness to Miss Tutin.

Rank Film Distributors of America. 117 minutes. Dirk Bogarde, Dorothy Tutin, Paul Guers. Produced by Betty E. Box. Directed by Ralph Thomas.



## What They're Talking About

□ □ □ In the Movie Business □ □ □

**HOUSE CLEANING.** One of the major film companies will experience a thorough-going overhaul in its highest executive echelons before the end of 1958. Destined to be swept aside to make room for newcomers are no less than the general sales manager, the director of advertising and publicity and the chief studio executive. That the axe has not yet fallen is a tribute to the nettled company president whose tolerance it is said is fast expiring, and who, insiders maintain, has granted the incumbents time to secure outside positions. It is a fact that this top official has been shuffling across country with airline regularity in order to assume direct personal command of all the reportedly deficient elements of his firm. It is his view that a transfusion is urgently required in order to remain afloat in today's stringent and highly competitive market.

**WARNER BROS. SHRINKAGE.** The industry is much concerned with the unhappy events stalking Warner Brothers, and agree that part of the difficulty may derive from ill-conceived economy moves. The shrinkage aspects are alarming. Watchful observers point to the shrinkage in picture production, the shrinkage in income (deficit of \$184,000 for the nine months ended May 31), and, most seriously, a shrinkage of some \$10 million in gross revenue for the 9 months. How much of this decline can be traced to the shrinkage of the company's sales and promotion staffs? Some industryites refuse to sanction this shortening of sail as mere economy footing, imply deeper-seated problems are at the core, most probably a weakened financial structure. In any event, the Warner belt-tightening is not producing the result originally sought. If anything, claim insiders, the shuttering (and subsequent reopening) of film exchanges impeded the overall sales effort and obstructed maximum revenues. At the same time, the limitation on product is placing a severe burden on those few films in release to defray studio overhead.

**THE COMING BOOM IN THEATRE SELL-OFFS.** It is now an established fact that the majority of top theatre circuits are readying themselves for a wholesale liquidation of subsequent-run properties. The soul-searching is over, as we hear it, with the hard-money view in ascendancy. The preceding months have witnessed a brace of sell-offs, principally among National Theatres (which dismissed nine houses at a loss of \$22,000) and Stanley Warner, but key officials indicate this may be viewed as a mere warm-up. Reasons behind the impending divestitures are manifestly the same as exist in any commercial chain reshuffling: far too many units are failing to pull their weight. As one circuit executive puts it: "The little (sub-run) houses no longer fit into our scheme of things and it's time to kiss them off." Because chains function under standardized

management practice, a certain unity must exist among the outlets in the field. When this unity expires, the outlet becomes a "special situation" requiring coddling and individual attention. At this point it becomes impractical to go further. Ironically, many a house in this category might be profitably managed in the hands of independents close to the operating scene, and it is likely this will be the case in many instances. From the circuits' standpoint, recent earnings statements indicate a general tightening is in order. As matters stand today with the chain operations, the low-grossing houses are serving to depress the overall income rendered by the better theatres.

**J. L. WARNER'S FUTURE.** There is strong feeling in some quarters that Jack L. Warner may not return to active Hollywood service when he recovers from his near-fatal accident at Cannes. Insiders had suggested he may have lost stomach for the film business struggle before the accident, as the result of recent reported differences with financier Semenenko. They aver that the doughty film veteran is faced with a long mending process and will not profess surprise if he turns over the reins of the WB operation to others.

**PARAMOUNT WINDFALL.** The headline-making news that Paramount would show a \$10 million profit for the first six months of the year also revealed that three-quarters of the income was liquidation money derived from the sale of its pre-1948 film library. Thanks to special income of \$7.7 million representing an installment on the sale to MCA of the features for TV exhibition, Paramount reported total net of \$10.3 million, or \$5.58 per share for the first half of 1958. The primacy of film library income to overall earnings is apparent in the estimate of a per share net of roughly \$1.40 with library revenue removed. In the comparable 1957 term, Paramount earnings were about \$2.4 million, or \$1.18 per share.

**BALLYHOO PAY-OFF.** The impression is growing among film executives that thar's boxoffice gold in them thar ballyhoo hills. Some of the recent successes achieved by heavily promoted gimmick offerings are looked upon as proof positive that there is plenty of grossing power in inexpensive films—those with a built-in promotion hook backed by hard-hitting showmanship. Even those film toppers who are sold on boxoffice blockbusters exclusively are investigating the merits of the small film with a ballyhoo kick. The performances of such offerings as 20th-Fox' "The Fly" and Allied Artists' "Macabre" are convincing a lot of people who recently had other notions about this type of product. And now, "The Fiend Who Walked the West", a 20th Century-Fox release, is really making showmen sit up and take notice. If this film was sent out as a run-of-the-mill western, it would be another offering, no better or worse than a dozen other films which it resembles. But, given the shock picture treatment and backed by a first-rate promotional campaign, it might wind up with a gross three times bigger than its original potential.



# Is There Profit Only in the Blockbusters?

We recently asked a select group of prominent theatremen if (1) they agreed with Samuel Goldwyn that we may soon see only 100 features produced per year, and (2) if they find a profitable market for pictures other than the block-buster. The reply of Mr. Samuel Rosen, executive vice-president of Stanley Warner Theatres, was received too late to appear with the other replies, and we are pleased to publish his views here.—*Editor's Note.*

## SAMUEL ROSEN

*Executive Vice-President,  
Stanley Warner Corporation*

You ask three questions in the order named:

- (1) Goldwyn's predictions—What is your reaction?
- (2) Is there a profitable market for pictures other than the "Block Buster"?
- (3) What kind of a product outside of the "Block Buster" are you finding an audience for?

I shall try to answer these questions as clearly and as logically as I know how. They will not be answered in the order asked, but based on my personal experience, some of my answers may make sense, and can perhaps be helpful to all of us.

Let us discuss the matter of the "Block Buster" first. What is a "Block Buster"? A simple answer is a "Block Buster" is an S.R.O. picture.



In my humble opinion, there is no producer living today, no matter how capable and sincere, who can tell in advance whether his picture will be a "Block Buster". The mere fact that the finest ingredients go into the making of the particular picture, including story, stars, directors, technicians, and plenty of money, does not guarantee that when the picture reaches the theatre screen, it will be a "Block Buster".

It is in the lap of the gods or better still, the audience. The making of pictures has always been a gamble and it will be ever thus. The multi-million dollar picture can be a big flop and a picture costing a few hundreds of thousands can be the "Block Buster".

There is only one suggestion I have—that Hollywood continue to make them with a real sincerity of purpose—no cheaters—and a desire that each and every picture that reaches the theatre screen will be of such capacity that it will obtain public acceptance to the point where it will produce satisfactory profit for the producer and exhibitor and at the same time, bring back the lost audience to the theatres.

In my study of motion pictures today and their acceptance by the public, I will say definitely there is a profitable market for pictures other than the so-called "Block Buster" category, provided the pictures contain in them ingredients that are entirely different and new and not the same trite stuff they receive on their television screens at home.

In my opinion, "Old Yeller" was a "Block Buster" and yet it was just a story of a man, a boy and a dog. When I say "Block Buster" now, it is hind sight speaking because neither I nor many men of vast experience in this business with whom

I spoke prior to exhibition of this production could prophesy the boxoffice results.

When you ask about "Off-beat" pictures, frankly, I am at a loss to define an off-beat picture. Perhaps ten years ago "Sayonara" might have been labelled an off-beat picture. I don't believe anybody felt that way about it in this market.

Neither would I call "Kings Go Forth" off-beat. It is just a facet of World War II. Miscegenation ten years ago was taboo as far as the motion picture screen is concerned. Now it is acceptable to audiences large enough to be in the "Block Buster" class, provided it is done in good taste. I wouldn't call that off-beat.

There are certain pictures, however, that are "gimmick" pictures. They are pseudo-scientific, fantastic adventures into space—horror yarns—things that never take place in daily life. By permitting our imaginations to soar, we develop all these stories.

These pictures are good, provided however, they are done well technically and that our appetites don't become satiated with too many of them. I am convinced however, that if we sell these off to television, they will be hurt at the boxoffice just as the westerns were, but despite the fact that TV is crowded with old western films and many TV western series, we now find that some westerns are making a comeback in the theatre. A new breed is being created; adult, fresh locations and situations that producers were fearful of using prior to the current day—a new quality in story telling and an angle that is appealing to a great many who used to sneer at westerns. These productions are recapturing the old audience.

The hardest kind of picture to sell today is straight farce comedy. As a matter of fact, it was always tough to sell because it requires an audience to laugh where a situation would become infectious and would induce others to laugh also. Plenty of comedies were done prior to World War II, and after World War II, about the basic training in the air force, boot camp training in the Marines or training in the Navy with fair and mediocre results and yet today, a picture such as "No Time for Sergeants" is panicking the audiences because it has fresh faces—new gags that build into belly laughs but still with the same universal appeal that can draw in the customers.

Hollywood has its problems in production today. We are familiar with that fact, together with approximately 35,000 motion picture theatres—world wide—demanding fresh new motion pictures for their screens, based on the law of supply and demand alone.

I cannot see how anybody can be so sure—even a successful producer as Sam Goldwyn—that the creative force which made Hollywood production the envy of the world—is going to dry up to a shallow trickle of about 100 productions a year. Mr. Goldwyn no doubt thinks that this 100 will be great. I hope

*(Continued on Page 24)*



# FINANCIAL BULLETIN

AUGUST 18, 1958

By Philip R. Ward

**WHO STRUCK JOHN?** In the interminable and classic struggle between theatre ranks and those who manufacture film product, chalk one up for exhibition.

For lo these many years Hollywood has flaunted a surly and slightly superior finger at Joe Exhibitor for his lassitude in beating the drums of showmanship. Now let haughty Hollywood be chary.

The trade journal *Advertising Age* in a recent study of 1955 advertising expenditures hastens to the defense of the theatre industry with these noble statistics: listing ad outlay as a percentage of gross sales, A.A. reports motion picture theatres spend 5.13% of their sales dollar for promotion as contrasted with 2.37% for motion picture production. Thanks to the heft of the theatre branch's ad budget, the total expenditure by the trade is 3.60%.

In rebuttal, Hollywood might offer the reason that newspaper directory advertising accounts for a high portion of the theatre's total promotion, and that this a peculiarity which Hollywood cannot rightly counter with broadsides of its own. Besides, Hollywood might retort, what are mere mechanical listings beside its polished pros in national media?

Joe Exhibitor is not without rejoinder. Observe, says he, the example of the common food stores and the food packers, a choice illustration of comparative outlays by retailer versus supplier. According to *Advertising Age*, retail food outlets as a category spend 0.95% of their total sales income for advertising while the average spent by all food manufacturing concerns is 1.96%. More specifically, canners spend 2.68%, dairy firms 1.97%, cereal companies 4.68%, meat packers 0.57%, bakers 2.55%, confectionery firms 3.14%.

Making the figures all the more impressive to theatre folk are the advertising allowances granted retailers, especially chain super markets, by the makers of shelf goods. Even taking into account subsidies granted to customers, food suppliers appear far easier in parting with the promotional buck than those who fabricate films—easier, that is, in relation to what the retailer spends.

All this might appear to place outraged justice squarely on the side of the theatre interests, if it were not for the suspicion that exhibitors simply do not behave like, respond like, or promote like super markets people, who, as a class, emerge as perhaps the most dynamic in the entire retailing field today.

Quite possibly the answer is hidden somewhere in the field of cooperative effort where each of the contending branches is sure to sense reciprocity and the feel of common muscle on the oars. The matter merits responsible discussion.

**THE DISNEY DOLLARLAND.** T. L. Watson & Co. (NYSE) offers an unusually interesting discussion of film amortization procedure by Walt Disney Productions—and its relation to company profits. Some excerpts: "Film rentals present Disney a recurring source of income. Unlike other movie producers whose film productions soon become relatively obsolete as 'revenue getters', Disney films are shown again and again every few years as a new audience of children becomes of age. The expense of re-releasing a full length Disney film, including advertising, promoting and making new prints, is about \$300,000, and as in the case of 'Snow White', currently to be reissued, Disney Productions expects to net about \$2.5 million.

"One of the most interesting aspects of Disney Productions is its cash flow, (i.e.—earnings plus non-cash charges against income.) A very substantial portion of this comes from amortization of film costs. The policy of Disney Productions has been to charge against current income from a release, that percentage of gross that production costs bear to anticipated total revenues of such release. Upon a film's retirement, after a first run, therefore, it is almost totally written off. In August, 1957, Disney Productions' inventory of 334 films, of all lengths and types with initial production costs of \$68,638,511, was written down to \$3,315,745.

"Presented below is a schedule of cash flow accruing to Disney Productions for the last five years: (all but per share figures are in millions).

	6 mos. 1958	1957	1956	1955	1954
<i>Amortization on film costs</i>	9.53	12.28	11.33	12.69	5.15
<i>Depreciation</i>	.68	1.12	.09	.03	.02
<i>Net Income</i>	1.63	3.65	2.62	1.35	.73
<i>Cash Flow</i>	11.84	17.05	14.04	14.07	5.90
<i>Cash Flow Per Share</i>	\$7.70	11.09	9.13	9.15	3.94

"The cash flow per share is extremely high in relation to the selling price of the stock, a condition typical of the amusement and motion picture industry due to fast amortization of high cost films. We feel, however, that the real impact and important of such high cash flow is found in its re-employment within the company.

In this respect, Disney Productions is outstanding as is shown in the following table:

	1957	1956	1955	1954
<i>Net increase in assets (in 000)</i>	\$7,470.	\$2,624.	\$1,352.	\$734.
<i>Net increase in assets per \$1 of cash flow</i>	\$ .44	.19	.10	.12

"The implications of plowing back such earnings and non-cash charges into new assets are obvious. This efficient employment of cash flow has increased the book value of Disney Productions from \$4.47 in 1951 to \$12.71 in 1957 even though the amortized inventory figure is carried at a fractional value of its inherent worth".



# Viewpoints

AUGUST 18, 1958

VOLUME 26, NO. 17

## A Mutual Aid Program for Film Promotion

It is hard to imagine a field of marketing endeavor more uniquely suited to the skilled practice of cooperative advertising than film business. Few industries can boast, as can ours, so great a preponderance of the pure promotional instinct throughout all phases of its operations. At the manufacturing stage, at the level of distribution and to a higher degree than ordinary in retailing are to be found gifted showmen, individuals so oriented by leaning and reflex as to make this sometimes gaudy, seldom tiresome calling their life's pursuit. Where is the theatremen, no matter his shortcomings, in whom the spirit of the midway fails to prevail? For these reasons, it is natural to suppose that if ever the conditions existed for a smooth rapport in the combined merchandising effort, it is in picture selling. Yet, basic cooperative advertising programs are very nearly invisible beyond the measures granted by distributors to first run houses, and the occasional offerings featured by press books, which, in reality may be construed as mere lip service on the subject.

In its stead goes on a kind of recriminatory parlor game engaged in by film sellers and theatremen alike over which branch wins the promotional laurels when the harvest is high, and who went fishing when it runs the other way. Philip Ward (see *Financial Bulletin* this issue) refers to this condition as the "who-struck-John?" of film advertising, a supercilious wrangle in times when the total industry is beset with the monstrous task of arresting a plummeting sales curve. Prior to advocating a reform, Mr. Ward gives the lie to distributor charges of exhibitor indifference in the discharge of his promotional obligations, by citing some intriguing figures compiled by the magazine Advertising Age from Internal

Revenue records for the year 1955, in which advertising appropriations by industries are shown as a percentage of sales. It develops that the theatre industry in that year (and there is little reason to suspect the percentages are much altered at present) spent 5.13% of its income for the purpose of influencing customers, as contrasted with 2.37% by the makers and sellers of film. This hardly indicates exhibitor lassitude in matters of merchandising. The nagging question is this: Did theatremen receive full value for the dollars statistics reveal they were willing to expend?

The most probable answer is no, certainly not to the extent possible in a systematic, joint promotional effort, which Mr. Ward suggests is the avenue to beefed-up bank balances for all branches of our industry. Though a program of mutual advertising assistance is aimed chiefly at bettering the lot of the subsequent-run theatre, it is by no means a one-sided affair. A veritable comstock lode is within grasp of distributors who heretofore may have been hasty in dismissing sub-run revenue as mere icing on the cake. A fuller exploitation of gross income at this level seems not only possible but likely, given wider promotional implementation. By tradition a distributor's ad

outlay is much in the vein of the biblical farmers who irrigated only that acreage designed to yield the cost of seed and a year's sustenance. The essential strategy is to work toward the greatest possible aggrandizement of a film's gross in the first run on the theory you must recover your negative costs here. It is no surprise to discover that cooperative subsidies are often plentiful at this point in the marketing effort, and distributors may properly feel self-righteous for the promotional aids extended, despite opinions to the effect that his grants are purely in self-interest. The striving for a fast and furious recoup is perfectly sound business practice, and a distributor's advertising appropriation is sorely needed to inaugurate a film. But where does this leave the countless sub-runs?

It leaves them somewhere between last June's *Life* Magazine spread and the newspaper ads a month later. This is stale support in the wane of August. The slick commercials and sleek broadsides which exploded with such telling impact some weeks, often months, earlier have evaporated into murky residual impressions in the memories of today's consumer, hounded as he is by advertisers brandishing limitless distractions which do not suffer the peculiar immediacy of films. No one decries the need for national advertising and other help offered the initial run situation for the distributor must make it at this stage, if at all. But it is blinking at the facts to expect promotional campaigns which are by now dog-eared, tired and spent to sustain subsequent-run exhibitors in their present problem in anything but the most marginal way.

A possibly profitable solution would commit the film seller to approach his advertising plan at two distinct levels.

(Continued on Page 21)



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TO: Whom It May Concern  
FROM: David O. Selznick  
SUBJECT: Making a Movie

Famous producer and memo-writer covers everything from death scene to squeaky shoes, providing unique look at filming 'A Farewell to Arms'

*When A Farewell to Arms is released nationally on Easter Sunday one of the first things moviegoers will see is the credit "David O. Selznick Presents. . . ." With this adaptation of Hemingway's tragic romance, the producer of Gone with the Wind (1939) and many other famous films returns to the screen after an absence of 10 years.*

*Already opened in Los Angeles, New York and a number of other cities, Farewell has received a wide range of reviews covering the whole spectrum of critical opinion and it has already proved to be one of the year's blockbusters at the box office. In the leading roles are three top stars: Rock Hudson, the current number one box-office*

*attraction; Jennifer Jones, Academy Award winner and star of many successful pictures who this time, as occasionally in the past, is starring for her husband, David Selznick; and Vittorio De Sica, the Italian director-actor.*

*During the filming of Farewell to Arms, Selznick wrote 10,000 messages to his associates. For 30 years, his memos have been famous in Hollywood for their content, range of interest and staggering volume. Those on Farewell, from 30 pages to a single sentence in length, give a revealing and fascinating look at both a movie and the perfectionist who, absorbed in every detail, made it. Here is an excerpted sampling.*

TO: Ernest Hemingway, Cuba

11/9/55

Happy advise you have bought *Farewell to Arms* for my return to production and hope to do job that will please you. . . . David Selznick

TO: John Huston (Director)

10/25/56

News your availability *Farewell* happily just in time to keep me from necessity closing with one of four other prominent directors STOP Ben Hecht myself have finished fifth draft and honestly think best script many years STOP fervently hope can candidly express my fears concerning your doing this job without offending you or reducing chance your acceptance STOP firstly want Huston not half Huston and frightened lest your preparations *Typee* overlap completion *Farewell*, which please remember marks my return after many years and thus most important picture of my career. . . .

Because of your tight schedule and also because extent to which I personally produce in every sense of word, I am perhaps not unnaturally worried lest unquestioned eminence of your present position would cause you to resist and resent functioning as director rather than director-producer. . . . Affectionate Regards, David

TO: Ben Hecht (Screenwriter)

12/19/56

If you get a little free time, I wish you would think about what we are going to do with the opening section of the love story. Everybody thinks that it is shortchanged, and fails to understand when, where and how this deathless idyll between Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry got started. I know, I know: our script does much more than Hemingway—but this is another instance of Hemingway "writing on water" as you put it, or successfully telling his story "in the white spaces between the lines," as Huxley put it. Unfortunately or no, we haven't the white space and have to really get this love story going. . . .

Let's really try to do a job that will be remembered as long as *Gone with the Wind*, something that we can be proud of for years to come. Love, D.

TO: Arthur Fellows (Production Executive, Rome)

1/4/57

. . . Regarding the selection of a hairdresser, the appearance of the woman star in this picture, as in any picture, is far more important to its success than the difference between one Alp and another. This is not to minimize the difference between one Alp and another! Rather it is to stress the importance of Jennifer's hairdress. . . . DOS

TO: Arthur Fellows

2/6/57

I am greatly concerned lest anybody get hurt—and much more about anybody getting killed—in the course of the production of *A Farewell to Arms*.

Spectacles of this kind are always dangerous. Paul Kohner [Huston's agent] told me that six people will be killed on this picture. I told him that this was utter nonsense and that nobody was going to be killed.

This means care as to the selection of explosives. It means people in

charge of the explosives who know what they are doing. It means that care will have to be taken in handling weapons—and no repetition of the sort of thing King Vidor told me about concerning his futile protest against the use in *War and Peace* of wooden instead of rubber sabres and bayonets. It means not riding people off a bridge who are not stunt people, and being very sure that our stunt people actually are stunt people. It means having doctors on hand, and nurses. There is no movie in the world that is worth the death of a single person. There is no movie in the world that is worth serious injury to a single person. I don't give a damn if the whole picture suffers, much less one scene. DOS

TO: Shirley Harden (Selznick's secretary)

2/19/57

Rock Hudson must recognize from the script that he has to row very well, and obviously be professional at it—otherwise the sequence on the lake would be a little ridiculous. Accordingly, unless he already rows very well, he ought to start studying it at once, even before he leaves Hollywood. . . . DOS

*From his offices in Rome, where he had gone to supervise the preparations for production, Selznick showed the first signs of concern about the casting of one important bit role, that of Count Greffi, a wise and aged bon vivant who briefly encourages Frederic Henry in his love for Catherine Barkley.*

TO: Jenia Reissar (Casting Representative, London)

2/22/57

As to the aged Count Greffi, I am eager that this be played by someone

CONTINUED

JENNIFER JONES AND ROCK HUDSON PLAY HEMINGWAY'S TRAGIC LOVERS







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 'THE SMARTEST THING ON TWO FEET'  
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## MAKING A MOVIE CONTINUED

with a real mastery of the language, able to get every nuance of what I regard as a splendid scene, one of Hemingway's best in the book. Unless this scene is played brilliantly, its chances of remaining in the final picture will be slim. I have not been able to get Felix Aylmer out of my mind for the part. . . . DOS

*After about a month of preparations Selznick and Director Huston began to disagree on a number of matters, among the most important of which were last-minute changes of the script, already in its ninth draft. At the time the following memo was written, sequences involving the principal performers were scheduled to go before the cameras in three weeks.*

TO: John Huston

3/4/57

. . . I went through with Ben Hecht every single point that you and I discussed during his absence. It was not just a case of molli-ying Ben, who was very angry, but of listening very carefully to what he had to say about our hasty decisions on a script to which he and I had devoted so many months. . . .



FIRST DIRECTOR John Huston quit before filming.

In the dialogue scenes you and I have made cuts of material, simply because it was not in the original Hemingway scenes. . . . And I think we may also have gone wrong in adding material simply because it *was* in Hemingway. I certainly want Hemingway to like the picture, if this is at all possible, which I doubt, because—as those who worked on *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Old Man and the Sea* learned—if a character goes from Cafe A to Cafe B, instead of from Cafe B to Cafe A, or if a boat heads north instead of south, Hemingway is upset. . . . I for one have no pledges to Hemingway to sacrifice the film and my future to excessive fidelity. . . . a fidelity which as it stands exceeds even that of *Gone with the Wind*, with which not only a couple of hundred million people but Margaret Mitchell herself were delighted. . . .

The responsibility is mine. Accordingly, today I overruled Ben in many of his objections, as I deeply regret I must now overrule you in relation to others. Cordially. DOS

TO: Arthur Fellows

3/9/57

I remember once on *Gone with the Wind* hearing Victor Fleming demand some dogs. They asked if he needed a dozen, and he said: "Hell no. Bring me a hundred." I thought he was overdoing it, but I was amazed to find how right he was, how much they contributed to the scenes of the men going off to war and the evacuation of Atlanta. I'd like you to assign one of your assistants to take charge of supplying plenty of dogs and also cats on all of the location exteriors, even in the smaller scenes. . . . DOS

*The most highly publicized event of the filming of A Farewell to Arms was the break between Selznick and Huston. The following is a condensation of a climactic 16-page memorandum from Selznick in which he laid out to Huston the main points of disagreement and gave him a choice.*

TO: John Huston

3/19/57

I would be less than candid with you if I didn't tell you that I am most desperately unhappy about the way things are going. It is an experience completely unique in my very long career. It is an experience I feel is going to lead us, not to a better picture, as you and I discussed the other evening, but to a worse one—because it will represent neither what you think the picture should be, nor what I think it should be. . . . I have the greatest respect in the world for Hemingway, but my ego—and also my record—doesn't permit me to think that Hemingway can prepare a motion picture better than I can. On the contrary, I know damn well that he can't. . . . and I also know damn well that our

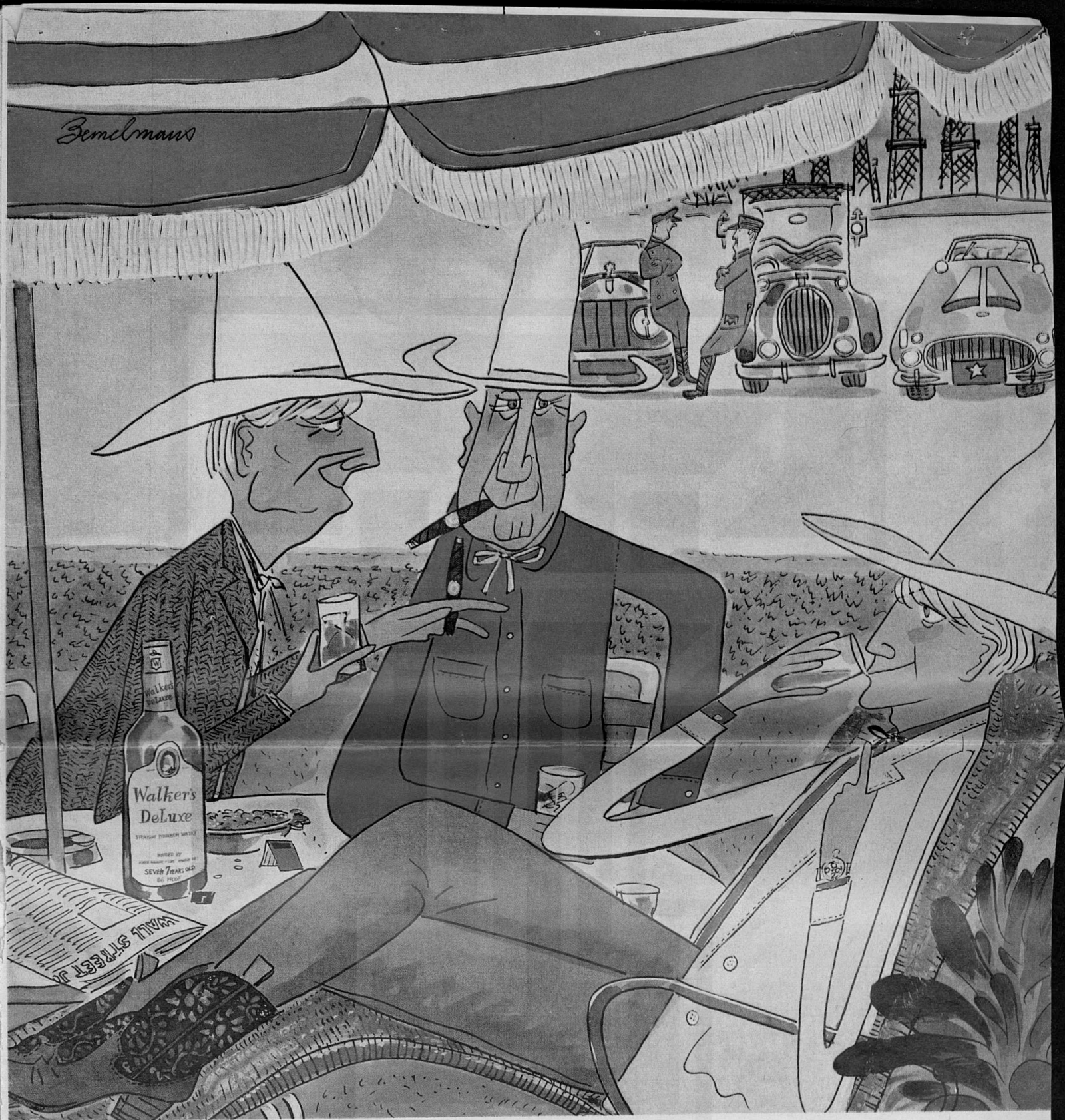


WRITER Ben Hecht revised the script 10 times.

script is infinitely better than a script resulting from these attempts, step by step, week by week, and what could be month by month, to go back to the few things, the cinematically bad or omitted things, based upon the book, which I have studied for nine months, and the qualities and faults of which for motion picture purposes I know, and which

CONTINUED





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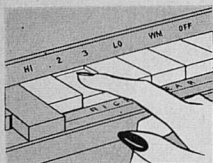
Straight bourbon, of course—7 years smooth—elegant in taste



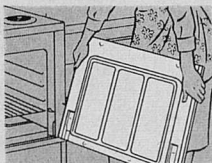
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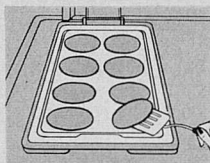
Wouldn't you like to be able to ...



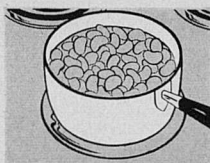
Press a key and get fast, clean, controlled heat that is just-right for your every cooking need?



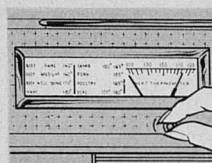
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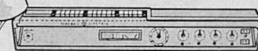
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## MAKING A MOVIE CONTINUED

book I am finally prepared to throw away, having wrung it dry. . . .

But speaking in its broadest terms the book is a romance. The book is a love story. We cannot now, particularly at this stage, change the Hemingway concept of a love story into the Huston concept of a war story. . . .

Let me say, John, that fervently as I want you to direct the picture, I would rather face the awful consequence of your not directing it than go through what I am presently going through. . . .

I am not asking you to resign; I am merely telling you the circumstances under which I think you can continue. If you do decide to resign, you may be sure I would protect you to the fullest, and that I would be perfectly prepared to emerge, with your friends among the New York critics and with the entire industry, as the tyrannical producer who didn't understand a gifted artist. I am used to that role. I have coped with it before. I have learned that nothing matters but the final picture. . . .

As you are an individualist in your way, so too am I in my own. In this case there cannot be two individualists: there can only be one—and under my obligations and by my training, and consistent with your discussions and agreements, both before and after you agreed to do the picture, this can only be myself. . . . This certainly doesn't mean that if you decide to do the picture and to do it enthusiastically I don't want every bit of directorial talents and gifts that you can give to it. I would have to be a fool—and I don't think you think I am that—to want anything else. Very, very sincerely, DOS

TO: John Huston

3/21/57

Arthur Fellows has informed me that you received my memorandum dated March 19, and that you discussed its contents with him; that you said in effect that you could not only not agree with my decisions on the script, but could not see eye-to-eye with me on other matters; and that under the circumstances you could not possibly direct the picture. . . .

Under the circumstances we are proceeding accordingly to engage a substitute director, your services on the film having been terminated by you. Very truly yours, David O. Selznick

TO: Ben Hecht

3/30/57

The attached on script changes is largely my writing and rearrangement. It's not good enough. Ben Hecht can do a lot better.

Go to work, and the god of the movies be with you. David

TO: Barry Brannen (Lawyer)

4/1/57

We need a director here Thursday morning prepared to shoot STOP think we had better quit vacillating and settle on Charles Vidor. . . . Selznick

*Hemingway's depiction of demoralized Italian forces, especially during the retreat from Caporetto in 1917, so outraged the Italians that his novel was banned in that country for many years. To get necessary governmental approval to film A Farewell to Arms against its original settings, Selznick negotiated some modifications with the Italian authorities. The following is an excerpt from a memorandum to the various ministries concerned.*

4/1/57

It is our understanding that you are very pleased generally with the script of *A Farewell to Arms*. It is our further understanding that you are happy with the extremes to which we have gone to give a more rounded portrayal of the Italian military effort in World War I, and a reminder of the splendid Italian victories against the Austrians and the Germans; with the omissions from the script of certain episodes in the book that in our judgment, as confirmed by you, might have been offensive to Italian sensibilities. . . .

However, consistent with your request and suggestions, we also pledge ourselves to the following alterations:

On page 27, Scene 29, we shall delete or change the script relating to the eating of the spaghetti. . . .

Pages 126 and 128. In the execution of the "Hatless Man" and also in the execution of the character named Rinaldi, the firing squad will in each case complete the execution with the first fusillade. . . .

Very importantly, we shall add, in accordance with the suggestion of the Defense Ministry, a scene showing fresh and very young troops moving up to the front, after the retreat. This will probably be in the sequence at the railroad station at Milan. . . . David O. Selznick

TO: Nancy Green (Production, N.Y.)

4/19/57

I have written Arnold Weissberger about chances of getting Alfred Lunt to play Count Greffi. . . . DOS

TO: Charles Vidor (Director)

4/23/57

. . . I have asked the casting office to have available for you, starting tomorrow morning, a pool of wonderful Italian types: infants

CONTINUED

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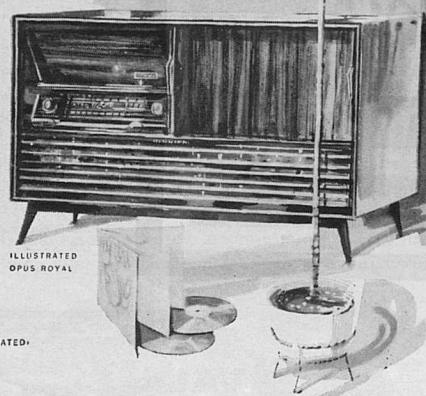
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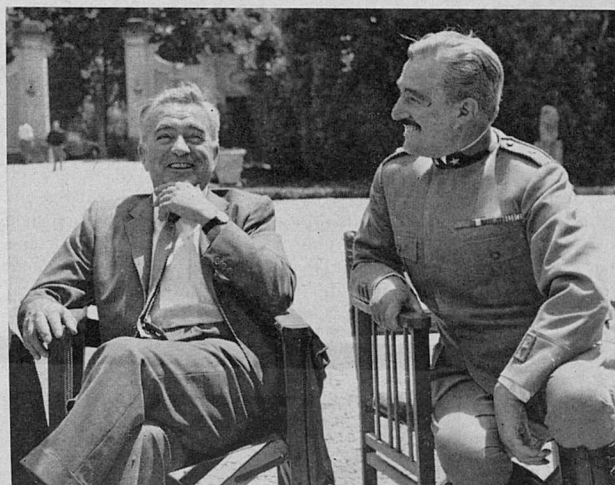


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FINAL DIRECTOR Charles Vidor (left) replaced John Huston. Here during a shooting break Vidor jokes with the Italian director-star, Vittorio De Sica.

### MAKING A MOVIE CONTINUED

and small children, even twins (which are so often seen in Italy, far more by actual statistics than in any other country), old men and women, strong young faces, and also the lame, the halt and the blind.

One good face in the foreground, one good piece of business, is worth more than a thousand troops; and one piece of interesting architectural detail, hundreds of years old, is worth more than thousands of dollars' worth of sets. . . . DOS

TO: Charles Vidor (Director)

5/14/57

I must say that Jennifer, in what is now my strong opinion, knew what she was doing when she asked for a "business appointment" with me today to discuss her deep disturbance concerning the change that we have made in her first scene with Henry in the Milan Hospital.

We have with the rewrite lost entirely the desperate hunger of these two for each other—in what Hemingway has called his "Romeo and Juliet," meaning partially and obviously the mad passion of two people for each other who scarcely know each other—by investing this scene with all sorts of complicated psychology. . . .

Jennifer feels that whereas Ben Hecht and myself have seemingly succeeded in matching Hemingway everywhere else, this scene sounds totally unlike Hemingway, totally unlike the characters in the rest of the picture, and extremely cliché. (Ben himself mentioned that some of the lines in this edited version of the scene sounded like song titles.)

Jennifer had all sorts of other effective arguments, and I must say I was greatly impressed with her logic. Additionally, I am mindful of the fact that she has now studied the role—and, I assure you, day and night—for months. . . . As I think you will discover, Jennifer is a very creative actress, who brings to a scene the benefits of intense study and her gifts as an actress. (Incidentally, please let me mention that I think you would be well advised always to let her play the scene for you first as she sees it, of course then feeling free to re-direct it as you see fit; but since she is so completely disciplined as an actress, if you direct her before getting her conceptions, I am fearful that you will lose the benefits of the intense and very lengthy study that she always gives to her roles and has given particularly to this role. . . .)

Further regarding the opening love scene, I hope you will not feel that I am approaching this on the basis of Jennifer's feelings, but rather of my convictions, because actually Jennifer had a rather rugged time with me persuading me, and I have long since learned to be on my guard against the criticisms of even the most gifted actors. But I must say, after much thought, that I think she is one hundred percent right, and I hope you will think so too. Accordingly, I have gone back to Hemingway in revising the scene. . . . DOS

TO: Production Staff

5/22/57

That idiotic number of umbrellas in the exodus from Orsino—which, thank goodness, I personally cut down at least partially in number—is going to haunt us in the retreat. . . . DOS

TO: Ben Hecht

5/25/57

I think what we are getting on the screen is just fine. I am particularly pleased with our cast, and with the fine job that Charles is doing

CONTINUED





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## MAKING A MOVIE CONTINUED

in getting their best work out of the actors. But the picture has increasingly become an obsession with me, and I can't get my mind off it, day or night. . . . Let me get down to at least the major things that are disturbing me. . . .

The Rinaldi [played by Vittorio De Sica] which we created, who dies during the retreat, appears in the film we have shot to be an entirely different Rinaldi from the one we see in the early sequences. In the first half he is a clown, with nothing on his mind but girls. In the second half, he is the sick philosopher, through whom we express much of the theme of our story. . . . I attach hereto script suggestions to meet this point.

Another point I want to stress with you is the development of the role of Frederic Henry. Henry cannot be a deserter because of thoughts of Catherine. He must desert, he must say his farewell to arms, because of a new maturity in him that makes him realize the horror of war, and he must be vitally affected by the disaster in which he is participating. Nor can this be the story of a man who quits the war, and deserts, because his best friend was killed. Rather it must be the story of a man who has had his bellyful of the nonsensical slaughter and who wants no more of war—or the whole picture loses greatly in size and importance. . . .

This calls for your most skilled writing—for the best of Hecht, as though he were writing one of his great novels. Affectionately, DOS

TO: Charles Vidor

Attached to this memorandum is a ditto copy of research material on both reviews and publishing history of Hemingway's book. A strange thing has happened: with Huston I was forever fighting against his slavishness to the book; with you I have just the reverse problem because of your repeated statements that the book is not the Bible, and that we shouldn't feel obliged to follow it! . . . Forgive me if I say that I don't think anybody in the history of the picture business has ever had as much success in adapting celebrated books as I have (I might mention *Gone with the Wind*, *Rebecca*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Anna Karenina* (Carbo version), *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *Tom Sawyer* and several others). In each case I was by no means a slave to the book; in each case I succeeded to an extraordinary and fortunate extent in convincing audiences that I *had* been a slave to the book, so that there was no resentment. In each case I insisted that my judgment be followed as to what should be retained and what should be thrown away and what should be changed—and, moreover, as to what should be telescoped and what juxtapositions should be changed, for purposes of dramatizing. The same has been true of the script of *A Farewell to Arms*. . . . David

In a newspaper interview about the Huston resignation, Selznick commented that he had wanted a first violinist, not a conductor. His memos to Director Charles Vidor occasionally drew angry responses: once Vidor retorted that what Selznick actually needed was a piccolo player. The following heavily excerpted exchange was prompted by Selznick's worries over the shooting of a brief scene.

TO: Charles Vidor

5/26/57

. . . I am bothered by the stirring of the gruel for such a long period of time in the kitchen scene. I think it is going to be a bore. Couldn't the nurse be fiddling with an Italian coffee machine and/or preparing Italian bacon, etc., since we make a point of Henry not being so fussy about the bacon? . . . DOS

Dear David:

5/27/57

I received your memo regarding the kitchen scene STOP in the light of my past performance on this picture alone I find it idiotic and I think that by the light of Monday morning you will too STOP the memo indicates that you think that you have on your hands a hopelessly inexperienced director STOP if you don't stop I will think that I am stuck with a totally inexperienced producer STOP now for heaven's sake let me function or else come down and shoot it yourself. Vidor

TO: Charles Vidor

5/27/57

I am sorry you felt impelled to send that wire. I had not thought that our relationship would have permitted it. And I don't believe I've ever used such terms with you as "idiotic." I may have thought your excessive takes and angles were idiotic, but the most I've said was that they were a waste of my personal money. . . .

It is only two days since you were flattering enough to be enthusiastic about my memoranda, and to ask me to "keep them going." I am now confused: am I to keep sending them, but first to screen them through your sensibilities? . . .

Now let's have lunch together, and get on with the show! Cordially, David

CONTINUED ON PAGE 105



**GRIM RETREAT** of the Italians from Caporetto is one of film's spectacles. In novel Hemingway had stressed military defeat at hands of Austrians. Selznick emphasized civilian side of catastrophe in order to accommodate Italian sensibilities and governmental requirements.



## MAKING A MOVIE CONTINUED

TO: Stephen Grimes (Sets)

6/4/57

I am now a little concerned that we have gone too far with the aging and tearing down of the Milan hotel room. It now looks filthy dirty, and I can't imagine Catherine being anything but desperately eager to get out of it. The point of the scene of course is that the atmosphere of the lobby, the attitude of the people in the lobby and the atmosphere of the room itself, in Hemingway's words, make her "feel like a whore"; but after she pulls herself out of this feeling, she has lines about the attractiveness of the room, obviously tongue-in-cheek, but still with a certain admiration for the garish "taste" of the people who "go in for vice." She even hates to leave the room, and sends Frederic ahead of her because she wants to take a last look at what has been in effect their first home, even if only for a few hours. . . . DOS

TO: Charles Vidor

6/15/57

The rushes tonight were wonderful. The work of Portalupi [new cameraman] and the change in makeup made the difference of day and night. . . . I am delighted and relieved. David

TO: Nancy Green (Production, N.Y.)

7/27/57

Rapidly approaching deadline Greffi without sufficiently good actor since no point shooting sequence without top personality STOP had pretty well narrowed field Guitry Gielgud Cocteau but Guitry died recently Gielgud Stratford makes him probably unavailable and Cocteau writing many doubletalk letters. . . . Regards, Selznick

TO: Charles Vidor

7/30/57

I think Rock needs to be goosed into the realization that in the scenes he is about to do, starting with the attached revised and lengthened scene before Catherine's death, may lie his best chances for enormously increased stature as an actor. I think if he works all night tonight and is tired, it can only help the mood of the scene—and anyway we know he is a big strong hulk, and therefore if necessary he can go without sleep for the benefit of the most important scenes in the biggest job in his career to date. . . .

The more I think about this, the more I dictate about it, the more I feel that we may be on the verge of something wonderful here. I suppose that no one in the world would realize, or give me credit for feeling, that in this substantial expansion of Rock's monologue might lie its being his picture instead of Jennifer's—but the last person in the world, believe me, who would want it otherwise would be Jennifer. If, after her important delivery scene, and if despite her death scene, Rock can take the picture and walk away with it, she and I would both be delighted—for the greater the picture, the better for everybody, and anyway Jennifer doesn't think in these terms. And I am so grateful to Rock for the superb job he has done to date that I feel we must give him every opportunity to realize the full potential of this extraordinary Hemingway sequence.

The scene has some very strong meat. In particular, I cannot think that at any earlier period of my career I would have suggested we use such a line as "This is the price you pay for sleeping together." But I think

it is a tremendously important Hemingway line, and that we will have no trouble with it, because the picture is a strong moral preachment in any terms, including those of the Code and censorship. . . . David

TO: Nancy Green (Production, N.Y.)

8/1/57

Rushing you copy revised Greffi scene please arrange even advance its arrival see Noel Coward so no time lost arranging appointment when script arrives STOP he would have makeup as octogenarian which think would amuse him. . . . Selznick

TO: Giorgio Adriani (Production)

8/2/57

Taking endless hours to get a simple rain effect on a window is bad enough, but it is really awful when we can't even cut through wardrobe stupidity and stubbornness concerning the squeaky shoes they are giving Rock.

Once again, in tonight's rushes, Rock's shoes squeak disgracefully. By great good fortune it is not under any dialogue. But I am in terror that it is going to be heard under the dialogue of other scenes, the rushes of which we haven't seen yet; and I am particularly concerned lest it destroy the death scene and what follows. I have seen us delay production to "fix the floor," when it was perfectly obvious that it was the shoes themselves, as proved over and over again by the fact that some people's shoes squeak, notably Rock's, and other people's do not.

I should like to be personally informed the next time the shoes squeak (and I am asking you to watch it personally every day—and also to discuss it with Guy Luongo, who I suggest should take over the monumental job of the non-squeaking shoes department). . . . DOS

*Selznick was unhappy with the character emphasis in the first shooting of the all-important death scene. The following is a portion of his instructions for reshooting.*

TO: Charles Vidor

8/6/57

The Death Scene: to begin with, I am sorry but I cannot agree with you at all that this is Henry's scene, or that the drama is in the reactions of Henry. Catherine's death is not only the finish of the character in the picture, it is also the most famous death scene in modern literature. For us to try to convert it into a scene of blubbery schmaltz may, I fear, lead us into the most severe kind of criticism from Hemingway, from the critics, from the lovers of the book, and from those millions of people who expect *A Farewell to Arms* to have the unique qualities of Hemingway. . . .

I am greatly worried that cutting back and forth between the principals would interfere with the flow of the scene; that we may have gone to wild extremes in converting Hemingway's "Henry begins to cry" into the biggest sobbing scene since Al Jolson in *The Singing Fool*; and that we have shortchanged what the scene is all about—Catherine's death—and have made it a scene of "reaction" rather than her death scene. . . .

We have spent tens of thousands of dollars on irrelevant or secondary material, much of which will not even stay in the picture. I feel strongly that we not only can't afford not to, but absolutely must, be very, very certain that this, the most important scene in the picture, is right, and is Hemingway. David



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## MAKING A MOVIE CONTINUED

The bulk of the shooting over, Selznick and the company returned to Hollywood for retakes and editing. The musical scoring of the picture remained to be done, and the following is an excerpted version of Selznick's 30-page letter of guidance to Italian composer Mario Nascimbene.

TO: Mario Nascimbene (Composer)

8/11/57

To generalize: 95% of the time I don't like music that tells word for word what the dialogue tells or what the scene tells. I think that music should establish and aid and abet the general mood, rather than try to tell the story. If the audience is conscious of the music, it means that the music is unsuccessful.

The music overall should have, to a degree, an Italian flavor, except that it must be remembered that we are dealing with an American boy and an English girl and that it is primarily a love story. . . .

On the men climbing up the mountain, singing, in the Advance: I want to hear the voices from way down below in the valley and to get the effect of thousands of voices. It shouldn't sound like an operatic chorus but like actual soldiers. We should use duplicate sound tracks of a small number of Alpini, re-recording them frames apart.

I'll do more with the Advance in the printing and in the editing so that photographically it gets colder and colder as they get higher and higher in the mountains. In the music get a little effect of its getting colder, with cold winds whining through it as they get to the top. You might consider using some bullets and cannon with the music. . . .

Catherine Theme: There must be in this girl's theme a little bit of madness at the beginning, just as she herself talks about it twice. She is a little bit fey and certainly neurotic. There should be a little discord in the melody.

We must have a theme for the dead lover, who is represented by the rattan stick. This theme should be English in nature. Secondly, there is the death theme, which should be a little short phrase that is the rain and that is death and that is her premonition of death, which should be reverberated as a *distant* theme.

There is a very important musical bit when Henry goes in and she is dying. Here we must have their gay theme and their love theme fighting musically against the death theme so that musically it is a struggle between the death and their love, with an increasingly accelerated tempo on the love theme of the first part of their story, and with the death theme becoming more insistent and more triumphant. . . .

I hate the idea of a heavenly choir. I think this is old-fashioned. I don't want to use a choir under her death scene, for I think it has become a little bit cliché. Also I am very much afraid of the audience thinking that the picture is over and reaching for their hats when Catherine dies. When she dies, we will stay on her in the darkened room after he leaves the room. Then we will cut outside and see him come out of the hospital, and the long walk down the wet street. I am afraid to have music here. What I would like to do is to stop the music on her death and have the exterior silent except for the sound of the carriage wheels and one or two people walking down the street, with perhaps off-stage a few little high voices of children playing or singing. Not until the very end should the music pick up, utilizing the main theme. . . .

Bear in mind that we would like to get out of the themes at least one popular song. . . . Warmest regards, DOS





SELZNICK BORE DOWN ON IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC TO THIS SPECTACLE

TO: Nancy Green (Production, N.Y.)

8/13/57

Very confidentially am rather excited about notion using Leopold Stokowski as Greffi. . . . Regards, Selznick

TO: Frank Lloyd Wright

9/10/57

It was a great pleasure talking with you over the telephone, even if your decision was most disappointing from my standpoint. Consistent with my request, and with your kind agreement that you would at least read the Greffi scene, and with my hope that you will reconsider, I send you the scene herewith.

It continues to be my sincere hope that you would do this, if only as a lark. With warmest regards, Cordially and sincerely yours, David O. Selznick

TO: James Newcom (Editing)

9/13/57

When we get to preview, please be sure that we record the audience reaction on tape because I am particularly concerned that on the comedy sequences we have a guide track in case there is any difference of opinion or memory as to which comedy scenes played better. It should be set up so that we get the sound track as well as the audience reaction. . . . DOS

TO: Production Staff

9/19/57

When we get into the last stages of the picture, it becomes important we guard against fatigue causing sloppiness in any department, including the preparation of budgets on remaining scenes. And incident to this, let me say that an item for "miscellaneous" of \$44,000 in today's "Costs to Complete" is obviously unacceptable. . . . DOS

TO: Alex Harrison (Sales, 20th Century-Fox)

9/30/57

Spyros Skouras [the president of 20th Century-Fox] saw *A Farewell to Arms* Saturday night. As you have no doubt already heard from him, his enthusiasm for the picture exceeded even that of yourself and your associates.

I am of two minds about opening in New York in December. On the one hand, if we can become eligible for the Critics' Awards, this has a great potential advantage; and I also realize the value of Christmas playing time. But no one can predict the reactions of New York critics. I have been startled sometimes, as no doubt you have been too, by their wild enthusiasm for films which one might have thought they would dislike, and equally by their dislike of, and even strong attacks upon, films which one would have normally thought they would have a great enthusiasm for. When we deal in the values of great reviews in New York, and our hopes of Critics' Awards, we must recognize therefore that we are dealing with a two-edged sword. . . . DOS

TO: Charlotte Gilbert (Casting)

10/4/57

What do you think about Bertrand Russell for Greffi? Regards, Selznick

TO: Spyros Skouras (20th Century-Fox President)

10/12/57

I am genuinely grateful for the superb abilities and the unwavering enthusiasm of your Charlie Einfeld, and of the Messrs. Silverstone and Harrison, but *A Farewell to Arms* needs also the showmanship that you and your brothers brought to exhibition many years ago. . . .

Frank Freeman lost money betting that *Gone with the Wind* would not do \$10 million—for that was the limit of his thinking, as an

CONTINUED

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## MAKING A MOVIE CONTINUED

exhibitor. The idea that it could do over \$50 million—with many more millions still to come in—would have seemed to him like the prattle of a madman. Just so, I am certain that a domestic gross of at least \$8 or \$10 million on *A Farewell to Arms* would be considered monumental in this depressed industry era by some gloomy prophets. Maybe that is all that is in the picture; maybe it is more than is in the picture; maybe it won't do a big gross at all. But shouldn't we at least try to explore the possible ways of breaking through ceilings that I have suggested in my memoranda on the subject?

We are up to deadline, Spyros. And we need you. Warmest regards, DOS

TO: Charlotte Gilbert (Casting)

10/15/57

With any casting available the role would never survive final cutting, so we must bid last and sad farewell to Count Greffi. Regards, Selznick

TO: Rodney Bush (Advertising, 20th Century-Fox)

10/15/57

Forgive me if I object to the addition to the Official Advertising Billing of the phrase "In the wonder of STEREOPHONIC SOUND." In the first place, I don't think stereophonic sound would sell one ticket anywhere in the world. In the second place, I can't conceive of the logic of a decision—which I myself suggested—to omit any adjectives applying to *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway and everybody else connected with the picture, in order to save them for "In the wonder of STEREOPHONIC SOUND." Cordially, DOS

TO: Rodney Bush

10/25/57

Thank you for your letter of October 22. Certainly I don't want to hurt Spyros' feelings concerning stereophonic sound! Therefore let's withhold decision on this point until I see the ads. . . . Warmest regards, DOS

TO: James Newcom (Editing)

10/26/57

We must add some moans of the wounded, at the Milano Nord station, and a few cries of pain to get more agony than is there visually. . . . DOS

TO: James Newcom (Editing)

11/11/57

I would suggest that our three different bugles, recorded stereophonically first left, then right, then center, ought to be used as a kind of introduction to the music that precedes the picture itself. DOS

*Though Selznick continued to work on details even past the first public screenings, A Farewell to Arms opened in California in December and has since opened in New York and other selected locations. The following memo was written to his director shortly before the premiere.*

TO: Charles Vidor

11/27/57

This is my last memorandum to you on *A Farewell to Arms*.

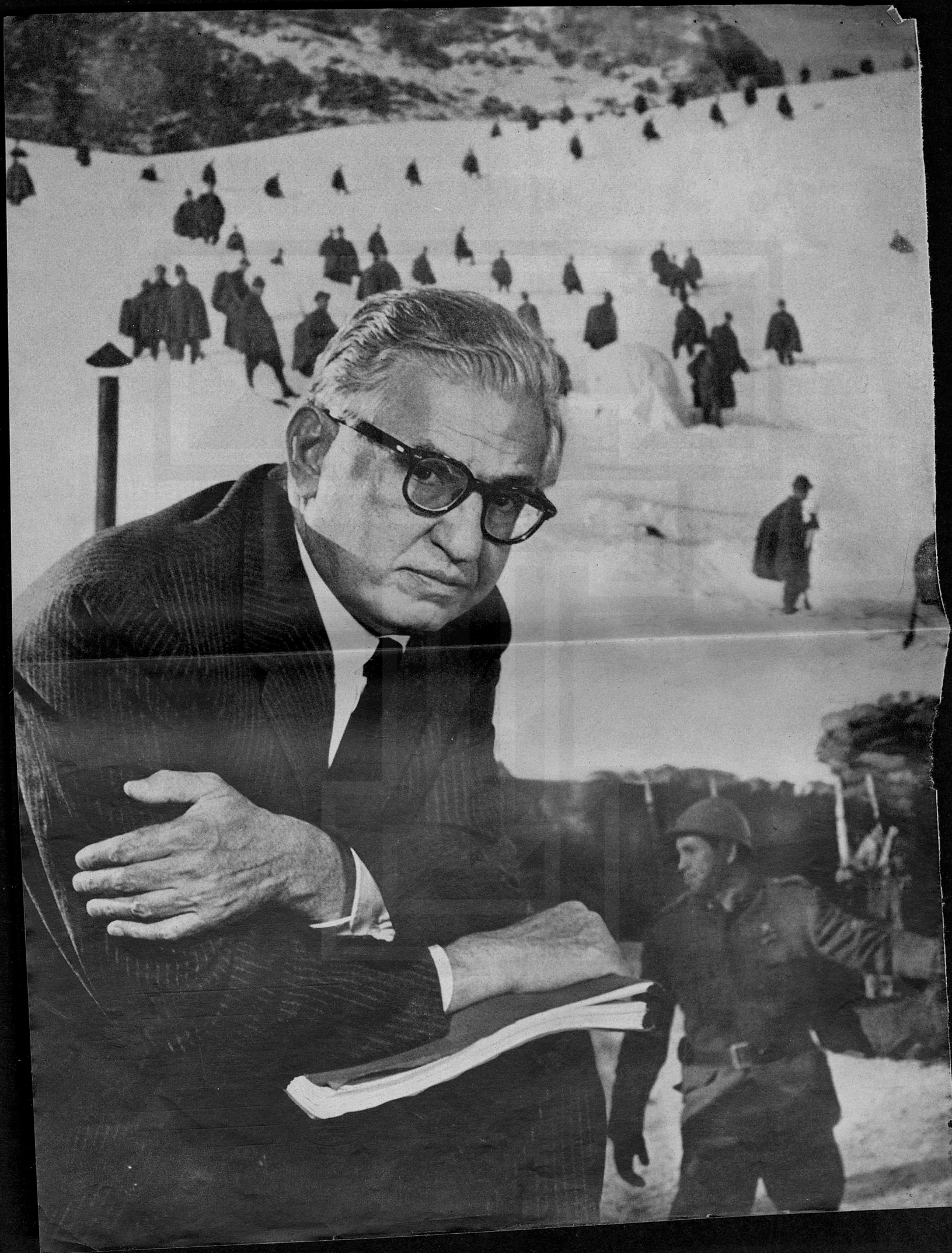
In advance of the world premiere of the picture out here on December 18, and of whatever reception is accorded it, I want to express my appreciation for your devoted and untiring and talented efforts, under the most extraordinarily difficult circumstances. For whatever it is worth, it is my personal opinion that you have done a magnificent job of direction; and it is my fervent hope that upon the release of the film, you will be universally recognized as one of the finest directors in the world.

And now, let us pray. . . . DOS



CLIMAX OF MOVIE is the death of Catherine Barkley as Frederic Henry watches. Selznick referred to episode in novel as "most famous death scene in modern literature," and insisted that script follow Hemingway faithfully.



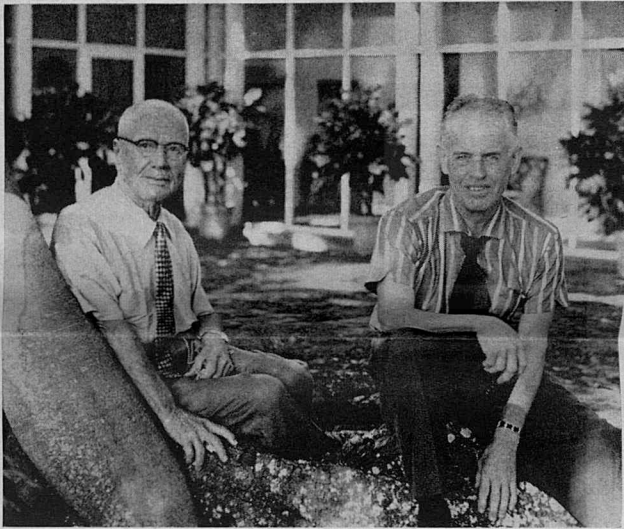




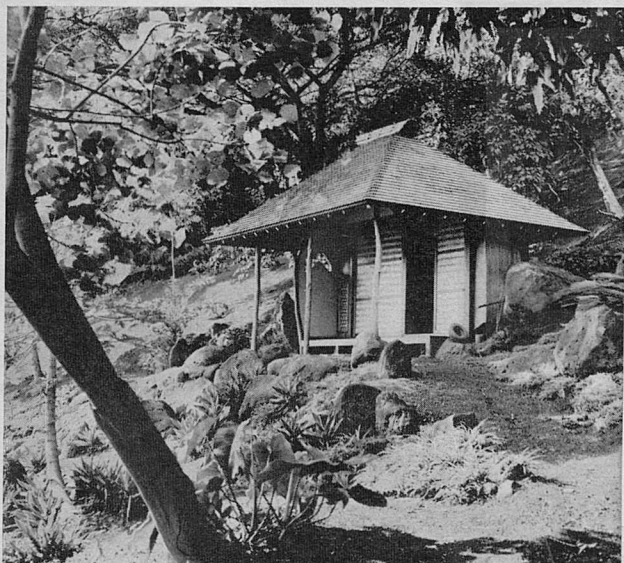
## TROPIC GARDEN CONTINUED



MAIN HOUSE on estate was built adjacent to original Queen Emma cottage (right). It overlooks palm-studded, cultivated area to curving tropic bay.



GARDEN'S DESIGNERS Robert Allerton (left) and John Gregg (right) laid out Allerton Park Gardens in Monticello, Ill. before moving to Hawaii.



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A Personal Note to You:

Here they are . . . the "Ten Best Pictures" of 1957, as voted by the representative motion picture critics, reviewers and commentators serving leading American newspapers, magazines, wire services, syndicates, and radio and television stations.

The story is for simultaneous national release on March 16. In fairness to all participating reviewers and critics, I know you will regard the poll results as confidential until that date. Layout possibilities to illustrate the story undoubtedly will suggest themselves to you.

CHESTER B. BAHN,  
Editor, THE FILM DAILY.

CAUTION:

For Release at 7 p.m. Sunday, March 16  
and Thereafter.

Todd's "80 Days" Tops  
"Ten Best" Selections

Sparkling Production Derived from Verne's Classic  
Places First in 35th Annual Poll of Nation's Critics:  
"Sayonara" Second, "12 Angry Men" Third in Voting

By CHESTER B. BAHN

Editor, THE FILM DAILY

NEW YORK, March 16 (The Film Daily)—Michael Todd's sparkling production of "Around the World in 80 Days," based upon the imaginative classic of Jules Verne, today has a climactic honor — selection as the No. One picture of 1957 in *The Film Daily's* 35th annual "Ten Best Pictures" poll.

A United Artists release, "Around the World in 80 Days" was photographed in the Todd-AO process and in Technicolor from a fine screenplay written by James Poe, John Farrow and S. J. Perelman with Michael Anderson directing brilliantly.

Unquestionably the most be-starred picture in Hollywood annals, the cast is headed by David Niven as Verne's intrepid adventurer, Phileas Fogg; Mexico's Cantinflas as his antic servant, Passepartout; Robert Newton as Detective Fix, and Shirley MacLaine as Aouda, an Indian Manahatee.

No fewer than 44 "Cameo" stars, ranging alphabetically from Charles Boyer to Harcourt Williams, appear in the lesser parts.

"Around the World in 80 Days" rolled up a lead of only 17 votes over another outstanding 1957 release, Warner Bros.' "Sayonara," based on James A. Michener's romance of an American jet ace and the leading dancer of Japan's famed Matsubayashi, to take first honors in the pioneer motion picture poll of critical opinion.

Critics, reviewers and commentators voting for "Around the World in 80 Days" numbered 179 and for "Sayonara," 162.

Calendar Year As Eligibility Period

Ballots cast this year totaled 274. The picture eligibility period was the calendar year, thus coinciding with that for the Academy's "Oscars" which will be announced in Hollywood on March 26. However, it should be noted that Academy contenders need not be in general national release and, furthermore that "Ten Best" ballots were cast only for pictures professionally seen by the participating voters.

"Sayonara," whose cast is headed by Marlon Brando, has seven co-stars: Patricia Owens, Red Buttons, Miiko Taka, Ricardo Montalban, Martha Scott, Miyoshi Umeki and James Garner. Filmed in Technirama and Technicolor in Japan, the screenplay was written by Paul Osborn. William Goetz produced and Joshua Logan provided the sensitive direction.

"12 Angry Men," an Orion-Nova Production distributed by United Artists, finished in third place with 137 votes. Reginald Rose wrote both the original story and the screenplay, and produced it with Henry Fonda who stars. A powerful, dramatic story, it was given just the right direction tempo by Sidney Lumet. Appearing with Fonda in the cast are Lee J. Cobb, Ed Begley, E. G. Marshall and Jack Warden.

Jerry Wald's CinemaScope-De Luxe Color production of the sensational novel of New England village life and morals by Grace Metalious, "Peyton Place," polled 129 votes to finish fourth. One of the neatest writing accomplishments of the film year, considering the unusually ticklish adaptation problem presented by the plot twists and turns, the screenplay was written by John Michael Hayes.

Director Mark Robson worked most effectively with a top notch cast starring Lana Turner and including Hope Lange, Lee Phillips, Lloyd Nolan, Diane Varsi, Arthur Kennedy, Russ Tamblyn and Terry Moore.

Play Adaptation Places Fourth

The first adaptation of a Broadway stage play to find a "Ten Best" 1957 niche is "A Hatful of Rain," which, receiving 119 votes, took fifth place. Michael Vincente Gazzo and Alfred Hayes wrote the screen play, based on the Gazzo play which was sponsored on Broadway by Jay Julien.

Produced in CinemaScope by Buddy Adler and directed by Fred Zinnemann with all the punch—perhaps even more—of the original play, the 20th Century-Fox picture starred these four: Eva Marie Saint, Don Murray, Anthony Franciosa and Lloyd Nolan. Their portrayals obviously left indelible impressions on memory's tablets.

The race between the next three pictures also was unusually close until the polls closed when Metro's "Les Girls" moved slightly ahead of its rival contenders to take sixth place with 105 votes, only 10 more than Warner's "A Face in the Crowd" and 11 more than 20th Century-Fox's "Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison." The two latter thus finished seventh and eight, respectively. A spritely musical extravaganza, "Les Girls" is a Sol C. Siegel production in CinemaScope and color expertly directed by George Cukor. John Patrick wrote the screenplay from the Vera Caspary story, and Cole Porter supplied the excellent score. The cast stars Gene Kelly, Mitzi Gaynor, Kay Kendall, Taina Elg and Jacques Bergerac.

"A Face in the Crowd" is an Elia Kazan production, Kazan also directing the Budd Schulberg story with the same deft touch which has brought him other honors in the past. Schulberg wrote the tight screenplay as well as the original. For the picture, Kazan picked Andy Griffith and Patricia Neal to star, and Anthony Franciosa, Walter Matthau and Lee Remick as his featured players.

"Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison," a best-selling novel by Charles Shaw, was adapted for filming in CinemaScope and De Luxe Color by John Lee Mahin and John Huston, with the latter directing expertly for the joint producers, Buddy Adler and Eugene Frenke. The picture co-stars Deborah Kerr as the nun, Sister Angela, and Robert Mitchum as the shipwrecked Marine, Corporal Allison.

"Don't Go Near the Water" Ninth

One of the year's funniest comedies, Metro's "Don't Go Near the Water" trailing "Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison" again by only nine votes, placed ninth in the poll. An Avon Production produced by Lawrence Weingarten, and directed by Charles Walters, its genesis was the William Brinkley novel of the same name. Dorothy Kingsley and George Wells collaborated on the hilarious screenplay. A truly hand-picked cast comprises Glenn

THE FILM DAILY

"TEN BEST OF 1957"

As Selected by the Motion Picture Critics and Commentators of America

Picture-Distributor, Producer and Director	Vote
"AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS" (United Artists).....	179
Producer, Michael Todd. Director, Michael Anderson.	
"SAYONARA" (Warners).....	162
Producer, William Goetz. Director, Joshua Logan.	
"12 ANGRY MEN" (United Artists).....	137
Producers, Henry Fonda, Reginald Rose. Director, Sidney Lumet.	
"PEYTON PLACE" (20th-Fox).....	129
Producer, Jerry Wald. Director, Mark Robson.	
"A HATFUL OF RAIN" (20th-Fox).....	119
Producer, Buddy Adler. Director, Fred Zinnemann.	
"LES GIRLS" (M-G-M).....	105
Producer, Sol C. Siegel. Director, George Cukor.	
"A FACE IN THE CROWD" (Warners).....	97
Producer and Director, Elia Kazan.	
"HEAVEN KNOWS, MR. ALLISON" (20th-Fox).....	91
Producers, Buddy Adler, Eugene Frenke. Director, John Huston.	
"DON'T GO NEAR THE WATER" (M-G-M).....	87
Producer, Lawrence Weingarten. Director, Charles Walters.	
"THE PAJAMA GAME" (Warners).....	73
Producers and Directors, George Abbott, Stanley Donen.	

THE FILM DAILY'S 1957  
"Ten Best" Honor Roll

Of Pictures Receiving 10 or More Votes

Picture-Distributor, Producer and Director	Vote
"Love in the Afternoon" (Allied Artists) Billy Wilder, Billy Wilder...	71
"Raintree County" (M-G-M) David Lewis, Edward Dmytryk...	70
"Pal Joey" (Columbia) Fred Kohlmar, George Sidney.....	69
"Written On The Wind" (Universal International) Albert Zugsmith, Douglas Sirk.....	58
"A Farewell To Arms" (20th-Fox) David O. Selznick, Charles Vidor...	65
"The Spirit of St. Louis" (Warners)..... Billy Wilder.....	61
"La Strada" (Trans Lux Dist. Corp.) Ponti-Delaurentiis, Federico Fellini	59
"The Great Man" (Universal International) Aaron Rosenberg, Jose Ferrer.....	58
"Funny Face" (Paramount) Roger Edens, Stanley Donen.....	57
"Man Of A Thousand Faces" (Universal International) Robert Arthur, Joseph Pevney.....	57
"Witness For The Prosecution" (United Artists) Arthur Hornblow, Jr., Billy Wilder.....	52
"Gunfight At The O.K. Corral" (Paramount) Hal Wallis, John Sturges	50
"The Sun Also Rises" (20th-Fox) Darryl F. Zanuck, Henry King.....	47
"Operation Madball" (Columbia) Jed Harris, Richard Quine.....	43
"Old Yeller" (Buena Vista-Walt Disney Prods.) William H. Anderson, Robert Stevenson.....	37
"Time Limit" (United Artists) Richard Widmark, Karl Malden.....	35
"The Joker Is Wild" (Paramount) Samuel J. Briskin, Charles Vidor.....	33
"Tammy And The Bachelor" (Universal International) Ross Hunter, Joseph Pevney.....	27
"Designing Woman" (M-G-M) Dore Scharly, Vincente Minelli.....	25
"Silk Stockings" (M-G-M) Arthur Freed, Rouben Mamoulian.....	24
"Full of Life" (Columbia) Fred Kohlmar, Richard Quine.....	23
"The Silent World" (Columbia) Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Louis Malle, Filmad, F.S.J.Y.C.....	23
"Battle Hymn" (Universal International) Ross Hunter, Douglas Sirk.....	22
"Fear Strikes Out" (Paramount) Alan Pakula, Robert Mulligan.....	22
"The Prince and The Showgirl" (Warners)..... Laurence Olivier	22
"Perri" (Buena Vista-Walt Disney Prods.) Winston Hibler, W. Paul Kenworthy, Jr., Ralph Wright.....	20
"The Hunchback of Notre Dame" (Allied Artists) Robert & Raymond Hakim, Jean Delannoy.....	20
"The Tin Star" (Paramount) William Perlberg & George Seaton, Anthony Mann.....	20
"3:10 To Yuma" (Columbia) David Heilweil, Delmer Daves.....	20
"The Bridge On The River Kwai" (Columbia) Sam Spiegel, David Lean.....	20
"Paths of Glory" (United Artists) James B. Harris, Stanley Kubrick.....	20
"The Green Man" (DCA) Frank Launder & Sidney Gilliat, Robert Day	20
"Pursuit of The Graf Spee" (Rank Film Distributors of America, Inc Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger, Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger.....	20
"Westward Ho The Wagon" (Buena Vista-Walt Disney Prods.) Bill Walsh, William Beaudine.....	20
"The Gold of Naples" (DCA) Dino De Laurentiis & Carlo Ponti, Vittorio De Sica.....	20
"An Affair To Remember" (20th-Fox) Jerry Wald, Leo McCarey.....	20

Ford, Gia Scala, Earl Holliman, Anne Francis, Eva Keenan Wynn, Fred Clark, Russ Tamblyn, Jeff Richards, Mickey Shaughnessy, among others.

To round out the 1957 "Ten Best," the critics, reviewer commentators gave the nod with 78 votes to "Fajama Gal" for Warner Bros. Abbott and Donen jointly directed as well as produced the filmization of the Broadway stage hit by George Abbott and Stanley Donen Production in Warner and Richard Bissell. The play itself was derived from Bis novel, "7½ Cents." The play's hit songs by Richard Adler Jerry Ross were carried over to the picture, naturally enough. So were John Raitt, Carol Haney and Eddie Foy, Jr., of the play's cast to star with Doris Day, the picture's Babe.

Thirty-six pictures, receiving from 10 to 76 votes, comprise the traditional Honor Roll accompanying the "Ten Best." The two top Honor Roll selections are "Love in the Afternoon," which was produced and directed for Allied Artists by Billy Wilder, and Metro's "Raintree County," produced by David Lewis and directed by Edward Dmytryk. They received 77 and 73 votes, respectively.

Three of the five featured nominated in the "best picture" category by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which awards its "Oscars" on March 26, are included among the 1957 "Ten Best," as chosen by the nation's critics. They are "Peyton Place," "Sayonara" and "12 Angry Men."

One of the Academy nominees, "Bridge on the River Kwai," was not in general release before Dec. 31, and therefore not an eligible picture under the "Ten Best" rules. However, 20 votes were cast for it. A second Academy nominee, "Witness for the Prosecution," placed on the Honor Roll with 52 votes.



Wednesday, March 12, 1958

## Desire Under the Elms

O'Neill's shocker about lust and greed in New England. Needs plenty of selling. Best prospects as a high-grade sex-ploitationer.

Hollywood, March 7.

Paramount release of a Don Hartman production. Stars Sophia Loren, Anthony Perkins, Burl Ives; features Frank Overton, Pernell Roberts, Rebecca Welles, Jean Willes, Anne Seymour, Roy Fant. Directed by Delbert Mann. Screenplay, Irwin Shaw; from the play by Eugene O'Neill; camera, Daniel L. Fapp; music, Elmer Bernstein; editor, George Boemler. Previewed at the studio, March 3, '58. Running time, 111 MINS.

Anna Cabot ..... Sophia Loren  
Eben Cabot ..... Anthony Perkins  
Ephraim Cabot ..... Burl Ives  
Simone Cabot ..... Frank Overton  
Peter Cabot ..... Pernell Roberts  
Lucinda ..... Rebecca Welles  
Florence ..... Jean Willes  
Eben's Mother ..... Anne Seymour  
Fiddler ..... Roy Fant

Despite all the plus factors, "Desire Under the Elms" is not satisfactory screen entertainment. It is painfully slow in getting underway, the characters are never completely understandable or believable, and the ghastly plot climax (of infanticide) when it comes, plays with a disappointingly little force. The picture is being given a double "art" house opening in New York but the commercial truth of the matter is that "Desire" will probably make its best return as a sexploitation item.

Eugene O'Neill's work has been given a "reverent" translation in Don Hartman's production for Paramount. Attempt was made, apparently, to treat the stage script with dignity. True, some elements of O'Neill have been deleted and new elements have been added. But essentially what Hartman and his director, Delbert Mann, have tried to do is remain faithful to the playwright's original design. The presentation has valuable star qualities in Sophia Loren and Anthony Perkins and it is being given a healthy exploitation campaign.

Irwin Shaw, who did the screenplay, has not improved the story. O'Neill, of course, wrote a modern version of a Greek tragedy, as raw and chilling as anything in "Oedipus" or "Medea." He chose the craggy New England of 1840 and its flinty characters with care. The casting of Sophia Loren in the role of the young (third) wife of farmer Burl Ives, is a key casting error because it injects an alien-to-the-scene element that dislocates the drama permanently.

The passion of greed and lust that takes place, in which Anthony Perkins and Miss Loren embark on a semi-incestuous love affair that ends with Miss Loren's having a child that Ives thinks is his, is strong stuff and it has been handled with discretion. Too much, perhaps.

The conflict between Ives and Perkins, son of Ives' second wife, the clash between Perkins and Miss Loren, these are powerful antagonisms but their impact has been hurt by the change from O'Neill's Greek simplicity to Hollywood gilding. O'Neill saw it as men fighting the gods and losing. Shaw apparently sees it as men understood through modern psychology, still doomed and damned, but for different reasons. In trying to understand these motivations, the straight story line has been enshrined by Shaw in specious complications.

There are moments of great power. The scene in which Perkins in his bedroom, adjoining his father's, suffers through his imagination of Miss Loren, is skillfully done. The episode in which Ives celebrates the birth of the son he believes to be his own but which is actually not, has appalling fascination. The final, uncompromising scenes, where Miss Loren and Perkins are taken away for the murder of their infant son—killed by Miss Loren in the belief it will put things right between her and Perkins—is silently understated for tremendous effect.

Despite Miss Loren's unsuitability for the play, she does her best work in an American picture in her role. She exposes a great variety of emotion than she usually does and she manages the scenes of tenderness with special and—in value. Perkins is more mature in his approach than he has been in anything he has shown previously, but his character is not as exciting or vivid as it should be.

Ives is the best, a bull of a man, cold in emotion and hot in passion, his measured reading is the pace the picture should have and he keeps it as near the original intent as it ever gets. This trio plays alone for most of the long film, but in minor characterizations, there are valuable contributions.

Especially there is the two brothers, Pernell Roberts and Frank Overton, who help set the theme and do it well; Jean Willes and Rebecca Welles, as their wives; and

Anne Seymour, in a brief early scene as Perkins' mother, Greta Gransstedt as the town "widow" and young Butch Bernard as Perkins as a boy, give memorable performances, although seen briefly.

Don Hartman has set his production against a stylized-realistic New England background that is realized beautifully in the farm settings, exteriors and interiors by art directors Hal Pereira and Joseph MacMillan Johnston with accompanying set decoration by Sam Coner and Grace Gregory. Dorothy Jeakins' costumes are unobtrusively authentic and Wally Westmore's makeup, particularly with Burl Ives, is helpful. Editing by George Boemler and sound by Harold Lewis and Winston Leverett are good.

Powe.

## The High Cost of Loving

Metro pleaser. Amusing domestic comedy about home and office problems.

Hollywood, March 7.

Metro release of Milo O. Frank Jr. production. Stars Jose Ferrer; introduces Joanne Gilbert, Jim Backus; introduces Gena Rowlands; features Bobby Troup, Philip Ober, Edward Platt, Charles Watts, Werner Klemperer. Directed by Jose Ferrer. Screenplay, Rip Van Ronkel; based on a story by Rip Van Ronkel and Milo O. Frank Jr.; camera, George J. Folsey; music, Jeff Alexander; editor, Ferris Webster. Previewed in Hollywood, March 5, '58. Running time, 87 MINS.

Jose Ferrer cleverly acts and directs and helps Gena Rowlands, from the Broadway stage hit, "Mousetrap," achieve her film debut impressively. "High Cost of Loving" should therefore hit the adult trade, and family market, both, for good returns.

"The High Cost of Loving" includes—according to this Metro entry—the costs of installment buying, prospective parenthood and most expensive of all, the toll in man's serenity in a world of super-cooperative operation where the individual is an ever increasingly minor cog. It's a world of missiles, mortgages and mechanization that Milo O. Frank Jr.'s debut production is set against.

Directed for maximum humor plus some pleasant interludes of married romance, entire action of the Rip Van Ronkel screenplay, based on a story by Frank and Van Ronkel, is centered around a few days in the life of purchasing agent Jose Ferrer. His company has been absorbed by a bigger one and everyone is wondering who comprises the "deadwood" that is sure to be chopped off in the take-over process. To give the problem added emphasis, Ferrer's wife, is expecting a baby and the expectancy looms especially large for the couple since they have been childless for nine years. Bobby Troup plays Ferrer's close friend and business associate, and Joanne Gilbert is his daffy wife.

Sure to be commented upon is Ferrer's fine opening scene. It runs almost ten minutes, completely without dialog, and shows what is probably a basic pattern in these days of working wives and husbands. Ferrer and Miss Rowlands rise from sleep, bathe, dress, prepare breakfast and eat it like somnambulants. It is very funny, and is expert use of motion picture techniques.

The rest of the picture does not always maintain this high level but it is usually amusing and always diverting, centering mostly around the performances by Ferrer and Miss Rowlands.

Miss Gilbert only has two or three scenes and they are not strong enough to give her much to do except play a stereo silly wife. Jim Backus has only one scene, really, a tightly written satire that manages to work into it every Madison Ave. cliché, and it keeps the story bright and adds depth to the humor. The rest of the cast, Philip Ober, Edward Platt, Charles Watts and Werner Klemperer, play assorted types to be found in such business enterprises as Ferrer works for, and gives value to the over-all production.

There is a lot of frank and amusing dialog in "The High Cost of Loving." It is the trend, to deal candidly with marital sex. It is done tastefully within sensible bounds and provides a basis for adult attraction that makes the whole presentation more believable and more sensible.

The technical credits are of exceptional value because George J. Folsey's photography and Ferris Webster's editing help achieve and maintain the light, fast touch. Ferrer was seeking. Jeff Alexander's music is sparing but also of aid in the picture's mood. Art direction by William A. Horning and Randall Duell, and set decorations by Henry Grace and Robert Priestley are expert.

Powe.



## MOTION PICTURE POLICY BOOK

Copied from Variety Wed., March 12, 1958

### RUMORS RE UNIVERSAL PERSIST

While Universal president Milton Rackmil has stated he would like to have the rumors cease about the U operation, the fact remains the rumors persist. Reports literally abounded in the Wall Street sector this week that U is on the brink of going out of a large portion of the picture business.

The intent, it's believed, is to sell off film assets as a means of bolstering the stock values of Decca Records, which owns over 80% of U. This cannot be checked.

~~Rumor has it that Rackmil wants to sell Universal City studio, the post-1948 film library and whatever assets that can be made converted into cash.~~



MOTION PICTURE POLICY BOOK  
(Copied from March 12, 1958 Variety)

BILL GOETZ 'MOST LIKELY' COL's NEW PRODUCTION HEAD

Hollywood, March 11--Naming of new production head at Columbia is expected in week or 10 days. Nominee will "most likely" be William Goetz. He's considered No. 1 choice of majority of special committee of five set up by Columbia's board of directors at last Friday meeting, to select a production head and keep production going.

It's anticipated that Goetz, if deal is acceptable to him can be worked out, will get some variation of contractual formula originally devised to Louis B. Mayer at Metro, more recently for Buddy Adler at 20th-Fox. (Latter gets 5% of profits of all pix made and released by 20th.)

Goetz has solid grounding in industry. He headed 20th-Fox production in 1942-43 after which he was prexy of newly former International Pictures which he founded with late Lep Spitz. Thereafter Goetz became production head of merged Universal Pictures and International Pictures.

After leaving UI following sellout of his and Spitz' stock interest to Decca, Goetz set up his own independent company. He's been releasing through Columbia, except for "Sayonara," which went to Warners release because of legal hassle on rights with author James Michener.

Goetz' latest film for Columbia release will be Danny Kaye starrer, "Me and the Colonel."

(sic)  
Sam Brisflin, presently a member of the Loew's board and previously a producer on the Paramount lot, is being mentioned as a candidate for the job of studio head at Columbia. It appears there's an open race for the post, the choice to be made by newly-elected president Abe Schneider and a special committee of five members of the board, but nonetheless Briskin's name has come up in several "insider" conversations.

Also prominently mentioned as George Sidney, independent producer ~~is~~ aligned with Col. Harry Cohn, late president of the film corporation, left no recommendation in his will but his choice would have been Sidney, according to a Cohn confidante.

Briskin headed Liberty Pictures until this company was sold (via a stock transaction) to Par. He ~~therefor~~ thereupon went to Par as a contract producer. His final picture at this studio was "The Joker is Wild." If the Col job comes about he would relinquish the Loew's directorate spot.



# Motion Picture Book

Feb. 26, 1958  
~~Mar. 12, 1958~~

VARIETY

## K HITS S

### UNFAIR & SNOBS ABOUT BRITISH?

Rank Film Distributors of America, determined to find outlets for the British-made pictures in the U. S. market, is ready to battle any circuit that refuses to give the pix a proper hearing. The Yank-Rank company is now feuding with the 108-theatre Schine circuit, and will open one of its pictures in a high school auditorium in opposition to a Schine theatre in a "closed" town.

Feud is based on the Schine outfit's alleged refusal to book Rank's "Pursuit of the Graf Spee" in any of its theatres. It's charged, too, that Schine executives refused to hold talks with Rank executives. Another effort, it's said, was made to break down the Schine prejudice against English pix with "The One That Got Away," a picture based on a true-life incident of a Nazi prisoner who escaped from Canada into the U. S. at Ogdensburg, N. Y., where the Schine chain operates a theatre. The circuit, it's reported, agreed to hold the world premiere in Ogdensburg, but would only take the picture for three houses in the chain.

Rank, however, held out for the entire circuit and when Schine nixed this demand, the British company decided to open the picture at the high school auditorium in opposition to the Schine theatre in Ogdensburg. The picture will be shown at the high school for four days starting March 18 and will receive the usual hoopla.

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# Motion Picture Planning Book

Wednesday, March 12, 1958

## STUDIO O'HE

### Briefs from Lots

Hollywood, March 11.

Lewis F. Blumberg bought "The Goldseeker," western documentary short turned out by Larry Frank Jr. and Gary Goldsmith, for expansion into a feature film . . .

Yuki Shimoda will recreate his Jap houseboy in Warner Bros. filmization of Broadway's "Auntie Mame" . . . bandleader Ray Anthony takes on first dramatic role in Metro's "High School Confidential," joining his wife, Mamie Van Doren, in cast . . . Inger Stevens snagged femme role in Harry Belafonte starrer, "The End of the World," jointly produced for Metro release by Sol C. Siegel and Belafonte. . . American-International set "Hot Rod Gang" as first of a series.

### SOCK 'KWAI' FLED FIXED CHARGES

While the picture industry is doing well enough on an off and on basis, the costs of studio operations are precluding all possibilities of profitable operation on a sustained basis. The switch to "unit" film-making—whereby independent producers make the pictures for the big studios—has had as its effect a red ink entry for practically every lot in Hollywood.

A key example obtains with "Bridge on the River Kwai," biggest money-maker in Columbia's history. The late Harry Cohn decried the fact, according to a close associate, that while this is such a successful picture, not one cent of its costs could be charged against studio overhead. Reason is, obviously, that the picture was made on location (in Ceylon). And numerous indie producers, such as "Kwai's" Sam Spiegel, are shooting their properties away from Hollywood.

Top studios are geared for (and are paying for) a shooting schedule that prevails over 52 weeks a year. Yet, at Columbia (for one) only seven of the last 20 pictures were made locally. The others were lensed abroad.

This, of course, suggests a sharing of studio facilities as has been recommended by Warner Bros., Serge Semenenko and others. Yet, nothing has been done about it.

The aforementioned profitable operations refers to the studios themselves. It's clear that a picture like "Kwai" will mean beaucoup profit for Col and Spiegel. But still, the Col studio, on appraisal as a separate entity, will wind up on the deficit side of the ledger. It exists, and is being paid for, but is not sufficiently being put to use.

### Buy Blood Brothers Novel

Another western, "Brother of the Broken Lance," has been acquired by 20th-Fox. It's a novel by Clair Huffaker, to be published by Random House later this spring.

Price paid by 20th was said to be close to \$50,000. It's a story about two "blood" brothers, one Indian, one white.

### Steve Cochrane Out To Halt Republic's TV Selloff of Late Pix

Hollywood, March 11.

Republic's inclusion of indie-made "Come Next Spring" in large library of films sold recently to television will be legally opposed by actor Steve Cochrane.

Thesp, whose own production outfit, Robert Alexander Productions, turned out picture two years ago for Republic release, has instructed his attorney to seek a restraining order in L. A. Superior Court enjoining distrib from disposing of film.

Pic is owned solely by indie outfit, which turned feature over to Republic for motion picture distribution exclusively, according to actor.

### Bill Holden % Of 'Kwai' Figures About \$2,100,000

Hollywood, March 11.

William Holden's rakeoff from his star appearance in Sam Spiegel's "Bridge On the River Kwai" will be at least \$2,100,000, according to exec vp Abe Montague, who reports Columbia Pictures' release is expected to hit a global gross of \$21-22,000,000. Holden's deal calls for \$250,000 against 10% of the gross, which will make this the all-time payoff for an actor.

Expected worldwide take from "Kwai" will make a total return in excess of \$45,000,000 on three Spiegel productions which collectively cost less than \$5,000,000. Producer owns 50% of "Kwai," which on basis of Montague's estimate will mean a net to him of at least \$5,000,000 from feature.

"Kwai," according to Montague, will top "From Here to Eternity," company's previous all-time grosser, by 15 to 20%. "Eternity" had a world gross of \$17,206,260 up to end of 1957, repping a profit to that date of \$7,852,896. By now, the

(Continued on page 22)

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# Motion Picture Policy Book

Variety, Wed., Mar. 12, 1958

"exhibition could at least make its position in this industry respected and make its influence felt in the board rooms of our major companies"

*Variety*  
Wed. Mar. 12, 1958

## Siegel to Sell His Company, Talents In Metro Deal

Members of the Loew's board reportedly nixed the proposed deal by which Sol C. Siegel's independent company would be bought out at \$1,250,000 as part of an employment deal. Some key stockholders also objected, feeling the figure was excessive.

Metro will pay \$1,250,000 in buying Sol C. Siegel's independent film company as part of the deal whereby Siegel is to become the film company's production head, according to an informed source close to M-G-M.

Contract is believed near the signing stage and Siegel is ready to move in on the Culver City lot. In addition to the capital gains benefits of the sellout of his indie outfit, he's also to participate in the profits of studio pictures made under his aegis.

Pictures being taken over by Metro for the \$1,250,000 include "High Society," "Les Girls" and the yet-to-be-released "Merry Andrew."

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# Motion Picture Book

Variety, Wed. Mar. 12, 1958

## MARTIN ECHO OF HELLER REPORT

"Liquidate the studios" appears as a chant that is being echoed among bankers, stockholders and some researchers. In recent months, as the plight of the film industry has become a national topic, the villainy of those Hollywood "fixed charges" has inspired radical cure proposals.

At Loew's recent N.Y. stockholders' meeting, Lester Martin, a textile millionaire with substantial holdings in motion picture shares, made the suggestion that Loew's get rid of its Culver City lot. The same suggestion, it was learned this week, was made in the controversial Heller report which Loew's has never made public.

The Heller report advised the company to get out of production and to concentrate on its theatre business. It further advised that Loew's sell a number of its huge, large-seat theatres and embark on a program of building smaller theatres with capacities of 500 or 600. These theatres, it was felt, would be capable of housing long-run blockbuster pictures which appear to be the only kind of product making money in today's market.

The "liquidation" remarks have not been confined to Loew's. It has come up in reference to Universal, Columbia, Republic and other companies. Point is made again that the day of the large studio is over. Even the late Harry Cohn has been quoted as saying that there no longer is a need for a company-owned studio and that pictures could be made any where. It is generally believed that the entire theatrical output of Hollywood can now be made in one studio, such as Metro's or Warner's.

What appears to be gaining in favor as the future modus operandi of Hollywood is a setup similar to that of United Artists. However, the elimination of the studios isn't as easy a matter as the advocates of liquidation believe. Studios facilities, of course, are required. The job is to find some one to take over the properties and convert them to other uses. At the same time, several studios will have to be kept and maintained as rental lots.

Although nobody has been bold enough to come out and say so, there is some belief that the huge plants can be saved if and when toll tv arrives. A number of traders have predicted that the film biz would experience an unprecedented boom if pay-as-you-see television ever became successful on a national scale. Perhaps the distant hope that toll tv would prove to be the saviour is what is delaying the managements of the film companies from moving ahead hastily in liquidating the studio properties.



# Rhoden Optimistic At Nat'l Theatres Meet; Cites Cuts, Better Pix

Los Angeles, Feb. 25.

Slash in operating costs, contributions from company's recent diversification program and growing number of quality pix are harbingers of a bright future for National Theatres, both in the current quarter and onward, prexy Elmer C. Rhoden reported at company's annual stockholders meeting here last week.

During the seven weeks beginning Dec. 25, 1957, National's gross and earnings equalled those for corresponding period of a year ago, he said. As against this, he pointed out, gross for the seven weeks which began Sept. 25, 1957, was down \$1,500,000 from corresponding period of 1956, and operations were conducted at a loss. Uppance in profits for current quarter are directly traceable to the "significant improvement" in the quality of films recently released, he noted. For this quarter, ending March 25, the gross should approximate that of similar quarter in 1957, he added.

Speaking of slashes in costs, Rhoden disclosed that company had trimmed \$114,000 from its operating expenses in 1957, plus another \$300,000 in administrative savings.

Circuit will begin to feel the results of its various diversification moves during latter part of fiscal year, according to Rhoden. These already have extended to the new widescreen process, Cinemiracle, and purchase of Kansas City stations WDAF-TV and WDAF-radio.

In addition, National now will expend \$750,000 in installations in the new Pacific Ocean Park, the amusement park now under construction on the old Ocean Park pier—next door to Santa Monica and Venice—being developed as a \$10,000,000 project by CBS and Santa Anita Turf Club. In addition to four major attractions in park, NT will operate all counters handling candy, popcorn, etc.

For the first time, too, it was pointed out, NT will realize income from abroad, when "Windjammer," company's first picture in the new Cinemiracle process, begins to show overseas. Pic will open at Chinese Theatre here April 6, followed a few days later at the Roxy in N. Y. Openings will follow in other U. S. cities and in Europe, NT has exclusive distribution and exhibition rights to all films lensed in Cinemiracle, and present plans call for a production sked of three pix annually by 1960.

Rhoden also reported that substantial reductions have already been effected in theatre operations through the disposal of theatres. Since last Sept. 24, he said, NT has disposed of eight theatre and real estate properties at aggregate sales price of \$1,650,000, and has designated other properties for additional sale.

Board of directors members re-elected at yesterday's conclave included Rhoden, John B. Bertero, B. Gerald Cantor, Peter Colefax, Willard W. Keith, Alan May, Richard W. Millar, F. H. Ricketson Jr., Graham L. Sterling, Samuel Firks and Jack W. Ostrow were elected directors to succeed Gregson Bautzer and Earle G. Hines, resigned.

All incumbent officers were re-elected by directorate.

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## Cuts-to-the-Bone Report to 'New' Loew's Board

Joseph R. Vogel, president of Loew's, Inc., is expected to tell stockholders tomorrow (Thurs.) at the company's annual meeting in N. Y. that Loew's has cut expenses by \$7,000,000 during the year. In addition, Vogel will probably give the stockholders a somewhat optimistic appraisal of the company's future, based on the savings, future planned economies, the performance of Metro's current pictures and the hopes for the studio's forthcoming product.

For the first time in over a year, Vogel will enter the annual meeting with the assurance that he will not be faced with the threat of a proxy fight or that his own position as president of the company is in jeopardy.

For the most part, Vogel will have a sympathetic board. However, it's not expected to be a rubber stamp group, since the new board members are considered to be realistic businessmen who are interested in profits for their investments. The constant harassment that had been commonplace on the board will be over now that the supporters of Joseph Tomlinson, the Canadian industrialist who threatened the Vogel management team, will be replaced by Louis A. Green, Jerome A. Newman, Ira Guilden and Philip A. Roth.

There is a possibility that a finance committee, headed by Green, who owns more than 100,000 shares, will be established by the board at its first meeting after the stockholders session. Green is a financial specialist and as head of the finance committee of another large corporation played a leading role in revitalizing the company's economic structure.

At the first meeting of the new board, it's anticipated that the question of the terms for a contract for Sol C. Siegel to head studio production will come up for discussion. Vogel has long wanted Siegel for the studio job but has had difficulty in working out the terms for a capital gains deal and a participation arrangement for Siegel.

Another problem that the new board will undoubtedly face will be Tomlinson's demand for \$150,000 to pay legal fees and other expenses involved in his unsuccessful proxy fight against the management. The sum allotted by the management for this purpose has been challenged by Tomlinson through a business associate, Ralph B. Campbell, who filed a suit in Delaware to prevent payment of the legal fees. Tomlinson's position, it's said, is that he feels he is entitled to similar consideration.

Shirl Frankel, New York secretary to Jack L. Warner, left after more than 30 years with Warner Bros.

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## Kingsley's Advice to French Showmen: Vital to Have Dubbed Prints Pronto

French producers, wanting to take a "reasonable" gamble on the success of their films in the U. S., should also be willing to share the independent distributors' risk by sharing dubbing costs in advance of a picture's release, Edward L. Kingsley, prez of Kingsley-International, opined in N. Y. this week.

Kingsley cited the example of the Brigitte Bardot starrer, "And God Created Woman," which was dubbed into English before anyone knew for sure whether or not it'd click. "It was a tremendous advantage to us to have the dubbed version available immediately when it was realized that the film would catch on," he said.

He added that, too often, an import was released and dubbed only after it became apparent that the public might go for it. "By having a dubbed version available on a film in which we have confidence—even though it does entail a risk—we can avoid the fatal lag between 'art house' and general release," he declared.

Though sanguine on the future of dubbing ("God Created Woman" did proportionally better in the English-language version than in its original French version), Kingsley nevertheless felt that "dubbing isn't necessarily the salvation." It depends very much on the type of picture, he said. "The film above all must be attractive to the general audience or else, with or without dubbing, it won't go."

### Outlook Bettered

Kingsley, who with the Bardot film is handling what shapes as the top grossing import ever (probably around \$2,000,000), debunked the notion that the foreign film was making huge strides in the States. "The big hits help, of course," he said, "but, on the whole, progress is still extremely slow." What is true, he said, is that a successful foreign picture can do better than ever "and each success paves the way for other foreign films."

In Kingsley's opinion, the "product shortage" has little relation to exhibitors' willingness to give imports a chance. "If this were true, then the British films would be the natural heirs to that screentime, he argued, and yet they're not. 'It is true,' he commented, 'that French films present a new and often exciting experience for people and they gain acceptance because of it. Actually, the French have more of a world market than the British, if you come down to it. Because of their special flavor, they are accepted everywhere and can break through more easily despite the language barrier.'

Kingsley reminded that, apart from the foreign biggies, like his own "God Created Woman" and a couple of other imports, the great mass of overseas films fail to go much beyond the art circuit, and some don't even manage to get back print cost. He pointed to the failure of the Japanese to succeed after their initial successes with "Rashomon" and "Gates of Hell."

Kingsley, whose outfit is connected with Columbia Pictures, expressed surprise at the tendency of some of the indies to build up large distribution organizations with matching overheads. "When you have a good picture, the exhibitors literally 'smell' you out anyway," he said, and the top runs can be sold right out of New York. The rest can very adequately be handled by the sub-distributors."

## TOA 'CONVENTIONETTE' IN FRISCO MARCH 26

Panel sessions on ticket selling, concessions and new equipment will highlight the drive-in convention of Theatre Owners of America in San Francisco March 26-27. Abe Blumenfeld and Roy Cooper are co-chairmen.

Since this is the first time TOA has held a separate drive-in convention, the meeting has been dubbed a "conventionette." The convention will follow the mid-winter board meeting of TOA which will be held March 24-25.

Arrangements are being made to bring two televised events to the delegates—the closed-circuit telecast of the Robinson-Basilio bout and the Academy Award telecast.

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## CONTRASTING JANUARYS ON FILM DIVIDENDS

Washington, Feb. 25.

Film industry dividends for January fell below those for January 1957. In the first month of this year, the stockholders' melon aggregated \$1,373,000. A year earlier, it was \$1,690,000.

Following are the publicly reported dividend payments for both Januaries:—National Theatres, \$346,000 both years; List Industries, \$788,000 both years; Republic Pictures, \$100,000 both years. Walt Disney \$135,000 in January 1958, none in January 1957. Duart Film Laboratories, \$4,000 this year, none last year. Chesapeake Industries paid nothing this time, but \$121,000, a year earlier. Columbia Pictures which shelled out \$320,000 in 1957, paid nothing in January of this year. District Theatres paid none this January and \$15,000 in January 1957.

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# IS MAJORS

## -Petrillo's; Melance Market

## BRUTALLY THIN PER INFLATION

By FRED HIFT

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onditions and the  
keep things quiet  
is set to roll.  
ickets—Yet!  
agreement with AFM  
midnight last Wednes-  
he union is now official-  
e but there is no picket-  
e studios.  
et that there are no plac-  
ers marching outside the  
of course, of major im-  
ce. The key angle is a ques-  
mark: Would other unions  
et picket lines? The signifi-  
here is obvious; failure of  
S.E. members to show for  
would mean an immediate  
age of all production activity.  
this were to materialize the  
es would be staggering, is not  
astrous to an already hand-to-  
with film financing situation. A  
consideration is that many pic-  
es now rolling have independ-  
ent performers involved, and they  
may not be able to interrupt work  
on a particular picture and resume  
in it at some given point in the  
future because of their personal  
schedules. Thus, dozens of prop-  
erties, involving investments high  
in the millions, clearly would be  
jeopardized, first by the danger  
of the immediate work halt and,

then, by the chance that resump-  
tion of the lensing might be too  
difficult.

By contrast, the musicians' walk-  
out in itself is not so catastrophic  
since production can continue with  
scoring done later or in another  
country beyond the AFM reaches.

### Not Clear So Far

Curiously, many of those at the  
Gotham "cabal" said they were at  
a loss to understand the specific  
reasoning behind the AFM's pro-  
jected new work terms or, indeed,  
just what the terms are. One exec  
related that Petrillo presented one  
set of demands and then added  
that Hollywood Local 47 would  
have additional ideas—what?

In general, it appeared that AFM  
is insisting upon a 6% cut in on  
all revenues from television, upped  
compensation for working musi-  
cians, guarantees of work periods  
and standby employment.

Top studios, unlike the past,  
have a major problem in their as-  
sociations with indie film-makers.  
The companies are finding more  
and more difficulty in mapping  
long-range production programs  
and consequently don't want to  
commit themselves to long-range  
employment arrangements.

### The Feeling In Hollywood

Hollywood, Feb. 25.  
With the major studios minus  
musicians following expiration of  
contract last Wednesday (19), the  
American Federation of Musicians  
is mapping its strategy against film  
companies. To a degree Hollywood  
(Continued on page 63)

Comparatively narrow profit  
margin on which the film com-  
panies operate in today's infla-  
tionary economy, and the reason for  
the determined cutback psychol-  
ogy at virtually all of the majors,  
is underscored by a study of the  
net-to-gross ratio of six key out-  
fits.

It demonstrates the hazards of  
the film biz in which the relation-  
ship between costs and volume—  
reflecting the ultimate ratio of net  
to gross—require adjustment.

It reflects, too, the rising cost of  
production and the continuing  
weight of overhead at a time when  
so much filming is being done away  
from the studio plants. Production  
investment is as high as ever, but  
the risk is spread over a much nar-  
rower area and the cost level has  
kept pace with expanding volume.

Though the film business is well  
below the national manufacturing  
average in terms of its profit ratio,  
it is not wholly out-of-line as far  
as the general trend is concerned.  
According to President Eisenhow-  
er's economic report to Congress,  
the 1947-1950 national average  
(after taxes) was 6.7%. It's dropped  
since then, hitting 5.5% during  
1956 and a low of 4.7% during the  
third quarter of 1957.

According to one industry econo-  
mist, taking a film company aver-  
age wouldn't be realistic unless  
many divergent factors, including  
the number and types of films re-  
leased, "outside" activities of sub-  
sidiaries in fields ranging from  
music to oil, are considered. Nor,

### Economics of Tape

### Vs. Film for Com'ls

Among the many features and

appraisals to appear in

VARIETY

Semi-Annual TV Film Issue

OUT IN MARCH

## Five Years of Net Ratios

The following chart shows the net-to-gross percentage ratio of six  
major film companies during the past five years. The 20th-Fox  
and Paramount figures for 1957 aren't in yet, and Metro had a loss for  
the year.

	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953
Warner Bros. ....	4.2%	3.7%	5.2%	5.5%	4.3%
20th-Fox .....	—	5.1%	4.9%	6.8%	4.3%
Universal .....	3.9%	5.1%	4.9%	4.8%	3.7%
Metro .....	—	2.8%	3.1%	3.5%	2.6%
Columbia .....	2.1%	2.9%	5.5%	4.4%	1.5%
Paramount .....	—	9.1%	8.2%	8.2%	6%

## National Boxoffice Survey

Storm Over, Biz Better; 'Witness' New Champ,  
'Arms' 2d, 'Days' 3d, 'Yeller' 4th, 'Raintree' 5th

End of the big snow and vastly  
improved transport will give first-  
run film biz a shot in the arm this  
stanza, according to reports re-  
ceived from VARIETY correspond-  
ents in some 23 representative key  
cities. In numerous localities,  
which were hit hardest last session,  
the same pix are doing bigger trade  
than week ago. Some new fare is  
also helping.

New champion is "Witness For  
Prosecution" (UA), which is edg-  
ing out "Farewell To Arms" (20th),  
first last round. "Witness," playing  
in some 13 keys, not only is regis-  
tering great opening week trade  
but also displaying marked stam-  
ina. "Arms" is a stalwart second-  
place winner.

"Around World in 80 Days"  
(UA) is winding up third as against  
second a week ago. It's currently  
playing in fewer key cities than  
in recent weeks. "Old Yeller"  
(BV) is pushing up from ninth to  
fourth spot.

"Raintree County" (M-G) also  
is climbing from eighth to fifth.  
"Peyton Place" (20th) will edge up  
from seventh to sixth position as a  
result of an amazing burst of  
strength. "God Created Woman"  
(Kings) is seventh.

"Search for Paradise" (Ciner-  
ama) is finishing eighth, with  
"Wild Is Wind" (Par), a newcomer,  
taking ninth money. "Seven Won-  
ders of World" (Cinerama) is  
winding in 10th spot.  
"Gift of Love" (20th), a newie,

will capture 11th place while  
"Seven Hills of Rome" (M-G) will  
round out the Top 12 list. "Don't  
Go Near Water" (M-G), "Bonjour  
Tristesse" (Col), "Darby's Rangers"  
(WB) and "Gervaise" (Cont) are  
the runner-up films.

"Brothers Karamazov" (M-G),  
one of new entrants, promises to  
go places judging from sock open-  
ing session at N. Y. Music Hall.  
"Big Beat" (U), also new, is rated  
good in Detroit.

"Cowboy" (Col), also new, is  
brisk in Chi, just okay in N. Y., and  
so-so in Toronto. "Snow White"  
(BV) is doing excellent trade on  
current trip around, being great  
in N. Y., happy in Providence and  
bright in Boston.

"Lady Takes Flyer" (U), another  
big newie, is a bit uneven cur-  
rently but rated big in Louisville  
and so-so in Philly.

"Sayonara" (WB), okay in Chi,  
is socko in L. A. and neat in Philly.  
"Spanish Affair" (Par), fancy in  
N. Y., shapes modest in Chi.

"Tarnished Angels" (U) looms  
bright in Detroit. "Et. Dobbs"  
(WB), okay in Louisville, looks  
stout in Detroit.

"Bridge on River Kwai" (Col)  
continues its remarkable showings  
in N. Y., Boston and L. A. "10  
Commandments" (Par) still is  
sturdy in N. Y. and L. A., and is  
about to go out on additional lesser  
first-runs.

(Complete Boxoffice Reports of  
Pages 8-9.)

say accountants, can one company's  
ratio be conveniently compared to  
the next since different methods of  
write-off are applied.

Paramount, for example, stands  
out via a much higher net-to-gross  
ratio than its competitors. Yet, in  
racking up a 9.1% ratio for 1956, a  
whopping \$5,000,000 profit on the  
special sale of films and on invest-  
ments must be taken into account.  
A more dramatic illustration of the  
widening industry spread between  
gross and net is embodied in the  
Columbia Pictures performance.

Back in 1953, with a gross of  
only \$60,273,000 and a net of  
\$942,000, its net-to-gross ratio was  
only 1.9%. The Col gross volume  
rose steadily from then, to \$80-  
208,000 in 1954, to \$88,655,000 in  
1955, to \$91,145,000 in 1956 and  
now to \$106,600,000 in 1957, re-  
flecting in part sales to tv and the  
operations of the Screen Gems  
subsidiary.

For a while—during 1954 and  
1955—the ratio of net to gross  
rose accordingly, to 4.4% in 1954  
and as high as 5.5% in 1955. But  
in 1956 it plummeted back to  
2.9% as gross and net went in op-  
posite directions, and in 1957 it  
lank further to 2.1%.

### Metro Diagram

Somewhat similar pattern per-  
tains to Metro. In 1955, the com-  
pany grossed \$570,952,000 and  
howed a net of \$5,311,733 (3.1%).  
In 1956, with the volume up over  
\$2,000,000 to \$172,355,000, the net  
fell to 2.8% (\$4,837,000). But in  
1957, with the gross down appreci-  
ably to \$154,320,000, the com-  
pany showed a loss of \$455,000,  
indicative of how high operational  
and other costs had wiped out the

(Continued on page 62)



# MOVE FILM ROW, C

## Texas Prefers 'Outdoor Theatre' Tag

Delinquents Hang Around Drive-In Restaurants—  
Create Unsavory Association

Houston, March 4.  
Growth of Houston's drive-in restaurants as headquarters for unsavory elements in teenage population has won them bad reps that oddly enough has the clean-nosed ozoner ops squirming.

Result is that pix man would like to escape "drive-in" tag & have crime-conscious public make "outdoor theatre" the popular term.

Case in point is Loew's Sharpstown, a Texas-style nabe skeddled to open tomorrow in an area full of new homes which will provide a top grade babes-in-arms family trade for years to come. Location is on border of Sharpstown . . . "World's Largest Development" if projected 16-20,000 homes ever get built, but currently far enough along to keep b.o. coin jingling.

"We are definitely going after the family trade, which is one of the main reasons we want to be known as an outdoor theatre, not a drive-in," said Jim Shanahan, Loew's rep who's in Houston to handle ballyhoo connected with theatre debut.

"The word carries a bad connotation down here, and with the kind of investment we are putting into the theatre, we want to help it succeed in every way possible."

Shanahan said construction costs for theatre were "a little more than \$1 million." Following features of new 1600-car ozoner illustrate whys of tab: 50-by-120 screen seven stories high; kiddies' playground; kids' miniature railroad which includes a trip through 60 feet of make-believe diamond mine tunnel where mechanical elves swing the picks & shovels; a zoo starring several bears; a Disney fairytale; an adopt-a-dog kennel (with cooperation of the local dog-saving society); and Bill Fee, full-time clown.

As part of "family-style" campaign, Shanahan said, 38,000 homes in the southwest section of Houston, the prosperous growing area where theatre is situated, have been circularized. Every school teacher and homeowner in Sharpstown will get a personal letter.

Booked for opening bill are "Sad Sack," which had its first run here several months ago, and "Pawnee," a local prem. The usual stars will be on hand & \$25,000 has been budgeted for hoopla, Shanahan said.

"The program reflects our plans to not make this a first-run theatre," he said.

## Nominate 'Anorv'

This was done e ro's "The Brothers Karamazov" and in several other pictures. There has been a good deal more experimentation with color effects abroad than in the States. Elia Kazan said last week that he would make his "Mud on the Stars" in color if he could get the kind of tint effects to suit the setting.

## Hyman Reports 36 From

## WB Shutters Milwaukee

Chicago, March 4.  
Warner Bros., in another economy step, shuttered its Milwaukee branch office last Saturday (1). Move leaves only two or three salesmen in the beertown, while all other departments are being absorbed by the Chicago office. Some clerical help fell by the wayside as a result.

## 68% of 1957's Pix (Via Code) In Monochrome

Hollywood is no longer focused at the world through rose-colored glasses. Instead, films today are overwhelmingly in the more realistic black-and-white, which also is less hard on the production budget.

Survey of film approved in 1957 by the Production Code shows that, out of a total of 380, a big percentage—280 or 68%—were in monochrome and the remainder (32%) in color. This confirms a trend that's been evident since 1955, when Hollywood started to worry about its expenses.

Back in 1955, the color-to-black and white ratio still favored color, with 51% of the films in one tint process or the other. By 1956, the ratio had been reversed, with color account for only 42% and black-and-white for 57%. In '57, the swing away from color became even more pronounced.

Producers haven't given up on color and most of the top films still are tinters. However, a more careful evaluation of what values color would bring an individual production now is the rule. It's no longer felt that tinting alone will intrigue the customers, though it's still a bargaining point for higher rental. At the same time, there's little question that, on the "right" story, color can enhance its enjoyment.

How much more flexible Hollywood's attitude in that respect has become is evident at 20th-Fox where, under the aegis of Darryl F. Zanuck, CinemaScope in color was a "must." Today, the company no longer is committed to that policy and is turning out black-and-white C'Scope films.

Also, color more and more is being utilized to create a story mood, effectively in Mei-

## NEW BLOWS SEEN FOR L'IL EXHIBS

New York film trade observers believe that the elimination and/or consolidation of exchanges will indirectly have the effect of closing down many fringe theatres throughout the country. Many of these houses which have been barely hanging on during the television era will not be able to afford the additional shipping costs for prints originating at more distant points. (See separate Albany story herewith concerning Universal.)

For some time now distributors have felt that numerous small accounts have been uneconomical to handle and have preferred to book pictures at some 2,000 to 3,000 key situations. The fringe accounts which deliver small rental coin have just about been breaking even or losing money in recent years. Any added cost, such as an increase in shipping charges, can make a serious difference in the economic position of these theatres. For some houses, it's asserted, the extra transportation costs will force them to close down operations.

Economic necessity has been forcing the major distributors to alter the operations of their exchanges. The film companies, although they did not set out to do so deliberately, do not regard the closing of many fringe houses as a tragedy. Since the entire complexion of the business has changed, the distributors no longer find it profitable to service the numerous small houses.

In the first place, they no longer have a large amount of pictures needed for the many changes required by the small houses. Secondly, the blockbuster pictures are playing longer and at higher admissions at key situations and are earning as much, if not more, money than the films which were formerly mass-distributed.

To some observers, the closing of the exchanges will have a long-range salutary effect on the business as a whole. It will cut down distribution costs and, at the same time, eliminate a number of accounts that have been uneconomical to service. It'll probably bring numerous squawks from exhibitors, it's felt, but traders feel that a realistic view must be taken and that under present conditions the film market, if it is to survive, must be contracted.

## France's Office

Continued from page 3

expected back shortly. The functioning of the office and its future are among the topics that he discussed in Paris with the producers and the Centre National du Cinéma.

Partly as an outcome of these talks it was decided to skip the idea of theatre leaseings or acquisitions in the U.S. A rep of Finacinef, the French company set up to acquire French showcases all over the world, was in the U.S. recently for a few days, but failed to explore any expansionist plans. Latter are said to be centered, for the moment, on French Canada.

French producers at the moment must rely entirely on the veracity



*Variety, March 5, 1958*

### TEXTILE MAN SEES RED SURE AT CULVER CITY

On the basis of a recent visit to Metro's Culver City Studio, Lester Martin, a millionaire textile manufacturer with substantial interests in motion picture stock, is of the opinion that the studio this year will lose between \$10,000,000 and \$15,000,000.

Martin's views were made known in a letter to Loew's prexy Joseph R. Vogel and were read to stockholders at last week's annual meeting by Judge Louis Goldstein who represented Martin. Martin also made the point that Loew's is faced with the serious problem of borrowing money at high interest rates "to continue to produce pictures which, at best, will show no profit."

"No one likes to talk about liquidating," Martin noted, "and no one likes to liquidate, but there is no alternative. It is foolish to continue any business that is economically unsound—and the production of pictures is in this category."

**KUDOS VS. KNOCKS**

Chicago, March 4



Latter produced Toronto-made color "Oedipus Rex," which Guthrie directed.

## Columbia Stock Up as Textile Operator Buys

Although its two past quarterly dividends have been passed, Columbia is getting upbeat treatment in the financial area. The Col stock went up to \$16.25 last week, for a rise of \$3.12½ within just the last three weeks. Presumably due to profit-taking, the issue slipped to \$15 by the close of trading on Friday (15).

Reason for the fancy jump is a subject of some speculation, as is usually the case when a company's earnings are off and the stock goes up. Wall Street sources of the "informed" variety believe they have the answer. They say that Lester Martin, millionaire textile industry operator, is buying up the Col issue through the brokerage firm of Reynolds & Co. and, on the heels of Col president Harry Cohn's death, will be seeking a position on the board.

As of a week ago Martin owned 100,000 shares—possibly more by now—and clearly is the biggest individual stockholder outside the Cohn family.

## Over 100 Asst. Directors Unemployed; About 65% Of Guild Now Working

Hollywood, March 18.  
Employment in the Screen Di-

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(Continued on page 14)

## NEW COAST PLOT TO OVERTHROW YATES

Hollywood, March 18.

Bid to oust from control Herbert J. Yates, Republic Pictures' president and to secure a controlling interest in the company's stock, has been made by a group which approached financier Elliott Evans and asked him to form a syndicate to purchase 200,000 shares of available Rep stock.

Group, which has chosen to remain anonymous, presently owns 300,000 shares, which, added to Evans' proposed 200,000, would enable them to take control.

Evans confirmed the report when contacted.

Musicians

prexy James  
would not han  
work," or soundt  
ings for U.S. films  
seas.

Elvin pointed out  
ish musicians recently  
work on the soundtrack  
Paramount's production  
tigo."

## Martin Davis Trav

Martin S. Davis, assistant  
director of Paramount, leave  
York tomorrow (Thurs.) for a  
of Chicago, Los Angeles and  
He'll confer with division  
in each of the three cities and  
up with the new product  
studio.

## National Boxoffice Surve

Tanda Perkins Un: 'Kwai' Cops First, 'Brothers

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presented sharply in the picture.  
The films were produced by Leslie Winik for the International Boxing Club. United Artists, which is releasing the films, has set an initial print order of 850 and anticipates a total of 7,000 bookings. N.Y. News sport columnist Jimmy Powers provides the narration. It's short and to the point. Holl.

### Orders to Kill (BRITISH)

Excellent psychological study of the mind of a wartime killer; lack of star names may make it less easy to sell to public than picture merits.

London, March 25.

British Lion release of an (Anthony Havelock-Allan) Lynx production. Stars Eddie Albert, Paul Massie, Lillian Gish, James Robertson Justice. Directed by Anthony Asquith. Screenplay, Paul Dehn from original story by Donald C. Downes; adapted by George St. George; camera, Desmond Dickinson; editor, Gordon Hales; music, Benjamin Frankel. At Studio One, London. Running time, 111 MINS.

Major MacMahon	Eddie Albert
Gene Summers	Paul Massie
Mrs. Summers	Lillian Gish
Naval Comdr.	James Robertson Justice
Leonie	Leslie French
Marcel Lafitte	Irene Worth
Kimball	John Crawford
Interrogator	Lionel Jeffries
Blonde	Sandra Dorne
Lecturer	Nicholas Phipps
Mme. Lafitte	Anne Blake
Louise	Miki Iveria
Mauricette	Lillie Bea Gifford
General Nolan	Launce Maraschal
Colonel Snyder	Robert Henderson
Mitchell	William Greene
Patronne	Selma Vaz Dias
Psychiatrist	Ralph Nossek
F.A.N.Y.	Ann Walford
Old German Officer	Boris Ranevsky

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Yet another British film turns to war espionage as its theme. Though the subject is getting a shade threadbare, "Orders To Kill" stacks up as one of the best in the stable. A more star-studded cast might have been useful for bringing in patrons. But this is such a satisfying and intelligent picture that word-of-mouth recommendation should insure it a brisk box-office reception at discriminating houses in Britain and the U.S.

"Orders" gets away to a flying start because of a first-class, adult and observantly written screenplay by Paul Dehn. It is clear that the writer, director Anthony Asquith and the players were in complete harmony. The main fault is that it slightly falls apart towards the end. More ruthless cutting in the last 20 minutes or so would have been useful.

Adapted from an original by Donald C. Downes, the yarn has Paul Massie as a grounded Yank flyer switched to espionage on a special job. The chore is to kill a small-time Paris lawyer who is suspected of double-crossing France by selling out radio operators to the Nazis.

Massie approaches the job with tremendous enthusiasm as he trains for this legalized murder. Not till he gets to Paris, meets his victim and gets to know and like him does his stomach begin to turn at the task ahead of him. But he does the job reluctantly and then goes on a mighty binge, broken up at the thought that he might have murdered an innocent man. It turns out that he has.

As the sensitive killer Massie enjoys a well-written meaty role. He is a young newcomer to films, under contract to Metro and Ealing, and looks to be a winner. His performance in this film is over-studied but he admirably suggests the transition from the carefree officer who approaches his mission almost as a lark to the uneasy, conscience-stricken killer.

There are also half a dozen other sterling jobs of acting. Eddie Albert, as an understanding officer; James Robertson Justice, as a trainer-commander who approaches the job of teaching Massie to kill with a breeziness that masks his real feelings; Irene Worth, as a French resistance agent, and Leslie French, as the victim, are

London.  
Gideon.  
Joanna I  
Kate Gid  
Sally  
Simon F  
"Birdy"  
Mason  
Paul Del  
The Chi  
Saver  
Kirby  
Mrs. Kir  
Det. Ser  
Ponsford  
Mrs. Sap  
Dolly Sa  
Sergeant  
Rev. Jul  
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Sir Rupe  
Inspector  
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all outstanding. There are neat cameos provided by veteran Lillian Gish, as Massie's mother, and Miki Iveria, as his childhood nurse.

Desmond Dickinson's photography matches Anthony Asquith's shrewd, imaginative direction. "Orders to Kill" may have come a little too late in the British film war cycle to make full impact, but it is a production of which all concerned can be proud, despite a few loose ends which may puzzle the earnest filmgoer. Rich.

### Gideon's Day (BRITISH—TECHNICOLOR)

Slick combo of director, star and scripter provides satisfying Scotland Yard yarn which offers good boxoffice prospects.

London, March 25.

Columbia release of a John Ford (Michael Killanin) production. Stars Jack Hawkins, Dianne Foster. Directed by John Ford. Screenplay, T. E. B. Clarke, from novel by J. J. Marrie; camera, E. Young; editor, Raymond Poulton; music, Douglas Gamble. At Gaumont Theatre. 91 MINS.

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## 'Jamaica' Nears Payoff, Will Give Merrick 4-Hit B'way Grand Slam

### St. Patnik

Philadelphia, March 18.  
Local WCAU newscasters referred to the Navy's orbiting of its Vanguard earth satellite as "the St. Patnik."

## Authors League Hits More Govt. Book Censorship

Authors League of America Inc. has asked Congress to vote down three pending bills that would change the Federal statute that makes punishable the mailing of "scene" material.  
League's objections center on HR 3663, under which—  
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David Merrick, who has set a precedent with four productions running simultaneously on Broadway, is about to outdo himself by having all of them become hits. Three of the four have already recouped their investments, while the fourth is doing near-capacity business and is figured likely to recoup its cost in about six-to-eight more weeks. The quartet's take last week was \$139,500 gross, with an estimated 30G net profit.

Various other managements have had several Broadway hits in succession, but Merrick is the first in many years to have four simultaneously. As an added wrinkle, Merrick's current four entries are all in the same block in West 45th Street. The present four, incidentally, give the producer a record of seven hits to date, without a failure.

His previous successes have included "Clutterbuck" (which took several years to pay off), in partnership with the late Irving Jacobs; "Fanny," in partnership with Joshua Logan; and "The Matchmaker," in partnership with the Theatre Guild. All of Merrick's current four are solo presentations. The four Merrick productions

(Continued on page 13)

## 'NEW' SHIRLEY TEMPLE:

WEST VIRGINIA CITIES, THE BRITISH Russe de Monte Carlo in Pitt, Jacksonville and Miami Beach, and Jose Greco in Pittsburgh.

## 'Jamaica' Payoff

Continued from page 1

are, in chronological order of opening, "Look Back in Anger," "Romanoff and Juliet," "Jamaica" and "The Entertainer." All but "Jamaica" are British importations, "Anger" and "Entertainer" being by John Osborne and "Romanoff" having been authored by its star, Peter Ustinov. The financial status of the shows is as follows:

### Look Back in Anger

Investment, \$40,000.  
Profit paid to backers to date, \$4,000.  
Additional payment due this week, \$8,000.  
Currently netting \$2,000-to-\$7,250th week.

### Romanoff and Juliet

Investment, \$80,000.  
Repaid thus far, \$48,000.  
Additional payment due this week, \$16,000.  
Recouped balance of cost last week.  
Currently netting \$2,000-to-\$7,000 per week, 24th week.

### Jamaica

Investment, \$300,000.  
Repaid to date, \$120,000.  
Additional payment due this week, \$60,000.  
Has recouped \$225,000.  
Currently netting \$14,000 per week, 21st week.

### Entertainer

Investment, \$60,000.  
Repaid to date, \$30,000.  
Additional payment due this week, \$30,000.  
Recouped balance of cost last week.  
Currently netting \$11,000 a week, sixth week.  
Ends limited engagement May 10.

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# Dunkirk

(BRITISH-METROSCOPE)

Inspiring reconstruction of an epic war adventure, well produced, directed and acted; deserves greatest boxoffice success.

London, March 25.

Metro release of an Ealing (Michael Balcon) production. Stars John Mills, Richard Attenborough, Bernard Lee, Robert Urquhart. Directed by Leslie Norman. Screenplay, David Dvorn, W. F. Lincolnton. Camera, Paul Beeson; editor, Gordon Stone; music, Malcolm Arnold. At National Film Theatre, London. Running time, 135 MINS.

Binns	John Mills
Mike	Robert Urquhart
Barlow	Ray Jackson
Dave Bellman	Meredith Edwards
Military Spokesman	Anthony Nicholls
Jouvet	Michael Shillo
Charles	Richard Attenborough
Holden	Sean Barrett
Frankie	Merchandise
Seaman	Victor Maddern
Diana	Maxine Audley
Flanagan and Allen	Themselves
Lieutenant Lumpkin	Kenneth Cope
Battery St. Major	Warwick Ashton
Staff Colonel	John Welsh
Viscount Gort	Cyril Raymond
Vice Admiral Ramsey	Nicholas Hannen
Commander	Eddie Byrne
Grace	Patricia Plunkett
Old Sweet	Michael Gwynn
Sergeant on Beaches	Fred Griffiths
Colonel	Lionel Jeffries
Dr. Levy	Harry Landis
Padre	John Horsley
Sergeant	Patrick Allen

Eighteen years after the event, Ealing Films has courageously tackled the mammoth task of committing Dunkirk to the screen. This inspiring story of a defeat which, miraculously, blossomed into ultimate victory because it stiffened Britain's resolve and solidarity, offered Sir Michael Balcon and his team many challenging problems. These have been grappled with most effectively and as a result "Dunkirk" is a splendid near-documentary which just fails to reach magnificence. The picture should prove a deserved, resounding success.

Director Leslie Norman's biggest headache was to satisfy three audiences. First, those who actually went through the hell of Dunkirk and will watch the film with an eye and ear quick to detect a false note. Second, those who, while not actually at Dunkirk, were old enough to be very aware of what was going on. Third, a new generation of cinema patrons who were either not born at the time of Dunkirk or were far too young for the name to mean anything but a French seaside town. Norman has achieved this three-pronged purpose admirably. Though the youngsters may still regard "Dunkirk" as "just another war story," only the most insensitive can fail to catch something of the spirit that was to lead to "Britain's finest hour."

Norman has planned his film through the eyes of three men. John Mills, a spry Cockney corporal, who, with a few men becomes detached from his unit and leads them to the beaches without quite knowing what is happening. Bernard Lee, a newspaper correspondent who is suspicious of the report of the higher-ups and intolerant of the complacent attitude of many British civilians who airily dismissed the war as phoney. Richard Attenborough is one of those very civilians having an easy time in a reserved occupation. Both Lee and Attenborough take their little boats to help in the great evacuation. Lee loses his life. Attenborough gets back, but with a fresh understanding of the drama surrounding him.

The film throughout is deliberately underplayed, with no false heroics and with dialog which has an almost clinical authenticity. On the whole, it is an absorbing rather than an emotion-stirring film. Yet there are many moments to be remembered. The sound of a faint harmonica playing "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" while bombs rain on the defenseless, naked beaches. The resigned fortitude with which a gun team await certain slaughter. The neurotic wife trying to fit a gas-mask on to her month-old baby. The savage yet not over-dramatic outburst of a wounded merchant seaman as he listens to the "phoney war" talk in a comfortable British pub. The death of Lee as the besieged soldiers join in church service. The setting out of the greatest scratch little fleet that history has ever known, though it was done with greater emotion in "Mrs. Miniver."

There are a variety of topnotch performances in "Dunkirk," but none has been allowed to dominate the greater importance of the film as a whole. In addition to the three stars, Mills, Attenborough and Lee (an excellent actor who has achieved nothing better in his film career to date), Ray Jackson, Fred Griffiths, Robert Urquhart, Kenneth Cope, Eddie Byrne, Michael Gwynn, Lionel Jeffries, Barry Landis, Warwick Ashton and

(Continued on page 14)

## Film Review

Continued from

### Dunkirk

Meredith Edwards all register strongly as varying servicemen in a long, well-cast string of players.

Maxine Audley and Patricia Plunkett have only limited opportunities as the wives of Lee and Attenborough, but make sure impact.

Production-wise the film is superb. Director Norman has marshalled his forces with patience and infectious enthusiasm and the beach scenes, filmed on Britain's south coast because Dunkirk is now so unlike what it was 18 years ago, are produced and directed with a masterly touch. Paul Beeson's photography is very good and the matching shots of newsreel are technically perfect. A special pat on the back must go to Fred Hellmuth for his special effects and to Stephen Dalby and his team for the sound effects.

Balcon and the Ealing setup have spared no pains to make "Dunkirk" a film worthy of the adventure it chronicles. Congratulations are in order all round and any defects in the film can be forgiven since it is impossible in 135 minutes, to do full justice to one of the most tragic yet inspiring pages of history ever to be written in the blood and torment of war. Rich.

### Hell's Five Hours

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## Fewer & Better Theatres Map Of Future: Goldenson

The public will respond in great numbers to good motion picture entertainment; fewer but better theatres are called for.

This was stated by Leonard H. Goldenson, president of American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres, in the corporation's annual report to stockholders this week. The public has become greatly selective and the accent in production is on quality. In the light of this situation it's a must that theatres provide the maximum in comfort and convenience.

AB-PT, said the report, is pursuing this objective and at the same time will continue to drop film houses which operate on a marginal or uneconomic basis. Circuit at the end of 1957 comprised 537 theatres, 276 of them owned in fee and 261 held on lease.

Theatre business during the first nine months of 1957 compared favorably with the corresponding period of 1956, Goldenson reported, but declined during the fourth quarter of last year because of the Asian flu epidemic plus the lack of boxoffice pictures. On the upbeat side were the good business results which began in January with a number of pictures.

Chief exec, commenting on the company's film-making subsidiary, said that as experience is gained pictures with greater production and star values will be considered. This unit was formed late in 1956 and has been turning out mainly exploitation-type features on small budgets.

As for the broadcasting end, Goldenson told investors that with the start of the 1957-58 season last fall ABC showed "fine improvement," attaining the largest percentage increase in gross time billings of all networks. As a result of better network programming and stronger local and public service shows the owned-and-operated tv stations have been scoring "fine progress and improved profits."

Network radio was adversely hit by the changing listening habits with the emphasis on local programming, and efforts have been made to overcome the trend with changes in the operation, including a full schedule of information programs and hourly newscasts going to all sections of the country.

AB-PT's gross hit a new high of \$215,877,000 in 1957, compared with \$206,916,000 the year before. However the net profit fell from \$8,477,000, or \$1.96 per share, in 1956 to \$4,894,000, or \$1.10 per share, in 1957.

At the end of 1957, company had working capital of \$45,848,000, and a net worth of \$83,718,000. Net fixed assets were carried at \$69,917,000 and long term debt at \$52,209,000.

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he stockholders that theatre earnings had been trending off for four years. Yates' answer was that sev-

## Columbia Studio Outlook

Hollywood, April 1.

Columbia Pictures, which will produce "only a limited number of productions" under its new policy of "United Artists" operations, will streamline (i.e. cut down) studio departments in changeover to the new format, according to prexy Abe Schneider. This new policy, he reported, "had been determined after discussions with Harry Cohn prior to his death."

Indie units headed by George Sidney, William Goetz and Sam Spiegel, Schneider disclosed, are to be expanded under new program, "and there are a number of other deals under consideration."

The Sam Katzman unit, said Schneider, "will be moved over to the main lot and the Sunset Studios will be available for rental to television producers or independent producing theatrical pictures."

Schneider said some functions of Screen Gems also will be merged "to effect economies as well as more efficient operations." Aim of the overall changes, he declared, "is to have resources, facilities and manpower at our studio which will make it more attractive to independents than any available elsewhere."

Executives of Columbia earning over \$500 weekly reportedly will be asked to take a voluntary pay cut of 10%. It's stressed that contract employees will be asked to do so purely in the interest of the company, with the proviso that the cuts will be restored as soon as the company is in a better financial position.

Similar requests have been made of top-salaried employees in the past at 20th-Fox and Metro when those companies faced adverse economic conditions. The slices were eventually restored.

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## 20th's Bettered Earnings

Though hurt by a sharp drop in attendance and earnings during the last quarter of 1957, 20th-Fox last year improved its earnings slightly. Company reported a net of \$6,511,218, or \$2.49 per share, for the year ended Dec. 28, 1957.

In the comparable prior year, 20th showed a net of \$6,198,419 or \$2.34 per share.

Total film rentals, including money from tv sales, hit \$117,537,070 against \$112,780,869 last year. Since foreign film rentals were about \$53,000,000 (with no tv income from overseas), domestic rentals and tv coin amounted to about \$64,000,000, which is \$4,000,000 over the \$60,299,658 which the U.S. market delivered for 20th in 1956.

Fourth quarter earnings were

\$887,360, or 36c per share, compared with \$3,016,320 or \$1.14 per share the prior year. During that quarter, said the report, "some of the pictures released . . . proved disappointing and the theatre business throughout the world was adversely affected by the Asian flu epidemic."

20th's 1957 balance sheet showed a total income of \$127,662,227 against \$122,251,864 in 1956. Amortization was down to \$63,524,545 against \$68,953,920 in '56. Participation in film rentals was up to \$16,474,493 vs. \$9,138,510 the prior stanza. For the first time in some years, distribution and administrative expenses rose almost \$1,000,000, from \$31,051,401 to \$32,120,682. Provision for \$7,130,000 in U.S. and foreign taxes was made against \$5,075,650 in 1956.



VARIETY

# L WAGS

## UNITED ARTISTS PLAN ELUSIVE

By GENE ARNEEL

Substantial segment of Hollywood production brass likely will run into serious problems as the policy of patterning future operations after United Artists is pursued. This point was made this week by veteran observers of the film-colony scene. They throw major emphasis on the fact that an abundance of industry tradition is involved.

To put it into simple terms, the UA modus operandi is providing the financing (usually 100%) for indie producers once a project is agreed upon. This includes budget, cast and story property. Thereafter the indie is free to shoot the picture with "independence"; UA execs actually remain aloof from the project until it's ready for screening.

Within the past several months, Loew's, Columbia and Universal in varying degrees have shown strong indications of taking their cues from UA. The only difference would be that each of these outfits has its own studio; UA does not.

Where, then, the rub?

Knowledgeable sources underline that UA, as it's now constituted under the Arthur B. Krim-Robert S. Benjamin regime, "came into being with the atomic age." Beginning in 1951 the enterprise was launched as virtually a new company, with no ties to past industry practice.

The only idea was to get pictures made with whatever financial sources could be found. Krim stated at the beginning there was no money to be made from distribution alone, that the company would want a substantial stake in each negative as well. (Actually, the producer in each case owns the negative; UA has the participation.)

UA competitors can undertake to follow suit, of course. But then the "tradition" comes into play.

UA encourages each of its indie film-makers to employ his own sales manager who, in turn, works with the UA distribution department. It's never been any other

(Continued on page 10)

"God Created Woman" (Kings). Hot \$10,000. Last week, "Girl in Black" (Indie) (2d wk), \$2,100.

## Studio Tails Wag

Continued from page 3

way. On the other hand, say observers, the veteran distribution heads of other companies might find it difficult to operate in association with an "outsider."

It's true that some indies at non-UA companies have had business reps but they have been relatively few in number. Similar situation obtains with special publicity reps.

The studio matter is of major importance. The big producer-distributor have had as the key course of migraine of late their studio overhead. This can best be handled as more pictures are made on the home lot. Indie producers have a definite yen to work in far-away places. It doesn't matter to UA where they go; the majors have the overhead to think about.

Finally, UA can't be regarded as the sole home of the indies. But the fact remains that, with one exception, every producer who had aligned with this financier-distrib for one picture has returned to the same fold to do others. The exception is Sam Spiegel, who turned to Columbia with "Bridge on the River Kwai."

And, as recently reported, late Col president Harry Cohn had the complaint that while "Kwai" proved highly successful, no part of its production overhead could be applied to studio overhead, "Kwai" having been lensed in Ceylon.

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## National Boxo

# MOST FILMS

## 'Directors Just Glorified Cameramen'

Which Is Robert Siodmak Bleat Against Hollywood  
—He's for Europe Where a Man's Still an Artist

### Sophie Tucker's Gifts

Los Angeles, March 25.  
Presented with a gold heart by membership of Variety Club Tent 25 at luncheon in her honor for her humanitarian efforts down through the years, Sophie Tucker told members that each month, for the rest of her life, she would send a three-figure check to Tent 25 for org's boys club.

It's estimated that vet headliner has donated more than \$2,500,000 to charity during her lifetime.

### Junior Goldwyn Takes Cue From Dad on Financing 'Rebel' for \$1,600,000

Samuel Goldwyn Jr. says he did it because he heard of another fella who did it—meaning he financed his own picture, as does Samuel Goldwyn Sr. The younger Goldwyn's new picture is "Proud Rebel," made at a cost of \$1,600,000 with the producer obtaining his financing from Bank of America.

Film-maker says the future of independent producer lies "in being a true independent" and the only way to do this is for him to put up his own money. Financiers, such as the distributors, want a number of "assurances," he says, and this deprives the pro-

ducer-director Robert Siodmak, formerly of Hollywood and active in Germany, last week explained why he prefers working in Munich or Berlin to working on the Coast.

"In Europe, the creative talent still has a say," he said. "I don't think I could stand the pressures in Hollywood any more. There the director is nothing much more than a glorified cameraman."

Siodmak came through Manhattan on his way to the Coast to be present at the Academy Award ceremonies. His "Nachts Wenn Der Teufel Kommt" (At Night When the Devil Comes) was picked as the German contender for an Oscar. Picture hasn't yet been sold for the States. Siodmak described it as frankly and outspokenly anti-Nazi.

He has made three pictures in Germany during the past six years. One was "Devil." The other two include "Die Ratten" (The Rats) with Maria Schell, and "My Father the Actor" with O. W. Fischer. Siodmak said he deliberately was holding back any deal on "Rats" pending the further growth of Miss Schell's stature in the U. S.

Siodmak's future program, envisioning U. S.-German coproduction, includes a film on Graf Luck-

(Continued on page 20)

## Action Taken,

Directed by George Archainault.

### Glorified Crankers

Continued from page 3

ner, the German "sea devil"; another version of "The Three Penny Opera" with the Kurt Weill music, for which he wants Curt Jurgens, and "Undine" by Giroudoux, for which he hopes to get Miss Schell.

Apart from these, he's planning to shoot "The Rough and the Smooth" as a British-German coproduction, with Renown Pictures as the British partner. Film is described as a modern human bondage.

Siodmak also is shooting three pilots for a tv series to be entitled "The Killers" and he has an idea for a tv series on "Great Escapes," from Churchill and Xenophon to Latude and Genl. Giraud. These pix would be shot at the Bavaria studios in Munich.

The Germans, observed Siodmak, are virtually the only producing country where virtually no thought is being given to export. "They don't bother to think beyond Vienna, Switzerland and the Saar," the producer held, adding that this was in part explainable by the fact that (1) the German market is so potentially lucrative for a hit, and (2) German actors, once they become known, are so quickly snapped up by Hollywood.

Television is gradually making inroads in Germany, Siodmak reported. He said, eventually, the small so-called German "Heimat" films would be replaced by tv. There was no great incentive for the Germans to coproduce with other European countries because the dubbed product would be released just as easily, he said. However, the incentive for Americans to coproduce with Germans was considerable since the German market carried a virtual guarantee of around \$400,000 or more.

Biggest problem in Germany today is playing time, and that's getting tougher all the time, said Siodmak.

"At Night, When the Devil Comes" was a success in Germany, where the Gloria outfit released it, Siodmak said. He acknowledged that the German system of production, with distributors financing producers and holding a tight rein on film content, prevented any great experimentation and possibly tended to keep down film quality, but added that there was little chance for any change. Quite apart from that, he reminded, some of the artistically poorest films have done the biggest business in the German market.

GOLDWYN'S HERSHOLT KUDO



Continued on page 18

## 20th-Fox Covets Howard Hughes' 300,000 Shares

Twentieth-Fox is seeking to work out a deal to purchase Howard Hughes' large block of stock in the company, reportedly about 300,000 of the common shares. Although not confirmed by either of the principal parties, this has become a matter of some discussion among brokers in the Wall Street area.

One source had it that Hughes earlier had been asking an "outlandish" price for his holdings but now is coming around to the idea of unloading at a market trading level, which would be about \$25 per share.

This would place the total price at \$7,500,000.

Hughes, according to individuals claiming knowledge of the situation, has been "friendly" toward management—that is, refraining from any openly-voiced complaints about policy matters and not seeking any board representation. It's said he bought in solely for investment purposes.

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VARIETY

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## NEW CAMPAIGNS KEY TO RENTALS

By HY HOLLINGER

As a result of U. S. exhibitors' asserted new interest in reissues to discourage post-1948 pictures selloff to television, distribs are planning to test the sincerity of the theatreowners and are readying a number of packages.

Joining the major distributors in the search for some of the reissue possibilities are the tv syndicators themselves which have acquired many of the pre-'48 films. These include National Telefilm Associates and Associated Artists Productions, both of which have organized theatrical distribution subsidiaries—NTA Pictures and Dominant Pictures respectively.

Opinion among the distribs, particularly among the tv firms, is that a reissue to be successful must be sold like a new picture. It's pointed out for example that exhibs are accustomed to buying reissues for "peanuts" and a distrib organization cannot operate on "\$15 bookings." That, at least, is the opinion of one distrib now handling reissues.

Contention is made that the reissue must be given all the earmarks of a new picture and should include a new publicity and advertising campaign. In addition, the distribs want percentage deals. NTA Pictures, for example, wants the same percentage that the major distribs receive for so-called program pictures. In most cases, however, the oldies are sold on a sliding scale basis and, according to an NTA spokesman, there have been circumstances where the percentage has gone to as high as 40%.

### Shirley's Back

In addition to 19 Shirley Temple pictures which NTA plans to re-release with an 18-month clearance over tv, the firm presently is offering 12 pictures on its release slate. Among these are Stanley Kramer's "The Men" and Samuel Goldwyn's 1943 entry "The North Star." Both pictures have been retitled to "Battle Stripe" and "Armored Attack" respectively and are being issued as a combo action package with a new bally campaign. "North Star," which dealt with the Nazi invasion of Russia, has been considerably re-edited. Title changes have brought some protests from unsuspecting viewers. However, this practice has been employed frequently in the past with certain reissues.

NTA is issuing the remainder of its oldies under the original titles. Included are David O. Selznick's "Adventures of Tom Sawyer," Stanley Kramer's "Cyrano De Bergerac," "The Bells of St. Mary's," and Selznick's "Spellbound."

A. W. Schwalberg, former Paramount distribution chief, is v.p. in charge of sales for NTA Pictures.

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VARIETY

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## KEEP ALL POCKET BOOKS AUDITABLE

Theatre circuits, which operate wholly-owned subsidiary concession companies, have been warned to "reexamine and reevaluate situations with the advice of their counsel and their accountants" in light of a recent ruling of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue against a Florida theatre chain.

The warning came from Herman M. Levy, general counsel of the Theatre Owners of America, who in an industry case digest cites the experience of Theatre Concessions Inc., a subsidiary of Tallahassee Enterprises which owns and operates theatres and drive-ins in Florida.

The Internal Revenue Code provides that the first \$25,000 of corporate income per year be taxed at the rate of 30% and that all income in excess of the first \$25,000 be taxed at the rate of 50%. Levy points out that it is not an uncommon practice to "split" the income of a business enterprise among two or more corporations in order to get the advantage of an additional "surtax exemption" for each separate corporation.

But, Levy stresses, the Internal Revenue Code also provides that if a corporation transfers property to a newly-created corporation, the second corporation shall be denied surtax exemption unless the taxpayer proves "by the clear preponderance of the evidence" that the obtaining of the additional surtax exemption was not "a major purpose" of the transfer.

In the case of the Florida theatre firm, the taxpayer failed to prove that the arrangement between the theatre corporation and the subsidiary concessions company was not an attempt to obtain a second surtax exemption.

Tallahassee Enterprises gave the following reasons for setting up a separate concessions company and the lease arrangement:

- (1) To facilitate a possible sale of the theatres and the concessions business as separate entities.
- (2) To prevent theatre managers from knowing total theatre profits and encouraging possible competition by talking about the large profits made by the theatres.
- (3) To discourage theatre managers from asking for increases in salaries.
- (4) To protect the theatre-operating assets from possible judgments for damages arising from the sale of poisonous foodstuffs.

The U. S. Tax Court in Washington, however, ruled that the major purpose for the formation of the subsidiary and the lease arrangement "was to effect a tax saving."

Juice Up State Street

present-day thinking, they can't

(Continued on page 13)

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CAST: James Mason, Ava Gardner, Nigel



INTER-OFFICE

Date

4/1/58

ALLIED ARTISTS

To

Gordon McLeod

Subject

"Macabre" (It means horror)

Klean Gordon:

This Insurance  
'bit' has a taste the  
ole Scotsman might  
have concocted -  
Thought it  
might interest you -

Best -

Geny Bannan

ARTISTS'

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"MACABRE"

The HEIGHT of HORROR is coming from ALLIED ARTISTS

DOLLARS in the event of the death by

NT

"MACABRE", I hereby instruct the  
named below.

RELATIONSHIP

Dollars (\$1,000) is not payable.

NAME

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IP K. SCHEUER

"\$1000 in case of death by  
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at a figure of eight in the United States  
in a single year. The policy excludes any suicide by a  
member of the audience, anyone with a known heart  
or nervous condition and any usher or member of a  
house staff who keels over in the performance of his  
duties."

I have seen "Macabre." There's a risk involved, at  
that.

# MACABRE

The Producers of the film MACABRE, undertake to pay the sum of ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS in the event of the death by fright of any member of the audience during the performance.

## BENEFICIARY AGREEMENT

In the event of my decease by fright during the performance of the motion picture "MACABRE", I hereby instruct the producers to pay ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,000) Life Benefit to my beneficiary named below.

I understand that if I have a known heart or nervous condition the One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) is not payable.

The above agreement is insured by Lloyd's of London.

LOS Angeles TIMES  
says:

Still another  
example  
of the  
excellent  
publicity on  
**ALLIED  
ARTISTS'**  
exploitation  
smash...

## Policy Issued

### Producer Insures 'Macabre'; 'Ben-Hur' Writer Finds Pal

BY PHILIP K. SCHEUER

That trade-paper ad, "\$1000 in case of death by fright" during the screening of "Macabre," a new film shocker, is on the level. So says William Castle, the producer and director, who reports he went all the way to London and negotiated the tie-up with Lloyd's.

"I have the policy to prove it," Castle claims. "It was issued last July and became effective in October. The whole thing is unprecedented. Lloyd's was properly conservative and very skeptical, but finally agreed providing we would not use the name 'Lloyd's of London' in paid advertising.

"They computed a table on the number of people who might drop dead during a viewing of 'Macabre' and arrived at a figure of eight in the United States in a single year. The policy excludes any suicide by a member of the audience, anyone with a known heart or nervous condition and any usher or member of a house staff who keels over in the performance of his duties."

I have seen "Macabre." There's a risk involved, at that.

**"MACABRE"**

The HEIGHT of HORROR is coming from ALLIED ARTISTS



# OUTSTANDING L. A. COLUMNIST HAILS "MACABRE" INSURANCE POLICY!

PHILIP K. SCHEUER  
Los Angeles Times  
says:

Still another  
example

of the

excellent

publicity on

**ALLIED**

**ARTISTS'**

exploitation

smash...

## "MACABRE"

The HEIGHT of HORROR is coming from ALLIED ARTISTS

## Fright Death Policy Issued

Producer Insures 'Macabre';  
'Ben-Hur' Writer Finds Pal

BY PHILIP K. SCHEUER

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I have seen "Macabre." There's a risk involved, at that.



# 'MACABRE' EXPERT HORROR PICTURE, SHOULD CLICK B.O.

## Castle, White Film Standout in Genre

### "MACABRE"

(Castle-White-Allied Artists)

Producers.....William Castle, Robb White  
Director.....William Castle  
Screenplay.....Robb White  
Based on a novel by.....Theo Durrant  
Photography.....Carl E. Guthrie  
Art direction.....Jack T. Collis, Robert Kinoshita

Music.....Les Baxter  
Sound.....Frank Webster  
Film editor.....John F. Schreyer

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

Cast: William Prince, Jim Backus, Christine White, Jacqueline Scott, Susan Morrow, Philip Tonge, Jonathan Kidd, Dorothy Morris, Howard Hoffman, Ellen Corby, Linda Guderman, Voltaire Perkins.

(Running time — 73 minutes)

A lot of fun can be derived from being horrified—by an expert. Perhaps that's why so many classics of horror fiction, in Germany, Britain and the early days of this country, were written to be read at night at Christmas house parties. "From ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties and things that go bump in the night, good Lord deliver us!" ran an old Scottish invocation. But it didn't ask for deliverance until after the lassies had squealed deliciously and hugged their lads in enjoyable terror as a mysterious hand groped from beyond a tombstone and a ghoulie made his improbable head seen in the night. The best horror stories were written to be read aloud and the best horror plays should be enjoyed with others in a theatre. Here is a field where the movies have a distinct advantage over TV and William Castle's "Macabre" should enable the exhibitor to take advantage of it.

Castle not only produced and directed this entertaining screenplay, he provided it with what may be the year's best exploitation gimmick by going to London and inducing Lloyds to insure every member of the audience to the sum of one thousand dollars against death by fright. Excluding those with known heart or nervous disorders, the underwriters expect to pay off about eight policies within the continental United States. I doubt if the film kills anyone who wouldn't have departed this vale of tears anyhow, but the policies, like the nurses and first aid stations that were set up in the lobbies during "Frankenstein," should produce the same mood of jocund mortality that causes Mexicans to hold their national picnic day in graveyards.

Most of "Macabre's" high-jinks also are held in a cemetery. The weird carnival gets going when an undertaker (Jonathan Kidd) tells the chief of police (Jim Backus) that a child's coffin has been stolen from his establishment. Shortly thereafter, a doctor's nurse (Jacqueline Scott) learns, from a mocking phone call, that the child of the local doctor (William Prince) has been buried alive. There is freshly turned earth on half the graves in the cemetery and, as nurse and doctor toil over them, a series of adroit flashbacks show that nearly everyone in town has reason to hate the medico.

His father-in-law (Philip Tonge)

## Alexander Gets Rights To Biopic Ber...

Willard Alexander has secured the rights to biopic band leader... formerly held by... agent Herm... eer's bro... N.Y. to... network...

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is... opening... day start... ices, and M... Russ Brown, p... miracle. NTO pre... is now in N.Y. bluepr... the splashy opening there.

has no reason to love the physician who permitted his pregnant wife (Dorothy Morris) to die of neglect. It is time, the doc was playing around with a trim-hipped young widow (Susan Morrow).

Another flashback introduces us to a most interesting and offbeat character, the doctor's sister-in-law (Christine White). Blind since birth, this girl was a reckless hedonist until the doctor permitted her to die during miscarriage. The chief of police, who loved her, hates the quack's guts.

Even the loyal nurse who helps this medical Lothario toil through the cemetery has reason to be jealous of the fact that he now has got himself engaged to the widow. He has also incurred the suspicion and intense dislike of his housekeeper, Ellen Corby.

All of the flashbacks are bracketed by shrieky and gaspy developments as the search goes on among the graves and vaults. These come to a hair-raising climax when the coffin is found. When opened it contains, not the living child, but a shocking monstrosity. As the story unfolds, Robb White's screenplay seems to include one ever-enlarging plot hole, but the final summing up deftly plugs this. Stripped of its spooky overtones, the yarn bears a close resemblance to the celebrated Swope case which shocked America about a century ago.

All the performances are good with Miss Scott, as the nurse, doing a fine job of carrying the main story line and Miss White being a standout as the blind hedonist.

Castle brings an excellent exploitation picture to just the right humorous conclusion with a series of playfully animated end titles by Jack Rabin, Louis Dewitt and Irving Block. From beginning to end, it's a shocker with class.

—Jack Moffitt.

## Civic Light Op To Give Rackin's 'Beauty' a Beat

Year's Best Gimmick... and a Helluva Picture, Too!

range program... light Opera... properties... Rack... ting... up... so... it... CLO negotiated direct... authoress Vicki Baum, Lester... disclosed. MGM, which filmed the novel 20 years ago, had only the film rights. However, Lester is now working on a deal with MGM for the studio to get first screen rights to musicalized version. "Grand Hotel" Broadway dramatic hit before... filmed it.

Financially, "Hotel" is almost solely a CLO venture, with only Roger Stevens participating in exchange for part of the possible Broadway starring. Actually, film company participation in producing legit shows are on the wane, Lester feels, because the major studios lack the available surplus these days for such investments.

CLO has two more years to go on its lease on the Philharmonic Auditorium, but he's not anxious to move to anything but a new Civic opera house, Lester states. The Philharmonic is owned by the Baptist Church, which wants the property for its own use, even though it has twice extended the CLO lease. As a last resort, Lester might reactivate negotiations to take over the Panages or the Wilmette theatres for the CLO seasons, but he'd much rather move into a new Civic Auditorium.

## Myrna Hansen Joins 'Party'

Myrna Hansen, under contract to the studio, was cast over the weekend by Metro in "Party Girl," Joe Pasternak production which Nicholas Ray will direct. Previously set for film have been Robert Taylor, Cyd Charisse and Barbara Lang.

## Goldwyn Award Speeches

Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich today, and Billy Wilder tomorrow, address UCLA Theatre Arts Dept., in connection with the Sam Goldwyn annual creative writing awards.

## Poise Carmen for 'Babe'

Indie producer-director Bert I. Gordon has optioned Jeanne Carmen to play title role in "The Babe," biopic of the Mildred ("Babe") Didricksen.

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Since her film role, Miss Windeck has been including background information about the picture and its anti-war theme in her broadcasts, and has aroused great interest wherever her program has been heard.

"Interestingly enough," she adds, "since I've started speaking about the picture and its meaning to free people all over the world, attempts to 'jam' my broadcasts have risen over 60 percent."

## Raoul Walsh to Meg 20th's 'Fractured' Pic

Raoul Walsh has been set to direct "The Sheriff of Fractured Jaw," to be produced by Bob Goldstein in London for 20th-Fox release. Set three weeks ago for star roles in the film were Jayne Mansfield and Kenneth More.

## Pal Paging Guinness

New York.—George Pal, on arrival here from London, disclosed he is currently negotiating for Alec Guinness and Peter Sellers to co-star in his projected filmization, "The Brothers Grimm." Producer-director just completed his own indie "tom thumb," in Britain, for MGM release.

## 'Bonnie' Roles for 3

Featured roles in American International's "The Bonnie Parker Story" have been assigned to Carolyn Hughes, Jeff Morris and Jim Beck. Stanley Shecter produces his own screenplay and William Witney directs.



## COLUMBIA

### Jungle Manhunt

MELODRAMA  
66M.

ESTIMATE: Average programmer for the lower half.

CAST: Johnny Weissmuller, Bob Waterfield, Sheila Ryan, Rick Vallin, Lyle Talbot, William P. Wilkerson, Tamba. Produced by Sam Katzman; directed by Lew Landers.

STORY: Into the jungle comes free lance photographer Sheila Ryan searching for Bob Waterfield, former football hero, supposedly missing when his plane crashed in the jungle. Johnny "Jungle Jim" Weissmuller agrees to take her along on a mission in the interior where he is to check on reports of tribes being raided by an unfriendly tribe. They are attacked, but are saved by the appearance of Waterfield, who leads them to safety with his tribe. Ryan learns he is happy, and has no desire to go back to civilization and his uncle's millions. Later, they are captured by marauders led by scientist Lyle Talbot, who is forcing natives to mine a poisonous ore which he makes into diamonds. Since they can't mine it for more than several days, he constantly needs more tribesmen. Weissmuller gets away, destroys the mine after the natives are freed, and pursues Talbot until he falls to his death. Ryan, in love with Waterfield, decides to stay in the jungle with him.

X-RAY: In sepia, this has the usual action scenes found in others of the "Jungle Jim" series and a story that manages to hold interest. Direction and production are about average. There are a number of library scenes thrown in, and the youngsters should get a kick out of the proceedings. This was written by Samuel Newman.

TIP ON BIDDING: Program price.  
AD LINES: "Jungle Jim" To The Rescue"; "Another 'Jungle Jim' Thrilling Adventure Yarn"; "Jungle Jim" Hunts A Missing Football Hero In The Jungle."

### The Magic Carpet

ADVENTURE DRAMA  
84M.

(Supercinecolor)

ESTIMATE: Names should help interest-adventure yarn.

CAST: Lucille Ball, John Agar, Patricia Medina, George Tobias, Raymond Burr, Gregory Gay, Rick Vallin, Jo Gilbert, William Fawcett, Doretta Johnson. Produced by Sam Katzman; directed by Lew Landers.

STORY: A Caliph is about to name his son successor when he is killed by his half-brother, Gregory Gay. Another leader of the revolt, Raymond Burr, kills the queen, but not before she places the infant on the magic carpet, and orders it to take the child to William Fawcett. The child grows into manhood unaware that Fawcett is not his father. He, John Agar, becomes a doctor helping the poor. Gay, and his cruel sister, Lucille Ball, with the aid of Burr, have been milking the people dry. Resenting this evil, Agar and friend George Tobias, organize a band to fight. Known as the Scarlet Falcon, Agar soon becomes a thorn in Gay's side. Tobias' sister, Patricia Medina, is saved by Agar, and they fall in love. Agar becomes the court physician. Ball becomes very interested in him, arousing the anger of Burr, who learns of Agar's true identity, and kills Fawcett. Before he dies, however, Fawcett tells Agar the story, and gives him the magic carpet. Agar returns to the palace, where his identity as the Scarlet Falcon has been discovered. He is about to be executed when his old nurse sends the magic carpet to save him. Agar's band take a caravan of arms, and attack the

# EXHIBITOR

## SERVISECTION

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SECTION TWO  
Vol. 46, No. 23

OCTOBER 10, 1951

palace. Burr is killed, and Gay and Ball arrested. Hailed, Agar and Medina fly off.

X-RAY: An entry that lends itself to exploitation, this has action, beautiful girls, colorful costumes, and the magic carpet. Agar turns in an adequate performance as the dashing hero, and Burr is an okeh heavy. The Supercinecolor is uniformly good throughout. The screen play is by David Mathews.

TIP ON BIDDING: Program price.

AD LINES: "Harem Beauties Fighting For The Favor Of Dashing John Agar"; "The Fabled Magic Carpet Again Fights For Freedom"; "Lucille Ball As A Beauty Whose Temper And Lips Were As Hot As The Desert Sands."

## MGM

### The Man With A Cloak (207)

DRAMA  
80M.

ESTIMATE: Program meller will need plenty of help.

CAST: Joseph Cotten, Barbara Stanwyck, Louis Calhern, Leslie Caron, Joe DeSantis, Jim Backus, Margaret Wycherly, Richard Hale, Roy Roberts, Mitchell Lewis. Produced by Stephen Ames; directed by Fletcher Markle.

STORY: More than a century ago, French lass Leslie Caron arrives in New York to see wealthy Louis Calhern, an emigre from France, and plead with him to give financial assistance to the Republican movement in France in which her sweetheart, Calhern's grandson, is interested. Calhern is slowly dying while his mistress, Barbara Stanwyck; his butler, Joe DeSantis, and his housekeeper, Margaret Wycherly, wait to get his money. On the scene comes mysterious Joseph Cotten, who decides to assist Caron. Eventually, Cotten gets Calhern to have his lawyer change his will in favor of the grandson. The lawyer then dies drinking a glass of poison by which Calhern had intended to kill himself. Calhern dies following a stroke. The will is missing, and Cotten, Stanwyck, and DeSantis hunt for it. Cotten gets it, and the police come to his rescue. It is learned that the house is left to the trio but Caron gets the money to take back to France. Cotten disappears but a note he signs reveals him to be Edgar Allen Poe.

X-RAY: Slow-moving, this needs the star help for any boxoffice draw. It lacks dramatic appeal and the only bit of action comes at the conclusion. Calhern has the major role as an old roue, Stanwyck and

Cotten are limited, and Caron doesn't make any particular impression. This will fit into the duallers for the most part. There is one song sung by Stanwyck. The story was written by John Dickson Carr.

TIP ON BIDDING: Program price.

AD LINES: "The Man Of Mystery ... Who Was He?"; "They Waited For Murder ... And Wealth"; "A Man Of Mystery ... A Friendly Girl ... And A Roue ... In The Year's Most Intriguing Film."

### Pandora And The Flying Dutchman

FANTASY  
123M.

(Color by Technicolor)  
(Made in Europe)

ESTIMATE: Artistic production should appeal to class and art spots.

CAST: James Mason, Ava Gardner, Nigel Patrick, Sheila Sim, Harold Warrender, Mario Cabre, Marius Goring, John Laurie, Pamela Kellino, Patricia Raine, Margarita D'Alvarez, La Pillina, Abraham Sofaer, Francisco Igual, Guillermo Beltran, Molnar, Phoebe Hodgson, Gabriel Carmona, Antonio Martin. Produced by Albert Lewin and Joseph Kaufman; directed by Albert Lewin.

STORY: A group of foreigners live on the Spanish Mediterranean coast, among them English archaeologist Harold Warrender, American Ava Gardner, Sheila Sim, Warrender's niece, and racing enthusiast Nigel Patrick. Sim is in love with Patrick but he is infatuated with Gardner. When he pushes his car over the cliff, Gardner promises to marry him. Intrigued by a schooner in the bay, Gardner swims to it, and finds Dutchman James Mason painting a picture with her face. Mason becomes a part of the colony, and eventually it is revealed that he is the Flying Dutchman, sentenced to sail the seas forever until he finds a woman who loves him enough to die for him. Only Warrender knows this. Matador Mario Cabre arrives, and resumes a romance with Gardner. Jealous of Patrick Cabre hopes the latter will be killed trying to set a new racing record but when Patrick remains alive despite an accident, Cabre realizes that Gardner really loves Mason. He stabs Mason, and leaves him for dead, but Mason is unable to die. The next day, Cabre, in the bull ring, sees Mason, and is gored by a bull. Gardner, realizing who Mason really is, goes out to his schooner which is about to sail. A storm comes up, and Gardner and Mason are both drowned.

X-RAY: An artistic triumph, this should be appreciated by class houses. Embellished by gorgeous scenery and Technicolor, it presents Gardner more attractive than ever, able performances, and eye-



filling scenes, but for the mass audience its appeal is limited. Care was lavished on the show but the general run of non-discriminating theatregoers probably will find it slow moving. Everything about the film is first-rate but the story, combining the tale of the Flying Dutchman and a modern romance, probably won't be appreciated by many. It is by Albert Lewin, suggested by the legend. Legion of Decency: "B."

TIP ON BIDDING: Good program price for class and art spots.

AD LINES: "The Strange Tale Of The Flying Dutchman And The Woman He Loved"; "Ava Gardner . . . More Beautiful Than Ever"; "Could A Woman Love A Man Who Came Out Of The Distant Past?"

## MONOGRAM

### Joe Palooka In Triple Cross (5118)

MELODRAMA  
60M.

ESTIMATE: Okeh series effort.

CAST: Joe Kirkwood, James Gleason, Cathy Downs, Steve Brody, John Emery, Don Harvey, Rufe Davis, Jimmy Wallington, Mary Young, Eddie Gribbon, Sid Tomack. Produced by Hal E. Chester; directed by Reginald LeBorg.

STORY: Joe Kirkwood, wife Cathy Downs, and manager James Gleason pick up two men and an old woman in mourning, who turn out to be three escaped convicts, leader John Emery, Don Harvey, and trigger happy Steve Brody, posing as the woman. The killers decide to hold Kirkwood, Gleason, and Downs as hostages. When they learn that Kirkwood is the champ, they decide to kill them. Emery tells them they can have Kirkwood's purse from his next fight, and Emery works out a plan to hold Gleason as hostage. Brody, who resents his treatment by Harvey and Emery, kills the two, and plans to go through with the scheme himself. Posing as Down's old aunt, Brody threatens to kill her if Kirkwood or Gleason get help. On Brody's orders, Kirkwood trains in secret. Since Kirkwood is a heavy favorite, the money hungry Brody bets the entire purse on Kirkwood to lose. Kirkwood, taking a bad beating, knocks Brody out, and before the count runs to 10, jumps back, and knocks out his opponent.

X-RAY: This is a moderate series entry. It places most of the emphasis on melodrama, and uses the big fight for background and climax. Brody and Emery register as the killers. The screen play is by Jan Jeffries.

AD LINES: "What Makes 'Joe Palooka' Agree to Throw A Fight?"; "'Joe Palooka' Thwarts A Triple Cross With A Left Jab"; "'Joe Palooka' Battles With A Trigger-Happy Killer."

### Oklahoma Justice (5144)

WESTERN  
56M.

ESTIMATE: Okeh western.

CAST: Johnny Mack Brown, Jimmy Ellison, Phyllis Coates, Lane Bradford, Stanford Jolley, Marshall Reed, Barbara Allen, Kenne Duncan, Zon Murray, Stanley Price, Bruce Edwards, Richard Avonde. Produced by Vincent M. Fennelly; directed by Lewis Collins.

STORY: U. S. marshal Johnny Mack Brown, posing as a bandit, and his stage driver friend, Jimmy Ellison, try to learn the identity of a gang of bandits preying on the area. Heading the gang is widowed rancher Barbara Allen. Her henchmen are Marshall Reed, Lane Bradford, Zon Murray, and Stanford Jolley. Through Bradford, Ellison gets to know the whole gang, largely through the efforts of bank cashier

Phyllis Coates, engaged to Bruce Edwards. After Brown and Ellison escape being killed by the bandits, they round up the gang, and Coates and Edwards receive the reward as a wedding gift.

X-RAY: An adequate series entry, this has the required quota of fighting, shooting, and riding. The script by Joseph O'Donnell conforms to the pattern.

AD LINES: "Whoop It Up On The Range"; "Blazing Bullets With Both Barrels"; "He Brought Justice Where The Outlaws Ruled."

## PARAMOUNT

### Detective Story (5111)

MELODRAMA  
103M.

ESTIMATE: High rating.

CAST: Kirk Douglas, Eleanor Parker, William Bendix, Lee Grant, Bert Freed, Frank Faylen, William Phillips, Grandon Rhodes, Luis Van Rooten, Cathy O'Donnell, Horace MacMahon, Warner Anderson, George Macready, Joseph Wiseman, Michael Strong, Russell Evans, Howard Joslyn, Gladys George, Burt Mustin, James Maloney, Gerald Mohr. Produced and directed by William Wyler.

STORY: Tough detective Kirk Douglas is out to convict George Macready, a doctor who operates a baby delivery farm and who has been responsible for the death of a girl whose child was born illegitimately. Although Macready was acquitted, Douglas, who will not compromise with evil, keeps pushing the case. Macready surrenders through his lawyer, Warner Anderson, who warns Douglas' superior, Horace MacMahon, against violence. However, Douglas slugs Macready, and Anderson indicates the lawyer's wife Eleanor Parker, knows something. MacMahon investigates, and learns that before she married Douglas, Parker had a baby by racketeer Gerald Mohr, who loved her but who was married. The child died. The news is broken to Douglas, who knew nothing of his wife's past. First forgiving, Douglas then realizes that he will never forget what his wife told him, and Parker leaves. When a crook who is a four-time loser tries to escape, Douglas is shot down. Before dying, he asks that Parker forgive him, and also softens enough to drop an embezzlement charge against youngster Craig Hill.

X-RAY: A sock melodrama, this is a picture that should make for solid box-office. The stage hit has been improved upon by taut direction, ace performances, and a terrific tempo. Douglas is tops as the detective, with the others, Parker, MacMahon, Bendix as a sympathetic detective; Lee Grant, as a shoplifter; Cathy O'Donnell, Bert Freed, Frank Faylen, Anderson, Macready, and the others excellent in their roles. There have been few melodramas in recent years with such merit, which speaks highly for the William Wyler direction-production. The play was written by Sidney Kingsley.

TIP ON BIDDING: Higher bracket.

AD LINES: "He Wouldn't Compromise With Evil . . . Not Even His Wife's"; "The Story Of A Tough Detective . . . Who Knew Only One Law" "Would You Forgive Your Wife's Mistake?"

### My Favorite Spy (5110)

FARCE  
93M.

ESTIMATE: Good Hope.

CAST: Bob Hope, Hedy Lamarr, Francis L. Sullivan, Arnold Moss, Tonio Selwart, Stephen Chase, John Archer, Morris Ankrum, Marc Lawrence, Iris Adrian, Mike Mazurki, Luis van Rooten, Ralph Smiley. Produced by Paul Jones; directed by Norman Z. McLeod.

STORY: A spy being chased by government officials at a New York airport escapes. An alarm goes out, and burlesque entertainer Bob Hope is picked up since he looks like the wanted man. The real spy is wounded, and Hope is released. Later, the government agents ask Hope to take the spy's place, go to Tangier with a million dollars, get in touch with a mysterious man, and buy some very valuable micro film with it. He agrees, and is briefed on the past history and contacts of the spy, especially his former associate and sweetheart, Hedy Lamarr. Another factor to contend with is Francis L. Sullivan, head of an international ring of spies and killers. Hope eventually gets the film but the real spy shows up, and is killed by Sullivan's men. Lamarr throws in with Sullivan, but when she finds out that Hope loves her she decides to switch, and leave the country with him. Sullivan's men are after them and the film, and, after a hilarious chase, Hope manages to get free and turn the film over to the proper authorities.

X-RAY: Another Hope entry calculated to get the most in laughs out of a mixture of comedy and slapstick, and this should bring audiences a highly enjoyable time. It has an interesting story, a fast and furious pace, good gags and comedy situations, good direction, and production. The screen play is by Edmund Hartmann and Jack Sher, while the story and adaptation are by Edmund Beloin and Lou Breslow. Songs heard include: "I Wind Up Taking A Fall" and "Just A Moment More."

TIP ON BIDDING: Higher bracket.

AD LINES: "Bob Hope Mixes In International Intrigue"; "Want To Laugh Your Head Off? Don't Miss Bob Hope's Latest"; "There's Fun Galore For Everyone."

### Silver City

OUTDOOR MELODRAMA  
90M.

(Color by Technicolor)

ESTIMATE: Action-filled outdoor show has names to help.

CAST: Edmond O'Brien, Yvonne De Carlo, Barry Fitzgerald, Richard Arlen, Gladys George, Laura Elliot, Edgar Buchanan, Michael Moore, John Dierkes. Produced by Nat Holt and directed by Byron Haskin.

STORY: Edmond O'Brien and Richard Arlen are partners in an assaying office. On information given by money desperate O'Brien, two masked men rob the office, and steal a valuable assay. Stricken with shame, O'Brien runs away. Arlen keeps track of him and see that he does not get a job. O'Brien sets up an assaying office in Silver City, and helps Yvonne De Carlo and her father, Edgar Buchanan, find a rich vein of silver on land leased from Barry Fitzgerald. The land is to revert to Fitzgerald in 12 days, and De Carlo asks O'Brien to help mine the silver, but he refuses. When Fitzgerald's chief hoodlum, Michael Moore, attempts to wreck the project, O'Brien takes the job. The next day O'Brien spies Arlen and his wife, Laura Elliot, and Arlen, now representing a large mining company, is interested in buying the mine. De Carlo, in love with O'Brien, resents Elliot's overtures toward him. O'Brien tells De Carlo that he once loved Elliot, and that she was the reason he had sold his information. When Moore sees Elliot forcing her attentions on O'Brien, he gets an idea how to kill him, and put the blame on Arlen. With Fitzgerald's knowledge, he incites Arlen with stories about his wife, and then hires a killer to get O'Brien. However, Moore kills Fitzgerald, but O'Brien shoots him, and then goes after the killer. Arlen is killed, and De Carlo and O'Brien clinch.



## EXHIBITOR

**X-RAY:** With more slam bang action than seen in quite a while, the familiar story line here is well handled, and there are some fine color shots. Not particularly subtle or weighty in theme, this is, however, an entertaining programmer. The screen play is by Frank Gruber.

**TIP ON BIDDING:** Fair program price.

**AD LINES:** "The Lure Of Silver Drove Passions To A Frenzy In 'Silver City'"; "Silver City' . . . Where Death, Danger And Desire Walked Side By Side"; "Edmond O'Brien And Yvonne De Carlo In The Story Of A Man Who Could Not Run Away From His Past."

## REPUBLIC

**The Sea Hornet** ACTION DRAMA 85M.  
**ESTIMATE:** Action show will fit into the duallers.

**CAST:** Rod Cameron, Adele Mara, Adrian Booth, Chill Wills, Jim Davis, Richard Jaeckel, Ellen Corby, James Brown, Grant Withers. Produced and directed by Joseph Kane.

**STORY:** Ex-Navy man Rod Cameron and buddy, James Brown, partners in a deep-sea diving outfit, are approached by pretty Adele Mara to blow up a sunken ship with no questions asked. Cameron says no, but charmed by Mara, Brown takes the job, and is killed. Cameron, sure that Brown was murdered, sets out to prove it. The sunken ship is the Sea Hornet, which had gone down during the war with a million in gold. The trail leads Cameron to Jim Davis, the man who sent Mara. Singer Adrian Booth makes a big play for Cameron, who, with his friend, Chill Wills, is attacked. Mara's brother, Richard Jaeckel, arrives, and Cameron learns that their father had been skipper of the Sea Hornet and Davis the first mate. Davis hires outlaw diver Grant Withers to blow up the ship. Mara, Jaeckel, and Cameron join forces. Davis kills Withers after he sets the charge, but Cameron arrives, and captures Davis and his men. He goes down, and gets evidence proving that Davis had killed Mara's father, and Brown, and had stolen the gold. The Coast Guard arrives as the ship explodes, and Cameron and Mara clinch.

**X-RAY:** With underwater photography as the principal asset, this action show will fit into the duallers. There is too much talk for this type of film, with thrill sequences opening and closing it, but not too much movement between. Performances, direction, and production are standard. The screen play is by Gerald Drayson Adams.

**AD LINES:** "Ruthless . . . In The Struggle For Sunken Gold"; "Rugged Rod Cameron Finds Dames And Deep-Sea Diving Don't Mix"; "Murder And Intrigue Stalk The Bottom Of The Ocean."

## WARNERS

**Close To My Heart** DRAMA 90M.  
(107)

**ESTIMATE:** Name draw will make the difference.

**CAST:** Ray Milland, Gene Tierney, Fay Bainter, Howard St. John, Mary Beth Hughes, Ann Morrison, James Seay, Baby John Winslow, Eddie Marr. Produced by William Jacobs; directed by William Keighley.

**STORY:** Gene Tierney, married to newspaper columnist Ray Milland, wants a baby, but, according to the doctors, is unable to have one, so she is determined

to adopt one. At an adoption center directed by Fay Bainter, she learns that she will have a long wait, but makes out an application. Later she hears of an abandoned baby boy and traces him to where authorities are keeping him. She falls in love with him, and asks Bainter if she may have him. She is permitted temporary adoption. Milland, anxious to find out something about the parents, runs something in his column, and receives a tip which enables him to find out that the mother is dead. More searching reveals that the father, a murderer, is about to die. Bainter takes the child away, saying that Milland is not the proper father because he would always be looking for bad things to crop out in the child. When Milland returns after visiting the father, he finds Tierney alone, and he tries to recover the child but can't. He goes to Bainter, and convinces her that he loves the child, and that he will be a real member of the family. All ends well as he returns the child to Tierney.

**X-RAY:** Appealing primarily to women, this has heart touching moments, a fairly interesting story, good performances, and suitable direction and production. The baby angle usually is a good one, and there is no reason to doubt its draw here when coupled along with the names. The leisurely-paced yarn is by James R. Webb.

**TIP ON BIDDING:** Fair program price.

**AD LINES:** "They Wanted A Baby In The Worst Way"; "There Was Only One Way To Get The Baby They Wanted"; "Follow This Young Couple As They Sought To Adopt A Baby."

## FOREIGN

**A Dead Woman's Kiss** MELODRAMA 94M.  
(Casaloro)

(Italian-made) (English titles)

**ESTIMATE:** Routine offering for the art and Italian houses.

**CAST:** Virginia Belmont, Gianna Maria Canale, Peter Trent, Aldo Landi, Vinicio Sofia, Paul Muller, Mariu Gleck, Rubi D'Alma. Produced and directed by Guido Brignone.

**STORY:** In the 19th century, Italy is fighting for freedom from Austria. Wealthy Virginia Belmont is in love with Aldo Landi, a poor patriot, but, wanting a title, Belmont's father insists that she marry Count Peter Trent. Thinking Landi dead, she agrees, and bears Trent a daughter. Trent takes up his old life, rarely sees Belmont, and falls in love with Gianna Maria Canale, who becomes his mistress. Canale convinces Trent that he must kill Belmont to get control of the fortune. Landi returns, is told Belmont is dead, goes to her in the chapel, and, as he kisses her, detects life. Landi takes Belmont to a convent to recover. When Trent and Canale learn that the will gives the young child everything, they attempt to kill her but Landi takes her to her mother. Trusted servant Mariu Gleck overhears the murder plot, and Trent and Canale are arrested. Belmont arrives to free them, but the shock of seeing her causes Canale to go insane. The revolution in Milan begins, and Landi is captured, but is rescued. To restore his honor, Trent is killed in battle. Landi goes to finish the fight knowing Belmont is waiting.

**X-RAY:** Apparently a pre-war film, this lacks the dramatic depth and quality of the better Italian product. An unfamiliar cast offers good performances, and this import would probably find its best audiences in neighborhood Italian houses. The screen play is by Leo Cevenni and Vittorio Martino.

**AD LINES:** "The Story Of A Love More Powerful Than Death Itself"; "Gianna Maria Canale . . . A Beauty Who Could Drive Men To Kill"; "A Story Of An Undying Love."

**House Of 1000 Women** MELODRAMA 81M.  
(Ellis)

(English-made)

**ESTIMATE:** Exploitable British meller.

**CAST:** Phyllis Calvert, Flora Robson, Patricia Roc, Renee Houston, Reginald Purcell, Anne Crawford, Jean Kent, James McKechnie, Rob Arden, Carl Jaffe. Produced by Edward Black; written and directed by Frank Launder.

**STORY:** When France is occupied by the Germans in 1940, a thousand British women, among them Phyllis Calvert, Flora Robson, and Patricia Roc, are interned in a large hotel. RAF fliers Reginald Purcell, James McKechnie, and Rob Arden are shot down during an air raid, and take refuge in the hotel. The inmates employ wit and typical British derring-do to save the fliers from detection by the guards and a Nazi spy in their midst, but complications arise over a thwarted romance between ex-striptease dancer Jean Kent and one of the fliers. The women put on a show for the Germans, and Kent is to put on her act as the finale in order to keep the Germans in their seats long enough for the fliers to take their car for the escape. When her attentions are rebuffed by one of the fliers, she refuses to go on, but Roc, a former nightclub entertainer, takes over, and the fliers get away.

**X-RAY:** While the plot strains the credibility a bit, and production values are merely adequate, this has moments of comedy, suspense, and excitement, portraying various British and German types which have become standard in the less inspired war films of recent years, the cast goes through the routine paces acceptably. The title, plus the provocative situation of three men seeking refuge in a women's internment camp, should give good merchandising angles.

**AD LINES:** "Three Men Hide Out In The House Of 1000 Women" In This Thrilling Wartime Drama; "Caged Women And Desperate Men Make This An Exciting Story You Won't Want To Miss"; "See How Three Brave Men And A Thousand Women Outwit The Nazis."

**Murder Without Crime** DRAMA 76M.  
(Stratford)

(English-made)

**ESTIMATE:** Fair import for the lower half.

**CAST:** Dennis Price, Derek Farr, Patricia Plunkett, John Dowling. Produced by Victor Skutezky; written and directed by J. Lee Thompson.

**STORY:** Patricia Plunkett, married to mildly-successful London fiction writer Derek Farr, despises him for making love to other women, and finally tells him off. Instead of consoling himself, Farr takes to a little drinking, meets a pretty girl, and fancies himself in love with her. He takes her back to his apartment house, and then hears his wife is slated to return. He thinks he kills the girl, but his landlord hides her elsewhere. Matters straighten out when Farr and his wife see the combined errors of their ways.

**X-RAY:** This production has some quality in photography work, particularly in downtown London shots, and the musical background, conducted by Louis Levy, is also commendable. Otherwise, it is just an import for the lower half.

**AD LINES:** "Thrills In A Metropolitan City"; "His Wife Said He Was A Drifter"; "Murder Without Crime" . . . Was It Possible?"



## ALPHABETICAL GUIDE To 85 Features Reviewed Since The Aug. 29 Issue

This index covers features reviewed thus far during the 1951-52 season, in addition to any feature of the 1950-51 season reviewed after the issue of Aug. 29, 1951.—Ed.)

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(The running time carried in this listing represents the latest corrected time of each feature. While every effort is made to keep the listing accurate and up-to-date, it must be remembered that features are often subject to home office editing after being reviewed. Readers are advised to check the time with the local exchange.—Ed.)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Two Dollar Bettor

MELODRAMA  
75m.

(Broder)  
(Realart)

ESTIMATE: Okeh entry for the lower  
if.

CAST: John Littel, Marie Windsor, Steve Brodie, Barbara Logan, Robert Sherwood, Barbara Bestar, Walter Kingsford, Don Shelton, Kay La Velle, Carl Switzer, Isabel Randolph. Produced and directed by Edward Leven.

STORY: John Littel, a widower with a position at the local bank, and whose entire life revolves around daughters Barbara Bestar and Barbara Logan, makes his first visit to the track, and wins \$200. He becomes a regular customer with a bookie who sends Marie Windsor to either pay or collect. Littel starts losing heavily, and finally takes \$14,000 from the bank. Bestar becomes engaged to the bank president's son, Robert Sherwood, and Littel's employer, Walter Kingsford, tells him that when the couple marry Littel will be promoted to a \$20,000 a year position. Knowing his actions would ruin his daughter's future, Littel makes desperate attempts to get the money back, but fails. Windsor, showing interest in Littel, tells him her brother, Steve Brodie, could get him off the hook by letting him bet on a fixed race. Actually, Brodie and Windsor are swindlers. Littel gives them \$20,000, learns of the ruse, goes to get the money, and, in a gun battle, kills Brodie and Windsor. Mortally wounded, he goes to Kingsford, and tells the story. Kingsford tells the police Littel died a hero defending the company money, and permits the marriage.

X-RAY: A study of how betting on the horses can destroy a man, this is an okeh offering for the lower half. Some of the sequences are taut with suspense. Littel gives a convincing performance, and Brodie makes the most of a small part.

AD LINES: "The Horses Are A Disease That Is Often Fatal"; "For Drama And Entertainment 'Two Dollar Bettor' Is A Sure Thing"; "You Can't Lose When You See 'Two Dollar Bettor'."

## The Shorts Parade

### TWO REEL

#### Comedy

DEAL ME IN. RKO—Leon Errol Comedies. 16m. Leon Errol and partner, Harry Hayden, are intent on allowing a prospective account to win at poker so that he will sign a contract. Matters become complicated when Errol's daughter, trying to make father let her go out on a date, rigs things so that the poker game is played with a loaded deck. After considerable mishaps, the police arrive, and take Errol, partner, and friends to the jail where they continue to play. By this time contract is a certainty, but Errol can't find a pen with which the prospect can sign. FAIR. (13607).

#### Sports

SADDLER-PEP FIGHT. RKO. 21m. Emerging as more of a comedy than a boxing bout, this has laughs all the way, for the wrestling, illegal blows, etc., contained in the nine rounds of battling between Sandy Saddler and Willie Pep for the world's featherweight crown make

this very entertaining if hardly a sample of fisticuffs. As such, it should have appeal to those who ordinarily don't care who gets battered in the ring. Photography, etc., are okeh, with slow motion heightening some sequences. GOOD.

## ONE REEL

### Color Cartoons

BALLOT BOX BUNNY. Warners—Bugs Bunny Cartoons. 6m. The political competition is between Bugs Bunny and his diminutive friend, Charlie. During the rivalry, Bugs comes out on the long end, but both are frustrated when a horse is elected mayor. This accomplished, Bugs and his rival decide to end it all, and, as expected, Bugs misses. GOOD. (8723).

A BEAR FOR PUNISHMENT. Warners—Merrie Melodies. 7m. It's Father's Day, and Mama Bear and Junior insist on honoring protesting Papa Bear with breakfast and a shave in bed, and a light for his pipe. With Junior in charge, the results are pretty disastrous. Mama and Junior then perform a vaudeville dance routine to entertain Papa. At the fadeout, Papa, coated with flour, is a much belabored Statue of Liberty in an hilarious tableau which features Mama as George Washington and Junior as Abraham Lincoln. EXCELLENT. (8703).

THE DUCK DOCTOR. MGM—Tom and Jerry Cartoons. 7m. When a baby duck, flying south for the winter, is shot down by Tom, Jerry bandages its wounds. Tom keeps on the prowl, and keeps shooting the duck, which is again assisted by Jerry. Eventually, the duck gets away, Tom being frustrated, as usual, and Jerry happy about the whole thing. GOOD.



General notes: costs Interstate \$1100<sup>00</sup> per day to keep  
downtown theatre open... one Sun. Apr. '58 Margie did less than  
\$300... operational cost of Casa Linda \$1000 week, about average  
for independently-owned suburban... negro attractions are lower  
and religious pictures... Isley makes \$20,000 year for business at  
Big O Drive-In - more than amt. of payments... Harry Sacks makes  
\$30,000 year managing Murchison's drive-ins... average  
promotional and advertising expense is 5% of gross...  
film cost. figure Texas at 5% of national gross...

Richard Kiley got 20  
per wk for making 2 films  
in Tex (30 mins each) for  
8 weeks guarantee...

Joanne Orr (says Ken)  
would get up to 20%  
per pic

## SELZNICK HITS INERT REISSUES

Rome, June 4.

Lack of exhibitor and distributor ingenuity in exploiting the great "old" pictures in the studio vaults was scored here last week by David O. Selznick, currently filming "A Farewell to Arms" for 20th-Fox release.

"There's all this hue and cry about a product shortage," Selznick said. "Why don't they do something about reissues. There's an entirely new audience for these pictures, but of course they have to be presented right. I'm willing to bet that, right now, there are some 50 or more pictures in the vaults that could more than recoup new negative costs through reissue."

"The only trouble is, the companies refuse to exploit reissues, and the exhibitors show great reluctance to book them. I spent \$25,000 to reedit 'Tom Sawyer.' We tested the new version, and it got a very enthusiastic reception. But to really do a job with it, I'd have to knock myself out trying to sell it, and I just haven't got the time for that."

When it was pointed out that "Rebecca," on reissue by 20th,

(Continued on page E2)

# Ann MARSTERS

**NEARLY EVERYONE** who has seen "The Bridge on the River Kwai" is puzzled by the ending. A number of persons have called or written to ask me if I could explain it. I couldn't ... until now. I talked with Sam Spiegel in Hollywood, the man who produced the picture for Columbia—the picture that walked off with no less than seven Academy Awards.

He laughed when I mentioned the ending and said:

"I, too, have been bombarded by questions about it, and I can understand why people are confused. We were trying to add an extra touch of irony. But the error was ours. We did not make it clear enough."

★ ★ ★

**THIS** is the puzzling scene:

Jack Hawkins, leader of the Commandos who have come to blow up the bridge in Japanese territory, is on a hill with several native women, overlooking the bridge.

William Holden and Geoffrey Horne have planted the explosives; Horne is hiding on the river bank beside the plunger, awaiting the proper moment for the thrust.

Suddenly Alec Guinness, the British colonel who had

directed construction of the bridge for his Japanese captors—and is enormously proud of it—notices the charges and wires leading to the plunger.

Taking the Japanese commander, Sessue Hayakawa, with him, Guinness sets out to investigate, aware that the bridge has been mined and determined to save it.

★ ★ ★

**THEY DISCOVER** Horne's position. Guinness calls for help from the Japanese on the bridge. Horne plunges a knife into Sessue and gasps an explanation to Guinness—that he is British and has come to destroy the bridge. Guinness restrains him from reaching the plunger. Holden tries to intercede, lunging desperately at Guinness. Shots are fired. Horne and Holden fall.

★ ★ ★

**UP ON THE HILL,** Hawkins watches the scene with horror. He puts a shell into his mortar, aims it into the midst of the three men, and fires.

At that instant, Guinness

## Phone Call Clears Up Mystery Ending of 'Bridge on River Kwai'

is overwhelmed by realization of what he has done. The mortar shell bursts. He falls dead over the plunger box, setting off the explosion that demolishes the bridge.

Hawkins stares at the devastation, the dead and the dying. The native women back away from him, contempt and accusation in their eyes. He tells them:

"I had to do it. I couldn't let them be taken alive."

★ ★ ★

**NOW** the question is: what did he mean by that? Did Hawkins kill Holden, Horne and Guinness, and if so, why would he kill Holden and Horne before they could reach the plunger?

Mr. Spiegel explained:

"Holden and Horne were already dead from Japanese bullets—but Hawkins thinks he killed them; that they were only wounded. And the women think he killed them. Commandos were under orders never to be taken alive, for they

knew too many valuable secrets.

"We thought it would be interesting irony for Hawkins to feel pangs of guilt for killing men already dead.

"But he did, of course, kill Guinness. Only in the last few seconds of his life did Guinness realize he was a traitor. His final impulse was to push the plunger, and this is accomplished by his dead body."

Mr. Spiegel believes that people missed the details and the irony of it all because it was a side show, taking place while the big act was on. They had no patience left for side issues.

Anyway, it certainly is a matter that needed clearing up.

★ ★ ★

**HAPPY** as he was over the seven Oscars won by "Kwai," Spiegel remarked that a previous production of his—"On the Waterfront," won eight. He said:

"You see how greedy people become. Now I can only keep trying to better my own record as a producer."



SHE WAS MY FIRST LOVE

This Easter week, these are the theatres showing Shirley Temple in SUSANNAH OF THE MOUNTIES and GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.

It seems silly to say it now. She was only eight years old. And I was not much older, really. But she was my first stampede of admirers that probably only a little child could lead.

Fact of the matter is that even as an eight-year-old, Shirley Temple had that certain magic. The magic of a great personality. The magic of being able to take you out of yourself. The magic of providing release from a less magical world.

In a word, she had *talent*. It seems incredible that such a tiny creature could sing the way she could. Could dance the way she could. Could capture the heart of America the way she did.

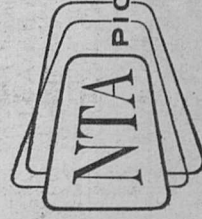
But she did all these things so well that she was the greatest motion picture personality of her time—causing

a stampee of admirers that probably only a little child could lead.

I'd like to see her again as she was at her peak — and so, I'll wager, would my children, who are about the same age now that Shirley Temple was then. Together, we'd experience the magnetism that comes from the pleasure of truly great entertainment.

As it happens, my children and I have that opportunity today, now that one of Shirley Temple's greatest motion picture triumphs, **SUSANNAH OF THE MOUNTIES** is being shown at theatres all over New York City. Along with millions of other Americans, I am looking forward to seeing my first love again, and my children will discover her certain magic for the first time.

To complete three hours of delightful entertainment for the entire family, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, the full length feature cartoon in magnificent Technicolor, will also be seen at the theatres listed at the right.



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Southampton Prudential's

Brooklyn Brandt's SANDERS  
Freeport Century's GROVE  
Amityville Prudential's AMITYVILLE  
Babylon Prudential's BABYLON  
Ballston Prudential's BALLSTON

— STARTS FRIDAY —

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Brooklyn Randforce's RIDGEWOOD  
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*Deterioros*  
Prudential's SAYVILLE  
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Middletown Paramount's

April 9-15  
April 11-14  
April 10-12







## No Strings to RKO Backing Of 'Right' Projects; Kaufman's Job

RKO is out to provide the financial support for anybody with the right kind of motion picture project and there will be no commitments involving studio or distributor, Tom O'Neil, president of the parent RKO Teleradio, explained in New York this week. At the same time he disclosed that Arnold Kaufman, Teleradio executive since 1947, has been named general manager of the film financing division.

The O'Neil pitch, as he put it, is to make RKO a key source of money for indie film-makers with the latter to operate either on a short-term or long-term basis, with no restriction as to cast or distributor and with only actual costs charged against the pictures. "There will be no unloading of excessive studio charges or other overhead items which bring no on-screen values to the particular film," declared O'Neil.

Actually, two productions which already have completed major shooting are covered under this new policy. Produced by Benedict Bogeaus, they are "Enchanted Island," adapted from Herman Melville's "Typee" with Dana Andrews and Jane Powell in the leads, and "From the Earth to the Moon," Jules Verne science-fictioner with Joseph Cotten, George Sanders and Debra Paget.

O'Neil held back on information as to which distributor would handle the two Bogeaus properties. "Typee," incidentally, once was started by John Huston as an Allied Artists release but was abandoned because of mounting location problems (and costs).

Kaufman, close associate of O'Neil's, was the key negotiator in RKO's behalf of the disposition of this company's pre-1948 library to television interests. Until recently he was chairman of the Teleradio advisory committee.

Morbid at Todd

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Movie Queen

## STORIES, NAMES HARDER TO GET

By GENE ARNEEL

Hollywood is coming face to face with one of its most perplexing dilemmas. The film-makers are convinced that for the most part the way to the big money at the boxoffice is via established properties and provocative, big-name casting; but the risks are greater than ever and the stories and names harder to come by.

That important boxoffice figures are within reach is evidenced by the success within the past several months of such entries as "Peyton Place," "Run Silent, Run Deep," "Bridge on the River Kwai," "Old Yeller," "Sayonara" and "Farewell to Arms." With the sole exception of "Yeller," these all represent sizeable production packages in terms of investment and stars.

But despite the hefty expenditures—\$2,000,000 in the minimum—all are coming out with profits. And this precisely is what is impressing the producers. They're convinced the public is willing to shell out money in significant amounts for something "special." It's on this basis that there's plenty of life in the picture business, and the Hollywoodites are anxious to latch on to it.

The rub centers on (1) the amount of chance involved in the new projects and (2) the difficulties in getting the right combination of ingredients for each package.

Paramount's top-echelon execs from both New York and the Coast spent a large portion of last week in huddles at the studio on evolving a new production program. But the blueprint that was drawn could only be a generalized one. Par is in a financially strong position, particularly in light of the up-to-\$50,000,000 which will be coming in from the sale of its pre-1948 backlog. Nonetheless a few epic-sized theatrical flops could mean a severe hardship.

Par, of course, has been watching the trends, as are the others, and taking the cues from the successful matching of Clark Gable and Burt Lancaster in "Run Silent," such click novels (with add-

(Continued on page 22)

VARIETY

### Top B.O. Pix

Continued from page 3

ed star values) as in "Peyton" and "Sayonara" and the mighty production plusses chalked up in "River Kwai." These, of course, are only a few of many productions which have been raking in nice returns in both the first-run and subsequent-run areas. The business since last January has taken a firmer tone, as previously noted, and responsible for it are about a dozen entries in the "A" category.

But, how to repeat. Par, for one, lifted the ceiling on amounts to be spent for novels and plays. Par, in other words, will be a significant bidder for the top-drawer writing work that's available.

However, execs at various companies, including major and independent, are shaking their heads in perplexity over the asking price for star material. Many of Hollywood's key performers want either 50% of the profits on the pictures or 10% of the worldwide gross.

So . . . combine two top players at 50% of the profits for each, and how does the producing company figure to make a buck? In many cases it obviously just can't be done. Gable and Lancaster could get together because of Lancaster's independent outfit status in association with Harold Hecht and James Hill.

T's a dilemma.

National Box



## 'When' Should Film Publicity Start ?

The value of long-range publicity on an upcoming picture is being reviewed by at least one major film company. For years, there has been disagreement on the proper timing in the flow of publicity.

There have been advocates of a constant outpouring of material—from the preproduction phase right up to the opening. In many instances, however, there has been a serious lull in newsworthy events during the period that occurs immediately after production is completed to the time the picture is scheduled to bow.

In recent years, the industry appears to have accepted the theory that a picture must be strongly publicized from the day it is announced, during its production, and, of course including the big push just prior to the opening date.

It is this theory that is now being challenged by some pub-ad toppers. It's their contention that a lot of the breaks obtained during the early stanza of a picture's gestation period is dissipated or forgotten by the time the film reaches a theatre.

The early stages of publicity frequently is very costly, particularly when newspapermen are brought to distant location sites both in the U.S. and abroad. In addition, many independents hire private publicity offices which are on the payroll from the time production starts.

In an analysis of the cost versus impact value, many traders have come to the conclusion that the coin outlay does not bring the required results in publicity which is most needed just before the picture is available to the public. This type of think-

ing, which is gaining favor in some industry quarters, would prefer to save the money and the main bally barrage for some 10 to 12 weeks before the initial dates of a particular film.

The establishment of this new policy is being openly discussed in a number of publicity departments. Hard-headed reviews of the prevailing technique has resulted in some sharp questioning of the value of news stories, column items, newspaper art and television and radio breaks which come some six or possible more months before a picture will appear on a theatre screen.

It's generally believed that if any changes are made, it will depend largely on the views of the independents. Some have been burnt by previous experiences and have discovered that the long-range bally, no matter how effective, has meant little at the b.o. if the picture is poorly received. The indies, for the most part, have been the ones to advocate the long-range campaigns and they have also hired the indie publicity offices to make sure that the picture is kept in the public eye. Some film publicity departments have resented the intrusion of these "private" flacks, feeling that their only contribution is to act as a "watchdog" organization.

Solution to the divergent views on long-range versus the immediate publicity impact, it appears, will rest with the decision of the independent producer. It appears likely that the distributor would prefer to pull out all the stops just before the picture, he'll have to depend on his own private-lyre's debut. However, if the producer is long-range employed publicists.



## Decca-U Earnings Down in 1st Qtr., But Still in Black

Overall earnings of Decca Records, including its interest in Universal, will be considerably less for the first quarter of the current fiscal year than for the similar stanza of a year ago, Milton R. Rackmil, Decca-Universal prexy, told reporters after the annual stockholders' meeting of Decca yesterday (Tues.) in New York. However, in comments to the press and to the shareholders, Rackmil stressed that the company would remain in the black and that Decca's quarterly dividend record of 25c appeared "safe for 1958."

At the same time, the Decca-U toppler noted that Universal's sec-

(Continued on page 18)

Office Survey

## Decca-U

Continued from page 3

ond quarter earnings "will be better," but that the figures would still be in the red. Record business as a whole, he stated, would be off for the entire industry during the first quarter, and that Decca's disk earnings would be "slightly less than last year but not much."

The meeting, attended by some 50 stockholders gathered in a recording studio at Decca's home office, was a sedate one and lasted about 45 minutes. In the course of the meeting, Rackmil reiterated that U will resume production on July 1, but he declined to elaborate on the company's "new plan of operation." He said he could not be specific about the film production plans, but emphasized that "we will make the type of pictures we think we will make money for us."

He added that the management "still thinks it can put Universal back in the black" and that he believed the company's new approach would bring about this result. He repeated that the company had no plan to dispose of its studio and that no mergers were contemplated.

Following the meeting, the Decca-U chieftain declined to confirm or deny a report that he had talked to other company presidents about new methods of distribution.

"I've been talking to film company presidents about a lot of things," Rackmil said. "We've been trying to find a new approach to this business. We've been discussing a lot of approaches. If it's done on the record." He stressed again that U had no plans to sell its post-1948 pictures to television.

The formal portion of the meeting saw the reappointment of Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co. as Decca's auditors and the reelection of Rackmil, Leonard W. Schneider (Decca exec veepee), Albert A. Garthwaite, Harold I. Thorp and Samuel H. Vallance as directors.

Present in person or by proxy at the meeting were 1,340,081 shares, or 87% of the outstanding stock.

Rackmil, during the meeting, declined to release figures relating to the company's advertising expenditures because of the competitive situation in the business. He took the same position at U's annual meeting several weeks ago.



## Milton Pickman Goldwyn Chief

Hollywood, April 8.  
Milton E. Pickman has been appointed general manager of Samuel Goldwyn Studios, succeeding Robert V. Newman, veepee for past seven years, who recently resigned to join Batjac Productions. Pickman in recent years was general manager of Jerry Wald Co., which was subsequently purchased by Columbia Pictures when Wald assumed post of Columbia exec producer. This, of course, was prior to Walad's switch to indie Film-maker status at 20th-Fox.



### Despite All, H'wood Not Quick to Spot Talent, Declares Producer Wald

Trouble with the picture business is that it has a shortage of talent, producer Jerry Wald said in Gotham last week.

"When we make an inferior product, we tend to blame the public rather than ourselves," he said. "We must finally accept the fact that the days of the star system are over. It's the 'package' that counts today, not the individual star. The public today buys what's in the film, not who's in it."

Wald speaks from experience. Having produced the outstandingly successful "Peyton Place," and with "Long, Hot Summer" just going out, he's one of the busiest men on the Coast today. For 1958 alone he has seven films ready to roll, with several more on the sked.

Titles he'll produce include "Mardi Gras," "March 9," "Sons and Lovers," "Have Tux, Will Travel," "The Big War," "The Sound and the Fury," and "The Best of Everything." In addition he has bought Fred Gipson's "The Hound Dog Man" which he'll re-title as "Wild in the Country."

He'll do "Beloved Infidel," the  
(Continued on page 119)



# Foreign Films In America: Up From Zero

[FRENCH ECLIPSE ITALIANS, GERMANS COMING ALIVE]

## SELLING AMERICA

Where and How Is Foreign Feature To Get Bookings in Depth?—Rank-Yank Defies Some Trade Maxims

Though the flow of foreign films into the U.S. has risen to flood tide, distribution methods have not substantially changed and, with the logical exception of the British, most imports still are confined to strictly limited circulation.

It's not so much a question of their inability to achieve the "depth" penetration so ardently sought by the French, but an economic equation that balances volume against such factors as cost of prints, cost of distribution, low rentals, etc. In other words, the foreign film biz is one segment of the industry where circulation and profits don't necessarily match.

Gradually, very gradually, this situation is changing, particularly with the oncoming of the dubbed films, which are a better bet for the commercial houses and can play down the circuit line by overcoming the subtitle barrier. But even though a dubbed import stands a better chance for wide playoff in the U.S. mart, it still generally pans out in the second-feature category and "La Strada" proved that the acceptance isn't uniform across the country.

Foreign film distributors are split into two groups. One goes on the theory that it isn't necessary to maintain more than a couple of offices across the country, with the bulk of the selling up to the sub-distributors. The other goes for penetration via a large number of offices. Latter segment feels that the added overhead is made up for by the greater business volume. In this group are the J. Arthur Rank Organization and Distributors Corp. of America.

### Sub Distrib

Efficiency of the sub-distributors has been a matter of much discussion. Some lean to the view that they do as good a job as can be expected. Others take the view that foreign films need specialized attention, which the grass-roots handlers can't give them. In any case, if an important film is involved, the axiom still is: We can sell it by telephone from New York; and in the instance of the top firstruns this is unquestionably true.

As for the release of foreign linguualers by the major companies, the feeling is still widespread that the big ones aren't geared for specialized handling. However, producers abroad continue to dream of "major" distribution, sometimes overlooking the fact that the "major" tag extends down the line, also to prints and costs.

Only company really active in the field is Columbia Pictures, which releases via Kingsley-International. Now United Artists, having acquired "Une Parisienne," the Brigitte Bardot picture, with Ilva Lopoert, may get into the fray too. Metro has several of the Ealing films, which it financed, but hasn't done much with them yet. Warner Bros. released a dubbed import, the French "Paris Does Strange Things" and will put out the German "So Lange Du Da Bist" (As Long as You Are Here) with Maria Schell.

### Token Circulation

The vast majority of imports get little more than token circulation in the States. Those that succeed are primarily exploitation entries, which may open around the country before hitting New York, and the films which make a mark for themselves in the Manhattan arties where the metropolitan reviewers help 'em along. But the art circuit pipeline is crowded and the number of outlets is still very limited, there being no more than about 300 houses that regularly and steadily book the foreign product.

In the metropolitan area, the situation changes from week to week. One moment, the arties are booked up tight. The next, several houses are looking for product. It's generally agreed that there is need for a house or two on the East side of Manhattan, but building costs are prohibitive. There has been talk of the Bockman Theatre going first-run, and also of the RKO 58th St. Theatre. Length of run, of course, is an important factor. When there are two or three b.o. hits staying for months, and additional houses are tried up with offbeat American product which has begun to seep into the East side show-cases, the competition for the remaining outlets is hot.

Situation is complicated by the fact that most of the outlets are owned by distributors who tend to showcase their own films in them and tend to hold them over even though the business is mediocre. Length of run in Manhattan is a big selling point out-of-town, and in those terms it's worth to hold over a picture.

A great deal of effort is going behind the current push to get more theatres throughout the States to accept foreign films. The commercial situations, aware that some imports can draw 'em in, are beginning to listen and a good many will book imports, particularly if they're dubbed. In the future, more and more films will be made available in dual versions at the same time where, in the past, the dubbing job followed in the wake of a successful subtitled run. But "penetration" will be more of a question of demand than distributor pressure.

The British have easier sledding primarily because they don't face the language barrier. Yet, even British pictures still move within great limitations and the Rank Organization is finding out that to "sell" its product is as much a matter of pressure and persuasion as it is a process of gradual conditioning. Like the French, the Italians and others, they're finding that it's on thing to book a picture and quite another to get the public to come see it.

Still fighting—and gradually winning—the battle for expansion in the American market, foreign films are beginning to give Hollywood a run for its money in the domestic market.

Realistically, there haven't been any resounding victories, but there have been breakthroughs; no great fortunes are being made, but a picture like "God Created Woman" from France can hope to pile up \$2,000,000 or more in film rental; no one is mobbing foreign stars, but their names are beginning to be known and have some marquee value.

To an extent, the concept of the shrinking world has helped the foreign film in the States. Finally abandoning their traditionalist isolationist stance, Americans in depth have come to take an interest in what happens in Europe. Many have come in contact with Europeans or have been among the millions that have flocked to the Continent on a look-see.

Americans are appearing in European pictures, and to an even greater extent, Europeans are being cast in Hollywood films. It is the kind of reciprocity that nurtures familiarity; and in the film biz, this doesn't spell contempt, but boxoffice.

### Don't Forget Basic Fact:

'Art' Circuit Still Limited

In gauging the status of the foreign film in the U. S. today, a degree of relativity is pertinent. It is still a small business. The number of "art" theatres has grown to around 700 to 800, of which any one film can play about 400. These houses will mix the British product with the foreign linguualers. There has been a sharp rise in the total of houses that will play imports either occasionally or even as part of regular policy, but some of these are "fringe" situations which turned to "art" as a last, desperate measure.

There's still resistance, and a good deal of it, to the overseas product, not because it comes from any one particular country, but because it represents a strange and unknown element.

In other words, those who seek from time to time to make it appear that the foreign film has hit the bigtime (usually after one picture or the other has caught on), are misrepresenting the rate of improvement.

It is true, however, that imports are no longer shut out of the so-called "commercial" houses. It's true, too, that their potential has risen a great deal, not only because of the continued flow of film, but also because the distributors have become adept in the experimentation and in selling. Dubbing is on the increase, and dubbing to many represents a strong hope for much greater success in the future.

Foreign films unquestionably have a future in the American market. They represent, for one reason or the other, the "offbeat" attraction. At a time when the public definitely is shopping for the unusual, that's a plus factor. Furthermore, the idea has sunk in that imports are more frankly daring and sexy than their Hollywood competition and this, too, have left an impression.

### Product Shortage Somewhat

Favors Imported Features

In addition, economic factors have a bearing. Exhibitors are crying "product shortage," and with the majors cutting down on programmers, the dubbed imports stand a better chance. Gradually, exhibitors (rarely in the mood for "experimentation") are catching on to the availability of the overseas product. The lines of communication with the distributors in New York have been strengthened both via repeated contact and also via the spread of offices which the importers have established in various parts of the country to do a better selling job.

Self-help, too, is a part of the story. The French Film Bureau in New York is mailing a flow of publicity about French films and the French industry to all segments of the trade, and the newspapers and magazines are being bombarded with material from France, telling the story of the French film and the French stars.

Relatively speaking, in other words, the foreign film has come a long, long way from the near-zero mark at which it found itself right after the war and from which it was temporarily lifted by the Italians. Naturally if contrasted to the American product, the performance of the imports is still very limited; and likely to stay that

## Copenhagen's Nordisk Expands

By VICTOR SKAARUP

Nordisk, oldest film producing company in Denmark, which celebrated its 50th anniversary a year ago, has embarked upon a sales campaign to sell its product in foreign markets. As a key factor in this it has hired Olaf W. Borgesen, 48, who has been with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's Copenhagen exchange since 1937 and latterly its manager.

As new foreign sales manager of Nordisk he will have two main tasks. First, to secure more playdates in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and wherever else may be possible. Second, he will seek co-production deals with foreign film companies in order to get rental money out of the Nordisk studios here. Borgesen will exit Metro at the end of this week, then holiday until May 1.

### Once Big Producer

(In connection with VARIETY's International Film Section, let one footnote serve as a reminder: until talking pictures came along in 1928, Denmark was a leading European film producer, selling its silents all over the continent here and across the seas as well. The Danish tongue is, of course, scarcely exportable. Even the other Scandinavians have trouble.)

way for the "run-of-the-mill" product coming over from Europe.

What the distributors feel is that more and more "big" foreign films are on the horizon. By this they mean films that click in New York and can then be sold widely throughout the country in dubbed form. It is a technique that has not yet been fully defined. "La Strada," was dubbed after it was a hit in the original version. "God Created Woman" was available simultaneously in both the dubbed and the original versions, and now another Brigitte Bardot release, "Une Parisienne," is to be released in N. Y. in July in both dubbed and original form at two theatres. A popular dubbed film can get as many as 5,000 dates.

The danger is that the few successes may blind producers abroad to true conditions in the American market. As one rose doesn't make a summer, so one big hit doesn't automatically create a demand for foreign films, though unquestionably it helps. The fact is that the number of truly attractive films from abroad (attractive in terms of the American b.o. potential) is very limited. A "God Created Woman" will hit a record number of bookings and gain entry where foreign films have never seen the light of a screen. Yet another French picture, well reviewed in New York and energetically sold, was able to get all of three dates and it grossed but \$7,000.

### Sex Is Boxoffice But Not

Always Predictable Value

"Sex," say the savants, "sells." But does it? "God Created Woman" is cleaning up and another sexy item, "Adorable Creatures," flopped.

"Give 'em art in the art houses," says another fellow, and he points to the success of "Gervaise" (at least in New York). But many thought that "Wages of Fear" was "art," and it flopped.

There is virtually no yardstick, even if one eliminates the whims of the New York critics who carry a certain weight when it comes to imports. "Diabolique" was smash all the way in Europe, and it duplicated its success in the States. But for each of these films there are a dozen which, by all prior standards, should have done well in the States and didn't. "A Condemned Man Escapes" is one example. "Ordet," another.

There is little question that the French film today dominates the scene, with the previously potent Italians lagging behind. But, considering the volume of French production, the qualities of the Paris imports is hardly overwhelming. Unquestionably, the French know how to handle sex in their films, and this puts them ahead. But sex alone can also spell trouble in the U. S., and not only because the critics tend to look down their noses at such films.

"God Created Woman" didn't play in Jacksonville, Fla., for instance, for the simple reason that the towns fathers feared that it would create too pressing a demand for a local censor board.

On the overall, the outlook for the foreign films in the States is bright; at least the percentage of money-makers is likely to rise if for no other reason than that the volume of bookings is likely to rise. It is still true today, on most foreign films, that New York represents 50% or more of an import's total income. But, gradually, the acceptance pattern is changing, at least on the more highly popularized French and Italian entries.

### Germans Begin to Impact

Long-Lost Yankee Movie

Coming up in the background are the Germans, whose production keeps pumping out films which are generally too "typically German" in character to get across in the States. Yet, "The Last Bridge" and "Devil's General" appear to have broken the ice, and a number of other German films of promise will be released this year, including "Captain von Koepenick." The rising popularity of such German stars as Maria Schell and Curt Jurgens unquestionably will help the Germans break into the States. The Japanese, who caused a bit of trouble in the States via a series of tentative advantage. Both the Germans and the Japanese held film weeks in Manhattan to introduce their new films to trade and press. Underly all this is the theory that it takes only a couple of hits to break through. It's a theory fondly held by many in the foreign film field, though it would appear to lack merit in the light of actual experience.

The success of the foreign film in the American market—and no one can deny the considerable progress that has been made—has not been due to some "icebreakers." It has been due to a combination of steady "pounding," amounting to a process of education of exhibitors and the public alike, and to economic factors quite outside the purview of the foreign film itself, i.e. the soft condition of the market for American pictures.

In its original form, equipped with subtitles, the imports will never escape the art circuit straightjacket. This circuit is comparatively small, but its patronage is growing. Dubbed, however, and properly exploited, foreign films are at the point where they can tackle the American competition on equal terms.

This past year, the number of strong foreign entries was sharply limited. The French flooded the market (much to the chagrin of those who saw in this a serious dilution of their reputation for quality), but not till late in the year did some really good French films appear. "God Created Woman" irritated the critics, but took off like lightning. "Gervaise" and "Razzia" did well and "Gates of Paris" came on the scene. So did "The Adulteress" and "The Bride Is Much Too Beautiful," which cashed in on the Bardot fad.

Earlier the French had released "Four Bags Full," which didn't live up to expectations; "We Are All Murderers," "Fruits of Summer," "Pantalone," "Only the French Can," "Passionate Summer," "The Sorceress," "Time of Desire," "Versailles," "Nana" (also very strong at the b.o.), "A Man Escaped," "The French They are a Funny Race," etc. The year's top entries from Italy were "Cold of Naples" (going out dubbed) and "La Strada" of course. "Nights of Cabiria" didn't open till very late in the year.