

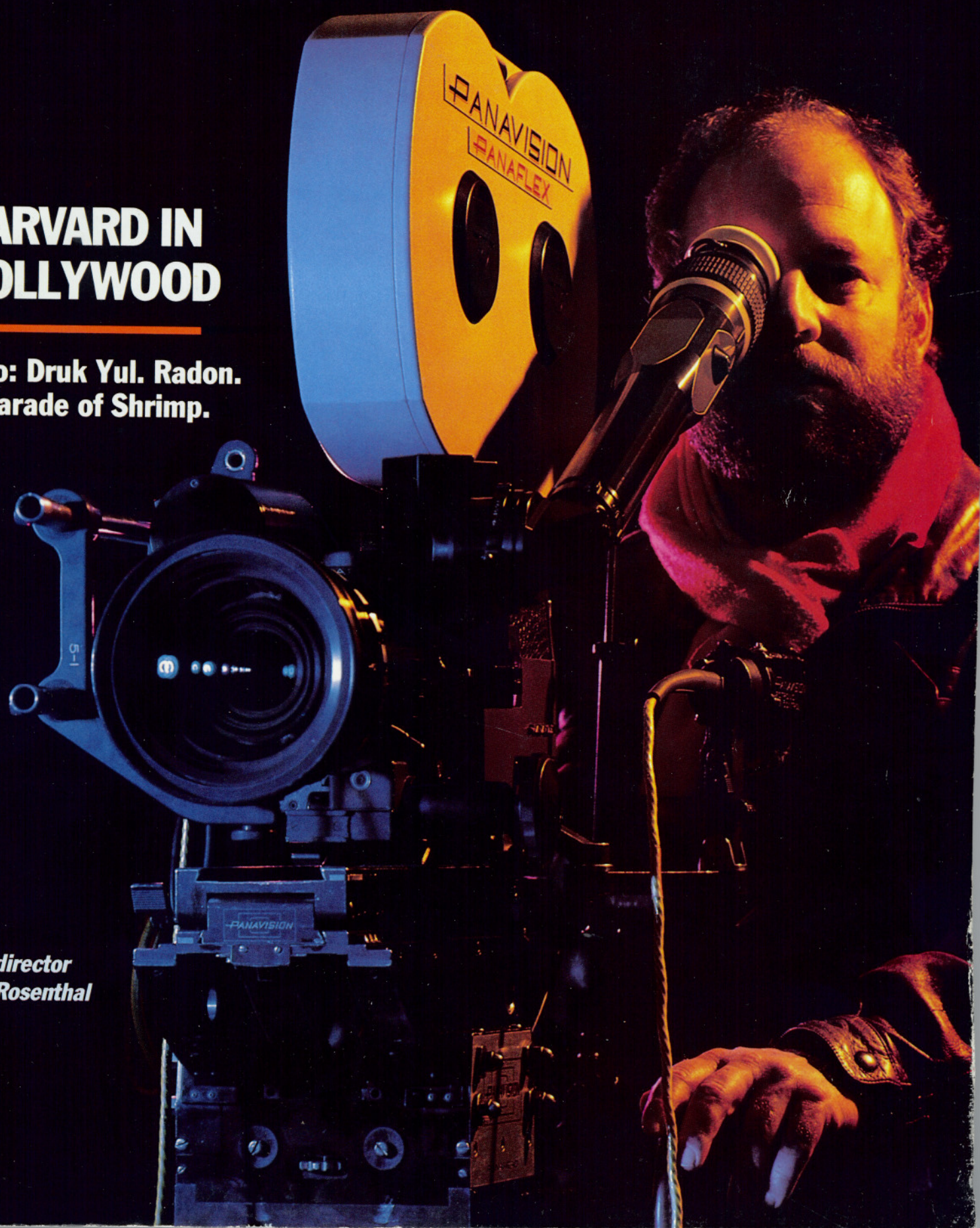
HARVARD MAGAZINE

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HARVARD IN HOLLYWOOD

Also: Druk Yul. Radon.
A Parade of Shrimp.

Film director
Rick Rosenthal



JEFF SAGANSKY

President of production,
Tri-Star Pictures.

"The film business is so
management-intensive.
As executives, our main
contribution is our
judgment, and there
aren't that many people
involved in the
judgment process."



By CRAIG LAMBERT
Photographs by JIM HARRISON

Conceived in the imagination of real-estate developer William Zeckendorf in 1958, Century City simultaneously dazzles the eye and jars the sensibility. The skyscraper complex occupies the site of the old Twentieth Century-Fox movie lot, and many felt that its construction rang down the curtain on Hollywood's golden age. A great motion picture studio's property was being recycled into commercial office buildings. The transition reeked with symbolism.

The Century City towers might be oversized versions of the "healing crystals" starlets clunk down on restaurant tables in nearby Beverly Hills. Their silver columns are a corporate Stonehenge, monoliths of steel and glass with mysterious powers compressed inside them. At Santa Monica Boulevard, two architectural scales collide: Century City's high-rise cluster of glittering skyscrapers shoots up right next to a golf course and a posh tract of one-story housing. The palm-lined, gardener-tended residential drives of Beverly Hills begin right across the street, and the contrast is, well . . . cinematic.

Yet the old Fox lot remains at the hub of the film business. Much of Hollywood's product now comes from a new type of motion picture studio, of which Tri-Star Pictures, headquartered in Century City, is a lead example. Tri-Star owns no movie lot, no sound stages, and keeps no writers, actors, or directors under long-term contract. Instead it assembles these elements on a project-by-project basis, produces feature films, and distributes the finished product via theaters, television networks, cable services, and videotapes. Founded in 1982, the former "mini-major" Tri-Star has already become a major studio like Warner Brothers, Universal, or Paramount.

Inside one Century City monolith, the seventh-floor corner office of Jeff Sagansky '74, M.B.A. '76, Tri-Star's president of production, could easily contain a friendly touch football game. Today is a normal Tuesday morning: five people—four

men and one woman—are having a fight. The group (a writer, a director, a star actor's agent, a producer, and Sagansky) clash over the story line of a film in development. Unlike the blind men and the elephant, these combatants can see only too well. It is, in fact, their competing *visions* of the zygotic film that now jockey for dominance. Should this battle, and another thousand or so over the next two years, be resolved successfully, their Hollywood movie may eventually open in theaters around the world.

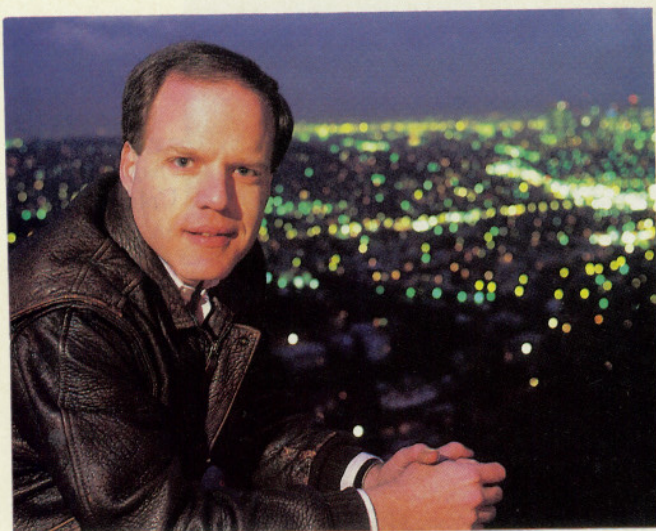
"These conflicts, these creative discussions, are what make a film good," says Sagansky. "You have a lot of extremely opinionated, articulate people with inflated egos trying to convince everyone else that they are right. Very much like dining hall conversations at Harvard. Every work day I use the verbal warrior skills I gained in those dinnertime arguments."

Sagansky started writing screenplays back in college and later collaborated with classmate Paul Josefowitz on a novel (*Entangled*, New American Library, 1981). But it was his spectacular success as a television executive that led to Sagansky's present august position at Tri-Star. As senior vice-president for prime-time series at NBC-TV, he played a crucial part in Grant Tinker's management team that turned NBC around, moving it from last to first place in the ratings. "Grant had a saying, 'First be the best, then be first,'" Sagansky recalls, and the novel strategy of airing quality programs succeeded with both critics and the public. At NBC Sagansky supervised the development of such respected shows as "Cheers," "Family Ties," "St. Elsewhere," "Remington Steele," and "Miami Vice."

"The biggest difference in moving from a television network to a film studio is that with feature films you're asking people to go out and buy a ticket. There must be a greater 'want to see' factor," he says. "As executives, all we're being paid for is our judgment. But you can only guess at what the

THE HARVARD POWERS OF Hollywood

*"The Harvard-trained gentlemanly virtues
don't score points here. This town responds to
ambition, flash, and street hustle."*



TOM PARRY, Creative executive.

"When I came to L.A. twelve years ago, a Harvard degree opened doors in the film business. People were very impressed. It was—probably—like being from Harvard on Wall Street in the 1920s."

public will want. It's like cooking dinner; you never get exactly what you imagined."

The influx of Harvard and Radcliffe graduates into Hollywood began as a trickle in the 1960s and has now become a flood. An informal survey of alumni in film and television careers turned up only 23 examples for all the classes prior to 1960, but there were 35 for the 1960-69 decade, 65 for 1970-79, and already 51 more for 1980-86.

Furthermore, unlike the film schools of U.C.L.A., U.S.C., and N.Y.U., which are famous for turning out directors and screenwriters, Harvard is sending graduates into all sectors of the industry. There are Harvard-educated producers, agents, directors, writers, entertainment lawyers, business and creative executives, composers, journalists, and even a casting director. No other university's alumni can equal the Harvard graduates' prominence in the movie industry and the variety of positions they hold. "Mark my words," says Tom Parry '74, an experienced studio executive (United Artists, Twentieth Century-Fox, Paramount, MTM), "in just a few years, people will start to recognize that Harvard's presence in the motion picture industry is comparable to the Yale Drama School's influence on New York theater."

One reason for this is the country's shift from a manufacturing to a service- and information-centered economy. "The film, television, and communications businesses, along with the financial services industry, are at the leading edge. They require a rare blend of business skills and creative instincts," says Copey Coppedge '70, M.B.A. '75, a financier specializing in media investments. "The brightest, sharpest people are attracted to the arena which offers the best level of play."

Some of the biggest and fastest play currently in progress centers on the acquisition and sale of communications properties. In another Century City tower, Tom McGrath '76, M.B.A. '80, plays this game hard and well. As senior vice-president for acquisitions, planning, and development at Act

III Communications, McGrath is helping Norman Lear to build his next media empire. Act III buys and manages entities such as trade magazines in the media field (e.g., *Channels*), independent television stations in medium-sized markets, and small chains of movie theaters. It also includes a film production company, whose first major release, last summer's *Stand by Me*, proved auspicious.

In 1986 Lear founded Act III (naming it to indicate a third phase in his own career, after comedy writer and television producer), and Tom McGrath was there from the beginning. "This was a brand new company, a cold start," he says. "I've learned as much about business since I've been here as I have in the last five years."

That must be a prodigious amount. Entertainment always attracted McGrath; a former professional trumpeter, at Harvard he conducted the Harvard Band and the Gilbert and Sullivan Players, and was a musical director of Hasty Pudding Theatricals. Later he enrolled in the Business School, where a research project in his last year launched him into the corporate entertainment industry. With five fellow students, McGrath prepared a study for Columbia Pictures on the future of the home video market. "That was in 1980, when nobody had a VCR," he muses. "The only right call we made was on the percentage of households who would get one."

But his work was impressive enough to land a corporate finance job with Columbia Pictures in New York. Soon he was logging many miles on the bicoastal air route, eventually moving, in 1981, from the Big Apple to the Big Avocado. McGrath helped raise money for film production through public financings, set up deals for Columbia with HBO and CBS, and helped create a major video distributor, RCA Columbia Home Video.

In 1982 the Coca-Cola Company bought Columbia Pictures and a year later summoned McGrath back to New York as vice-president for corporate planning and development. Then came another turning point. Working for Coke, he took a lead role in negotiating that corporation's \$485 million purchase of Embassy Communications from legendary deal-maker Jerry Perenchio and his partner, one Norman Lear.

Sitting on the other side of the table, Lear came to recognize McGrath's business acumen and, after the negotiations were done, offered him a job. Thus he moved back to Los Angeles to help raise the curtain on Act III. Poised and brilliant, McGrath seems perfectly equipped for the challenge of setting a corporate course amid waves of new media and the fickle winds of the consumer marketplace. "Motion picture and TV types have always been very savvy deal makers and business people, but it's been on an intuitive, seat-of-the-pants level," he says. "Now, you meet Harvard M.B.A.'s all over the industry. With the changes in media that are coming up, there's room for advanced analytic techniques and a broader view of the leisure-entertainment spending mix."

What makes us laugh is people saying, 'You must strike while the iron is hot,' " chuckles Tom Werner '71, grinning even at the thought. Surely no iron is hotter than the Carsey-Werner Company, producers of television's smash hit "The Cosby Show," which has occupied first place in the national Nielsens for most of its on-air life. Critically and publicly acclaimed, "Cosby" has won a host of media awards, including an Emmy as best comedy series in



TOM MCGRATH

Senior vice-president
for acquisitions,
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1984-85. In late 1986 the "Cosby" syndication deal became the richest in television history, at a reported value, according to industry sources, of \$500 million. At this point, if Carsey-Werner suggested a new series based on a chess club for salamanders, it's likely that all three networks would vigorously bid for the pilot and first six episodes.

But Tom Werner has other priorities. "I originally got interested in television as a communicative tool. The reach of the medium, its political and sociological aspects, drew me to it," he reflects. "Television is a more important and more democratic medium than feature films. You can do things on TV that you can't do in movies—for example, stories as easygoing as 'your grandparents are coming over for dinner.' The main story line of our second show was 'a goldfish died.'"

"Our goal, and Bill Cosby's goal, in developing the series was never to come up with the number one show, though that's a very nice by-product," Werner says. "Having kids ourselves, we saw unreal things on TV—atypical families, children constantly talking back. We wanted to make a show where people watching it would say, 'How did they get inside my house?'"

Tom Werner's first hands-on experience in filmmaking came at Harvard, with courses in visual studies. After graduat-

ing he made several critically acclaimed documentaries, including *Shirley Chisholm: Pursuing the Dream*. All of these reached the airwaves on PBS, but, as he observes, "Making documentaries is not the easiest lifestyle. I was spending as much time raising money as I was in making films."

So Werner looked toward television and turned up two job offers: a producing slot on "60 Minutes" and a position in planning and development at ABC. He chose the latter, where, working under Fred Silverman and Michael Eisner, Werner helped develop such programs as "Taxi," "Soap," "Mork and Mindy," and "Barney Miller." His immediate boss at ABC, Marcy Carsey, later became his partner when Werner left the network in 1981 to form the independent production company of Carsey-Werner.

"The excellence of 'The Cosby Show,' its special look and feel, in part derive from the fact that it's independently produced," he asserts. "Marcy and I are proudest of our decision to be totally independent and to do the show exactly the way we wanted to do it. When Norman Lear's shop turned into a studio, the programs no longer bore his signature."

To stay close to the production, Werner has become a true bicoastal producer, regularly shuttling between his home in Los Angeles and the Cosby sound stage in Brooklyn. With a wife and two children in L.A., it's a grueling schedule, but he keeps a sense of humor about it. "People on the plane sometimes ask if I have fear of flying," he says. "And honestly, no, I don't. I have fear of crashing."

As one who came of age during the heightened social consciousness of the late 1960s, Werner cares deeply about the underlying themes of the show. "We spend an enormous amount of time on 'Cosby' asking, 'What is this episode about, what is it saying?'" he remarks. "Through your work you try to move the world half an inch forward. The statements made in comedy are subtler ones, and they stay with you longer."

For every film that is produced and released, scores of ideas, books, and screenplays enter the development process, which eventually weeds them out or consigns them to a hellish limbo. "We have 100-125 projects in development at any given time," says David Madden '76, vice-president of production at Paramount. "In the average year we'll release twelve to fifteen movies." In feature films, the developed-produced ratio may be as high as 20:1.

Development has almost become a complete industry in itself, one that is allied to the enterprise of actually making movies. Fees collected from projects in development can provide a very good living; plenty of creative types drive Mercedes around L.A. without ever seeing their work on the screen. "I know one well-known writer who has sold over twenty screenplays, and his price is well up in the six figures," says Tom Reilly '71, a much-sought-after first assistant director in New York. "Only one of his scripts has been made."

At studios, much of the development process centers on changing and refining—or coarsening, as the case may be—the screenplay. Writers convene repeatedly with "creative executives"—high-level studio staff, numbering about six at each studio, who supervise the genesis and preparation of film projects. "I do what an editor at a publishing house does," says Tom Parry. "Find good projects, nurture them along, assemble key elements, and present the package for approval." Jeff Sagansky points to the centrality of the screenplay: "Every-



DIANE NABATOFF '78, M.B.A. '82

Vice-president for creative affairs, F/M Entertainment.

"The business is all-consuming. Here, your friends are the people you work with."



TOM WERNER, Producer, "The Cosby Show."

"My basic love is TV. Television is a more important and more democratic medium than feature films."

thing stems from script development. From there you attract your director and actors."

But writers often lament the executives' and producers' incomprehension of the requirements of storytelling. "I was once trying to explain a narrative principle to a couple of producers," says screenwriter Rob Ulin '84, "and one of them actually said, 'Why do we need a story?'"

The creative executives experience the stress of the middle. They're paid by the studio, but they work on a close, personal basis with writers, directors, and other creative talent, and often become deeply committed to their projects. Yet they cannot give the ultimate "green light." Today's average feature budget may run as high as \$15 million or even \$18 million, and only a studio head can commit such a sum. This means that final approval in the Hollywood system rests with fewer than a dozen men. No woman has ever run a major studio.

Ten years ago a film producer hired Judith Rascoe, A.M. '65, to write a screenplay based on a book. "I had majored in English at Stanford and completed my doctoral orals at Harvard in American literature," she says. "Maybe my literary background helped, because I was the only writer the producer knew who had read the book and who realized that there was no story in it." The book, by Isak Dinesen, was *Out of Africa*.

And Rascoe was right; since it had no narrative spine, the screenwriter would have to construct the story. Several years and producers later, after many screenplays by many writers, the film, starring Robert Redford and Meryl Streep, won the Academy Award for best picture. "I think there is one line of my script in the film," says Rascoe.

Rascoe's literate sensibility may have helped her carve out a niche in the screenwriting trade. She has written screen adaptations for Scott Spencer's *Endless Love* and James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and has collaborated with Robert Stone on the screenplay for *Who'll Stop the Rain*, a film based on his novel *Dog Soldiers*. "I have a reputation as being someone who can deal with intellectual material, adapt big books," she says. "You know, a cinematic bluestocking."

Rascoe has in fact written book reviews and journalism and published a volume of short stories (*Yours, and Mine*, Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1973). But in movies a writer has far less control over the destiny of her product. "The creative conflicts aren't as clear-cut as someone telling you, 'Please put the clowns on roller skates into this Henry James story,'" she says. "It's more often a case of good projects getting shelved because they don't have a quickly describable 'high-concept' premise. Television, more and more, has taken over domestic stories, personal stories, dramas that are 'just about people.'"

Comical moments sometimes arise with executives or producers who want to sell a high-concept idea but haven't done

DAVID MADDEN
Vice-president for
production,
Paramount Pictures.

"During production, you
are sitting on a phone or
on a set trying to make
\$200,000 decisions
instantaneously, just
by guessing."



their homework. "Once, a producer approached me to write a script about Los Alamos, Edward Teller, and Robert Oppenheimer," she recalls. "I told him that although Oppenheimer was dead, Dr. Edward Teller was very much alive and might be unwilling to sign a release for the film. The producer gasped, 'Oppenheimer's dead?'"

The attrition of projects in development also bedevils the screenwriter. "The great stress of this business," Rascoe says, "is that you invest the same energy in a screenplay as you would in writing a book, and then, at the last minute, the publisher closes down and you are powerless because they own the rights. The savvy screenwriters often want to be paid up front because they know the chances of getting produced are so fragile."

They become somewhat less fragile for pictures guided by the legendary Edgar J. Scherick '50. Blessed with a resonant bass voice, a full-blooded New York accent, and an inviolable self-assurance, Scherick possesses an ideal—perhaps the ideal—combination of traits for a film producer: an incisive, subtle intellect fused with a highly developed street sense. "Any producer worth his salt works on both the business and creative sides," Scherick says. "You have to be able to do everything."

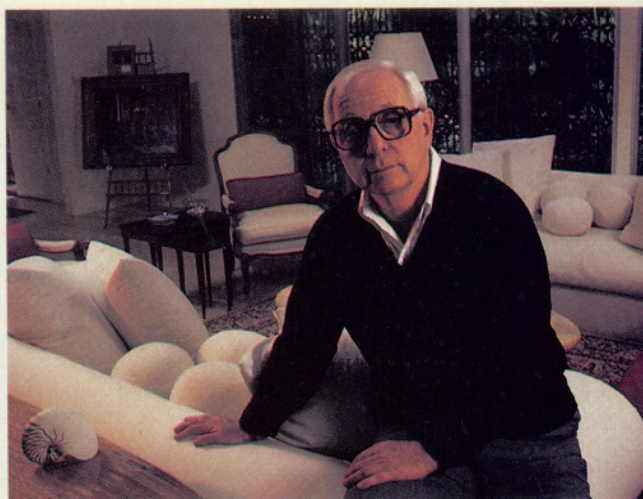
Scherick is an independent producer in the strict sense, meaning that he has financed most of his pictures without relying on studio money. And the results, over the past twenty years, have been spectacular: *Take the Money and Run*, *The Heartbreak Kid*, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, *Sleuth*, *Shoot the Moon*, and *Mrs. Soffel*, to name just a few high points. "Each picture is like an independent, multimillion-dollar business venture," he says. "The producer is the chief executive officer of that venture, and the director is like the chief operating officer."

But Scherick did not start out in movies. After graduating from Harvard and helping with a political campaign in Boston, he worked in broadcast advertising for six years at Dancer Fitzgerald Sample, a New York agency. In 1958 he started his own company, Sports Programs Inc., to produce sports coverage for television. For three years this entrepreneurial company supplied all of the ABC network's sports programming. Sports Programs created and owned "Wide World of Sports" and employed such future luminaries as Jim McKay, Howard Cosell, and Roone Arledge. In 1961 Scherick merged his company into ABC, thus giving birth to ABC Sports.

"My life revolves in five-year cycles," he says, and Scherick spent his next cycle as an ABC executive, first as vice-president for sales, then programming. Under his tenure the network aired such familiar series as "Peyton Place," "The FBI," and "Bewitched." In 1967, "tiring of the oblivious treadmill," Scherick left ABC, founded Palomar Pictures International, and began his prolifically successful career in motion picture production. He is not a "poolside producer" but one who gets deeply involved in his films.

"I work well with writers in going from an idea to a structured script. Structure is a very important word," says Scherick. "It's like the arc of a bridge across a river; what keeps it intact, what makes it harmoniously beautiful, is its structure. The same thing applies to a screenplay."

"Good films are about the human condition. They are concerned with how people relate to each other," he says. "As



EDGAR J. SCHERICK
Producer, Edgar J. Scherick & Associates.

"The story material is the beginning of everything and the font of every successful film. As filmmakers, we are essentially spinners of yarns. The minute we get away from that we lose touch with one of the inherent factors of being in the movie business. Most contemporary films fail because there are few spinners of yarns around."

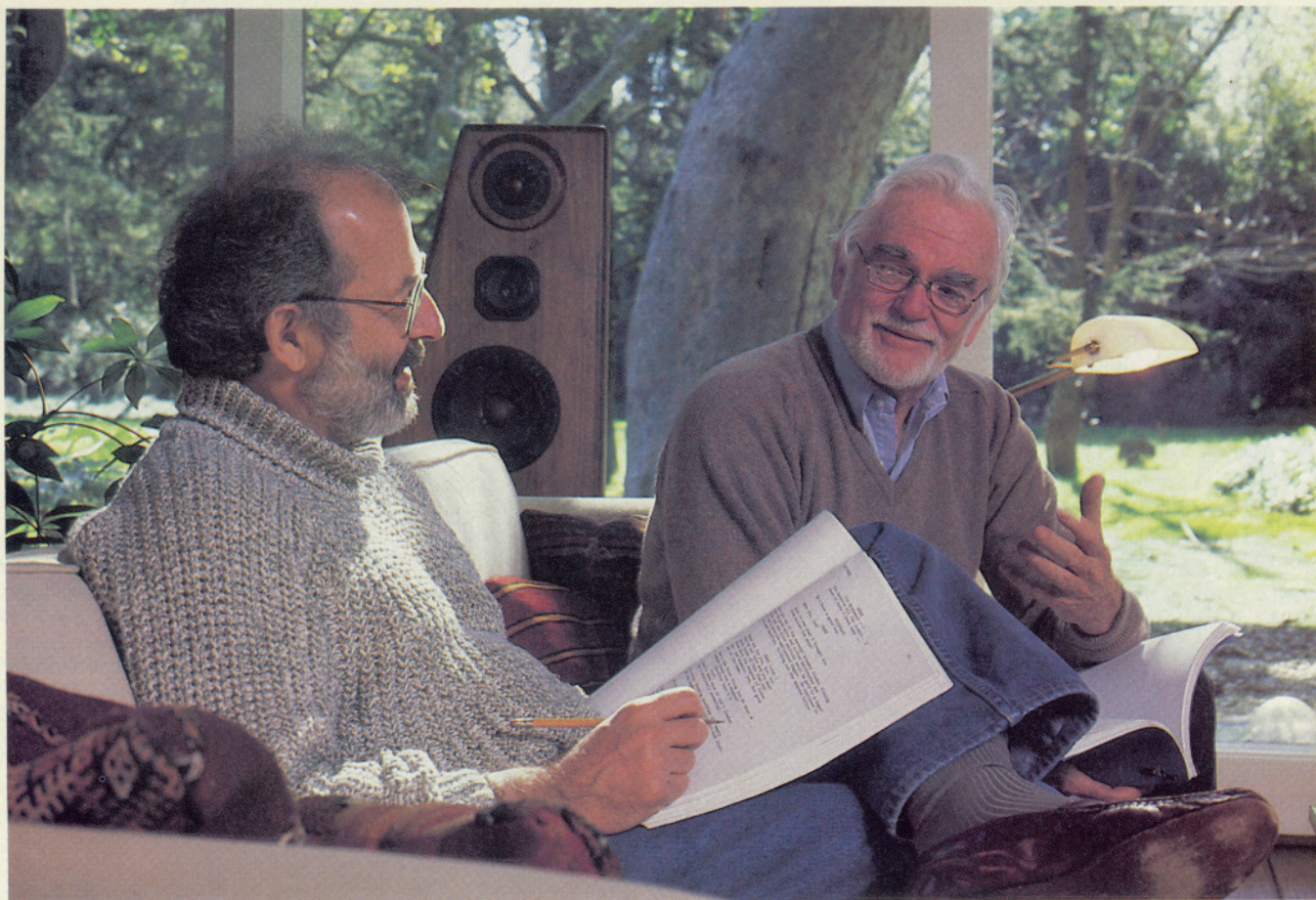
filmmakers, we are essentially spinners of yarns. The minute we get away from that, we lose touch with one of the inherent factors of being in the movie business."

Until moving to Los Angeles about ten years ago, Scherick ran his company from New York, and he's one of the few independent producers who keep offices on both coasts. Scherick cares deeply about the direction of the industry. "The movie business will move away from Hollywood, both spiritually and physically," he says. "Right now, Hollywood happens to be important because the climate's nice, there are a lot of nice houses and good film labs, and the power brokers live here. But the films aren't really *made* here anymore. They're made in Texas, Brazil, Vancouver—anywhere in the world."

"We are reaching a point where configurations of media ownership are becoming more important than the creative filmmaker's freedom of choice," he says. "In our business we have been plagued with the likes of Marvin Davis, Ted Turner, Kirk Kerkorian. These people have no real interest in film."

Scherick's two Harvard-educated sons, Gregory (A.B. 1983) and Jonathan (A.B. 1984), also work in the film industry, the former as a film editor and screenwriter, the latter as an actor. Their father hopes that the younger generation of filmmakers will maintain some latitude for creativity. "In 1939 movies were the fifth-largest business in the United States. Today they're way down the list," says Scherick. "But movies are one American product—as opposed to automobiles, television sets, and microchips—that every country in the world wants to buy."

Films, however, are very hard, and very expensive, to make. Estimates of the average production budget for a studio feature today run from \$12 million to \$18 million. Add to this amount \$6 million for prints and advertising and some of the most daunting business conditions imaginable. "Seventy to



DAVID RINTELS, Writer-producer.

"The happiest moment in the whole process isn't seeing the movie but finishing the script, when you write FADE OUT, THE END, and you feel it's good."

FRANK PIERSON, Screenwriter-director.

"I am opting out of the mainstream and going to the independent film market. The Sundance Institute and the United States Film Festival are much more interesting than mainstream studio releases."

eighty percent of major studio releases don't go into profit," says Paramount's David Madden. Clearly, the one film in four or five that *does* make a profit must earn a mighty one indeed to take up the slack. This configuration of logic underlies the phenomenon of the "blockbuster complex."

Studios today show small interest in making films that generate a modest profit of a few million dollars. Instead they throw their weight behind projects perceived to have blockbuster box-office potential: \$80 million, \$150 million, even \$200 million in receipts. A monster hit like *Beverly Hills Cop* (over \$234 million to date) opens not only a heavy thunderstorm of money from theatrical exhibition but also starts a flood of cash flow from broadcast and cable television, videocassettes, foreign and ancillary rights. And the flood can last for years, even decades: *Gone With the Wind*, released in 1939, still earns money for MGM—and, ironically, for Atlanta's Ted Turner. Such a rain of cash can wash away much red ink accumulated by films that prove duds in the marketplace.

The rub is this: there is no way to predict a hit movie. The commercial fate of an unreleased picture remains among the great imponderables, resisting the best predictive efforts of generations of studio executives. Audience research, sneak previews, track records of similar films, surveys of stars' popu-

larity, advertising and public relations campaigns—no technique has managed to capture and bottle that inexplicable, irresistible "something" that draws the public to theaters. As screenwriter William Goldman puts it, "Nobody knows anything."

These facts place the studios and producers in a peculiar business situation. They are risking a multimillion-dollar investment amid the circumstances of a crapshoot. Each movie produced is like a new-product introduction, and most fail. To protect themselves, studios often sell television, foreign, and videotape distribution rights in advance. They cast stars in lead roles to assure a recognition factor and to draw the actors' fans. And they gravitate toward "presold" properties—stories of which the audience has partial knowledge before seeing the film. Preselling accounts for the proliferation of Roman numerals in movie titles and the plethora of remakes and play and book adaptations.

Of course, all of these risk-reduction strategies constrict the options available to Hollywood's creative community. "Everything builds timidity into the system," says Charles Champlin '47, arts editor and columnist at the *Los Angeles Times*. "The studios' economics have led to a dangerous creative paralysis."

The valet parks his red Jaguar, and the maître d' escorts Frank Pierson '46 to a choice corner table at Orsini's, an elegant northern Italian restaurant in Beverly Hills. A distinguished graybeard with the soul of a 25-year-old firebrand, Pierson is a combative rabble-rouser, a colorful screenwriter-director who has maintained an anti-establishment stance despite enormous success by the standards of mainstream Hollywood. "People at the creative end of things don't get there by being satisfied with the way things are," he says, and Pierson willingly bites the hand of the movie industry that feeds him, and rather well, at Orsini's.

Winner of an Academy Award in 1974 for his screenplay of *Dog Day Afternoon*, Pierson had twice previously been nominated, for *Cat Ballou* and *Cool Hand Luke*. He directed Barbra Streisand in the 1976 remake of *A Star Is Born*, whose screenplay he wrote with Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne, and directed his own scripts of Peter Maas's *King of the Gypsies* and John Le Carré's *The Looking Glass War*.

Such credentials place Frank Pierson on many of Hollywood's elite writers lists, except at studios where his outspokenness has made enemies. But his talent is widely recognized and courted.

"They wanted me to write the first *Rambo* picture," Pierson recalls with a grim smile. "I turned it down, as any decent person would."

Pierson received his degree from Harvard in 1949, having been expelled in 1943 after his freshman year. "I had enlisted in the army, and that spring semester I didn't go to classes, drank a lot, and played close to 3,000 games of chess," he remembers.

Pierson's mother had been a successful screenwriter at Warner Brothers; during the war, Christopher Isherwood and William Faulkner shared a carpool with her. In 1951 Pierson returned to L.A. and took up the writing trade himself, spending the next seven years on staff at Time-Life. But he was always drawn to show business. In 1958 Pierson quit his job and for the next two years kept turning out scripts for television series and submitting them. Not a single one sold.

"In my second summer of unemployment I wrote seventeen half-hour teleplays in seventeen weeks," he recalls. "I eventually reached a point where I had to get a job—pumping gas, anything—because I'd just plain run out of money. I'd grown a beard, and one Friday afternoon I shaved it off, to get ready to look for a job the following Monday. Half an hour later my agent called and said he'd sold one of my scripts to 'Alcoa Theater' and had also gotten me a tryout job on 'Have Gun, Will Travel.'"

Pierson's Hollywood career has straddled two eras; he witnessed the waning days of the old-time studio moguls and the ascendancy of a new generation of tycoons in the 1970s. "Conglomerates have taken over the motion picture companies, and people trained in corporate law have now aged into top management positions," he says. "The M.B.A. mentality—an obsession with short-range objectives—is destroying the respect the business side once paid to directors, actors, and writers."

"Look at some of the top screenwriters: Bo Goldman, Bob Towne, Alvin Sargent, Bill Goldman, and myself. Not one of us has had an on-screen credit in the past six years. Yet we've all been working and making a lot of money," says Pierson. "The reason is, we're writing stuff that the studios don't want

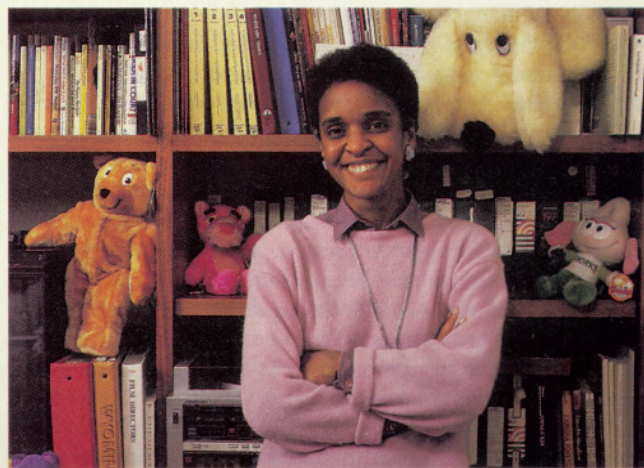
to do. I'm opting out of the mainstream and going into the independent film market—it's the only place to go if you're interested in doing something besides the next *Rambo*."

Pierson fulminates against the blockbuster complex. "The studios are locking themselves into a narrower and narrower range of pictures, which are just imitations of what sold well last year," he says. "When the public taste changes, they'll be stuck like dinosaurs were when the rains stopped falling and the swamps began to dry up. The last place to be then is in the swamp with those dinosaurs thrashing around in their death throes. You'll be stomped to death."

Like all media industries, television and film organizations have both a "business side" and a "creative side." The former includes traditional corporate executives, lawyers, and people experienced in sales, marketing, accounting, distribution, finance, and management. Many of the business-side people could readily migrate into another industry; they practice business principles that apply as soundly to the manufacture of cornflakes as to movies. On the creative side, people's skills focus much more specifically on their medium: they are the screenwriters, producers, directors, set designers, casting agents, cinematographers.

Feature filmmaking is the world's most expensive art form and a highly collaborative undertaking. When the business and creative sides dovetail, the result can be a superlative work environment, which may also result in a memorable film. But often they seem to be at war. The various tensions endemic to the business-creative relationship resonate through the range of inflections attached to Hollywood's most ubiquitous maxim, "They don't call it show *art*."

Into this hiatus step the agents. They are the intermediaries, the negotiators who have something to gain—generally, a 10 percent commission—by bringing the parties together. Agents represent "talent" from the creative side and market their clients' services to buyers—generally networks and stu-



WINIFRED WHITE '74

Vice-president for family programming, NBC Television.

"Many people want television to preach to children, thinking kids should watch programs that are good for them. Even adults don't want to watch programs that are good for them. You have to reach your audience emotionally before you will intellectually."

**LEE ROSENBERG**

Agent and founding partner, Triad Artists.

"The Ivy League, button-down style doesn't sell here. What works here is a tough, aggressive, convincing, compelling, sleeves-rolled-up approach."

dios—on the business side. "Agents are the lubrication which makes the whole machine run," says Tom Parry.

"Three things count in this business," asserts Eric Ellenbogen '78, a specialist in film finance. "Money, talent, and distribution. Power resides in each one of them, and when all three are connected together, you have a picture." Television networks and studios control channels of distribution as well as some hefty money, but feature-film-sized money can actually come from anywhere—HBO, Coca-Cola, Egyptian shipping companies. Hiring the top creative talent means dealing with their agents, and the agencies' tremendous leverage in the business, their ascendancy to power, rests on the control of talent.

It is 8:30 A.M., and the long table, surrounded by ladder-back chairs, gleams with china and glassware for twelve. Around the table a dozen film and television agents are thrashing out client problems, deal negotiations, packaging considerations. Chairing the breakfast meeting is one of the most powerful men in the television and motion picture industry, Lee Rosenberg '56. He is a partner in Triad Artists, which, with Creative Artists Agency, William Morris, and International Creative Management, is one of the four full-service talent and literary agencies that broker literary properties and creative services to networks, producers, and studios. This private dining room at Triad is a major nerve center in the entertainment industry.

A panoramic view of Beverly Hills opens from Rosenberg's capacious 16th-floor office. Inside he has an electronic message communicator that allows him to interact silently with his secretary while simultaneously fielding phone calls and talking to a visitor. "We are involved in true high-speed communications," he notes. The agency processes a welter of incoming information; in its computer center, four employees stay busy entering data. The internal "Go Projects List," updated daily and printed out weekly for agents, summarizes critical infor-

mation about all active television and film productions in town.

"Time is a critical mechanism in negotiations," says Rosenberg. "The sums of money involved are staggering, and it's also a highly subjective arena. Within half an hour, someone's gut feeling about a project can change, and a deal that was on is suddenly off. Crucial factors are very difficult to forecast. For example, 100 percent of the profits of most films equals exactly nothing. But *one percent* of the profits of *E.T.* would be worth \$6 million or \$7 million."

Rosenberg recalls an illustrative story. "Several years ago we had a script by one of our writers which I thought was truly brilliant. Yet every studio in town rejected it, and so did every source of independent financing. It was a devastating experience. But we persevered, and the movie was eventually produced and released." The film, *Risky Business*, grossed nearly \$80 million.

Triad's offices occupy two elegantly appointed floors of a Century City skyscraper. The atmosphere is at once intense and subdued: high energy, tastefully channeled. The company, formed in 1984 by a merger of three independent agencies, represents actors, writers, directors, producers, and composers; clients include actors William Hurt, Raul Julia, Bruce Willis, and Sam Shepard, and director John Badham. There are literary and theatrical stage operations, a personal appearance department, and divisions handling motion picture and TV talent, TV packaging, and commercials.

At Harvard, Rosenberg had done some off-campus acting and directing at the Brattle Theatre, then a legitimate stage. After graduating, he and a friend drove his Austin Healey to Los Angeles, where they were supposed to have jobs as roustabouts in the oil fields. That promise failed to materialize, and for a time he drove eighteen-wheel trucks, worked on a Buick assembly line, and had one job literally digging ditches.

By accident, Rosenberg knew some people in the entertainment industry and got work in the production office at Universal Studios, then moved on to Columbia and MCA. After some years on the management side, he was offered a job by the distinguished literary agent H.N. Swanson, but, as Rosenberg recalls, "I had no appetite for agency work then. I thought that would be being tarred with the wrong brush."

**ROBERT LEE, Agent-packager, Triad Artists.**

"When certain talents are ripe to do a particular project, it's like a vapor in the air that's ready to explode. But if the deal isn't put together then, the vapor will evaporate."



ROBERT ELLIS MILLER '48, Director.

"The moment that Alan Arkin was nominated for an Academy Award for his performance in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* was one of the most thrilling moments of my life."

However, Swanson persisted, and "when I found out that he represented some of my favorite authors," Rosenberg says, "I would have paid him for the job." In his four years at H.N. Swanson, he learned the ropes of the agency game, representing the likes of John O'Hara, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner.

In 1963 Rosenberg joined with fellow agents Sam Adams and Rick Ray to found Adams, Ray, and Rosenberg, an independent agency specializing in writers and literary properties. "We were scared stiff," he admits, but within six months their client list had doubled, and after two years they were the largest independent agency in the business. Twenty-four years later, the three men are still together, running Triad with their seven new partners from the merger.

"The Ivy League, button-down style doesn't sell here. What works here is a tough, aggressive, convincing, compelling, sleeves-rolled-up approach," Rosenberg explains. "Engaging in those relationships has always been an effort for me, since I have never been an outgoing individual. I'm a private person by nature, someone who's highly subjective and deliberate."

But Lee Rosenberg extracts many rewards from agency work. "Agencies are a very stable business; your product is always in demand. We are not subject to the vicissitudes of being 'hot,' then 'cold,' like a studio or an individual client," he notes. "When you discover a talent and initiate a relationship between that person and the marketplace, there's a tremendous satisfaction."

The Bel Air Hotel is not quite inaccessible, but it occupies such a remote location that one assumes its patrons must have very good reasons for going there. Two miles north of Sunset Boulevard, up winding Stone Canyon Road, the hotel is surrounded by one of the city's poshest residential areas. Beset with lush gardens, bathed in a pastoral quiet, run with understated luxury, the Bel Air serves breakfast to many entertainment people. The weekday "trades"—*Daily Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter*—are available on a side table. On mornings when there is no agency breakfast at Triad Artists, Robert Lee '78 and a client often meet over granola and fresh berries here.

"Getting into a big agency is the hardest thing I ever tried to do," says Lee. "It's like breaking into a closed shop. I made a five-week public relations effort and spent \$4,000 on credit cards taking everybody I knew in the entertainment industry out to breakfast, lunch, and dinner. When I had my final interview at Triad, it was like a Ph.D. oral exam. The five principals sat around me in a semicircle and grilled me for an hour and a half on everything from my favorite films to the intricacies of legal deals."

Lee had been an attorney specializing in entertainment law before becoming an agent two years ago. He got his legal training at Georgetown after his graduation from Harvard. But at a law firm, "I felt I was on the outside looking in," he says. "The youth of the entertainment business attracted me. If you stay back East, you almost have to be gray at the temples

before you can really rock and roll. This is a real meritocracy out here; people don't look at pedigrees nearly as much."

Trustworthiness and personal rapport are key attributes for a successful agent. "So much of what happens in this business depends on relationships," he notes. "Even being able to get reservations at certain key restaurants isn't trivial, because that's where some of the real action is going on." Lee is admirably suited to an industry that merges social with business contacts; articulate, gracious, and funny, he exudes style and charm. "Having a solid liberal arts education is an advantage to an agent," he claims. "If you can really talk to writers about their work, that's the best way to get a client."

Only fifteen or twenty agents in Los Angeles do what Lee does. He specializes in agency "packaging"—assembling a project with two or more key personnel, then selling it to a studio or network. A package might include a miniseries story and screenwriter, a production company, and a major star. Lee does more work in television than in feature films, which he calls "a richer man's sport. Television is more structured, more corporate, more defined, and generates a more constant demand."

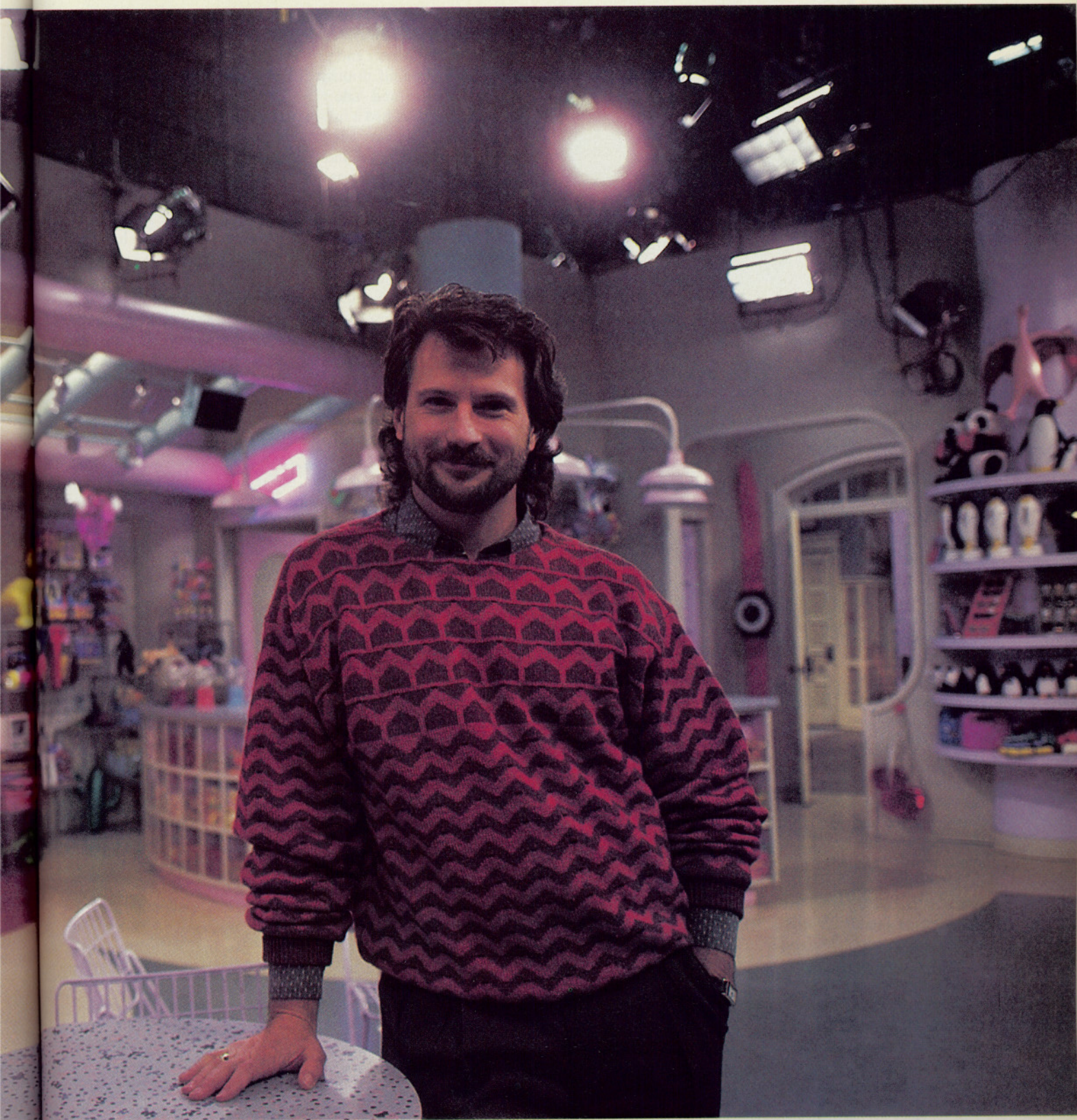
His work often brings him into famous company. Lee might well fly to Las Vegas to meet with the Smothers brothers, stopping first to eat dinner with Mr. T. In the spring he often flies to the Cannes or Deauville film festivals to meet with clients such as international star Christopher Lambert. And agents often have the anomalous experience of being seen as mentors by their celebrity clients, who turn to them for needed support. "They're looking to you for guidance; they're putting their career in your hands. They want to know that you believe in them," Lee says.

Lee enjoys his career and describes show business as "the prize pig." But some of his friends and classmates once looked down on it. "Even in 1978 there was still a prejudice, some negativity directed at me for coming out here. Just typical establishment snobbery about dealing with Hollywood," he says. "But the entertainment community is now in higher public esteem than Wall Street."

A Harvard education poses several disadvantages for those entering the film and television industry. The least important of these is the stereotyping of Harvard alumni as "eggheads," intellectuals out of touch with both the marketplace and their own emotions. Although the old-time Hollywood was "a proletarian industry, in which nobody but the writers were educated," as Frank Pierson recalls, the era of the movie moguls has long since given way to a corporate style of management, staffed by college-educated executives. Hundreds of Ivy League graduates now populate the business, with many, like Dartmouth alumnus Grant Tinker, standing out as conspicuously successful.

But if Harvard teaches a propensity for understatement, an aversion to selling, or a haughty indifference to style, it ill fits its alumni for Hollywood. "The Harvard-trained gentlemanly virtues do not score points here," says Steve Kolzak '75, senior vice-president for casting and talent at Embassy Communications. "What this town responds to is ambition, flash, and street hustle." Dick Button '52, LL.B. '55, a television producer and figure-skating commentator for ABC Sports, says, "If there's one thing I've learned after thirty years in this business, it's this: if you can't sell something in three sen-

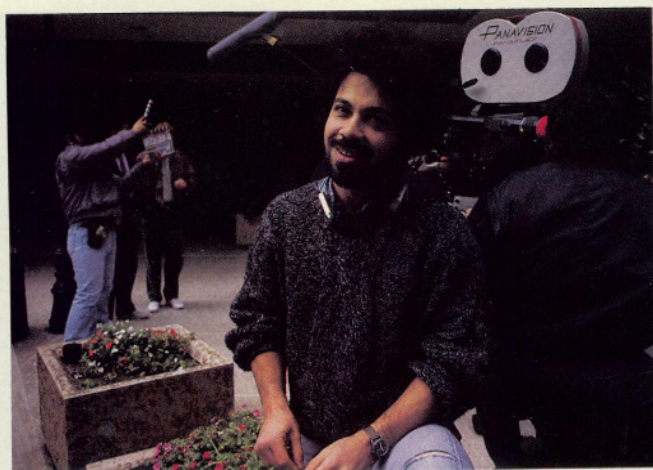




STEVE KOLZAK

Senior vice-president for casting and talent, Embassy Television.

"A television show is very different from selling dreams to people in the dark of a theater."

**ED ZWICK '74, Director.**

"Working in the industry is a very manic-depressive cycle. When you're doing a film, you're completely absorbed, on a true high. Between projects, you wonder if you'll ever work again."

tences or less, you can't sell it, period. You have to give the network something *they* can sell in the three sentences they get in *TV Guide* or a ten-second on-air promo."

Having gone to Harvard probably provides less of a head start in entertainment than in any other business. The industry cares little or nothing for prestigious academic credentials and respects no tradition-bound entitlements. Show business values present-day performance above all else, and that very quality attracts the ambitious.

Jeff Sagansky notes the movie and television industry's wide-open quality: "Film and investment banking are the only businesses you see where talent will out, and rewards quickly parallel your contribution."

The industry also offers a unique sort of inner reward. Michael Alexander '73, vice-president for broadcasting at MCA, is a Harvard graduate who pursued a career in academic administration before entering the entertainment field. He says that "colleges and entertainment companies are more alike than they are different. In both cases, the level of intellectual stimulation is high. In the university, it's academics with ideas, in the studio, it's film creators with visions. The entertainment business is based on copyrights, intellectual property. With that type of product, there is a lot of creativity involved no matter where you are in the industry."

In producing so many successful film and television professionals, perhaps the University's greatest strength is its lack of a theater, communications, or television-film department. "Some film school graduates come out prepared to be whores before they've been virgins," says critic Charles Champlin.

In contrast, the Harvard powers in Hollywood typically launched their show-business careers at the Loeb Drama Center, the Hasty Pudding Theatricals, or the *Lampoon*. While in college, they were actually writing, producing, and directing—not studying the process of creation but living it out. And reaching for professional standards.

"In the late 1960s, the *Lampoon* published parodies with press runs of as much as 600,000. That's better than getting a degree in publishing from a journalism school," says Henry Beard '67, a comedy writer and one of the founders of the

National Lampoon. "And many of the Loeb shows could have opened off-Broadway."

Television writer and producer Liz Coe '73 had written and directed plays all through high school and was accepted by both Harvard and Yale. "At Yale I would have majored in theater arts and had a full-blown education in the theater. The Harvard admissions officer told me, 'we educate you for life, not for a profession,' and that phrase haunted me," she says. "As it turned out, I was able to write and direct much more theater at Harvard than I would have at Yale. Robert Brustein was at Yale then, and graduate students ran the program."

Frank Pierson stresses that "you need practical, hands-on creativity in film. This is a very physical thing, like making cabinets. Students can't just watch Renoir films and analyze them. A writer who doesn't know what a director needs to do his job is almost useless in film." Pierson also suggests that the University would do well to establish something like the Nieman Fellowships for film and television professionals. Like the Office for the Arts's Learning from Performers series, such a program would expose students to active practitioners, who could screen and discuss their works while using the resources of the University to recharge their own creative batteries.

From the outside, the studio with the sign reading Overboard Music near the door looks unprepossessing. It is, in fact, a small back room in a residential area northeast of Hollywood. But inside, a dazzling array of electronic keyboards, synthesizers, amplifiers, and speakers, plus a Macintosh computer and printer, arrests the eye and ear. A visitor remarks that the place must get quite crowded when the other musicians are present. Robert Kraft '76 grins broadly and stretches out his arms. "They're all here," he says.

Kraft's high-tech gear allows him to compose for several voices, synthesize the tone qualities of scores of instruments, and record the results on computer discs. He can alter and play back this digitized information with variations in tempo, dynamics, pitch, counterpoint, or other musical parameters. In this room he composed the new theme music for ABC's "Wide World of Sports," and, as Bruce Willis's musical director, prepared the latter's NBC special with the Pointer Sisters. Kraft has written music for the daytime serial *Days of Our Lives* and scored *Seven Minutes in Heaven*, a feature film whose executive producer was Francis Coppola.

"I'm truly as unacademic a musician as possible," Kraft says. "Pop music was my education. I used to go to bed with WABC radio on under my pillow." In his freshman year at Harvard, Kraft, who had played piano since age three, flunked a sight-reading test at the music department. "It was a Bach prelude, and I couldn't really read music," he recalls. "I suggested a blues in C as an alternative, but the professor told me that I was so far behind in my musical education that it wasn't worthwhile for me to start here at age seventeen."

Kraft fared better at the Office for the Arts, where director Myra Mayman linked him up with avant-garde composer David Patterson. "We threw the *I Ching* to devise melody lines, wild stuff," he says. "Patterson told me, 'You don't have to go to music school to be a composer.' It hit home."

Shortly after graduating Kraft went to New York. "My first night there I was sitting at the piano at a party with some Harvard people," he remembers. "I had been in New York for two hours and the producer of 'Agronsky and Company' came

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ROBERT KRAFT
Composer.

"In Hollywood, work comes from going to barbecues. You're standing in someone's backyard with a hot dog in your hand and you get into a conversation that leads to a job."

up and asked if I could write a theme song for the show. Three weeks later I saw 'Music by Robert Kraft' roll by on the TV credits. Two things Patterson and I had discussed with distaste were electronic music and television, and the first thing I did was an electronic theme for television."

But that was a one-shot success. Afterward, Kraft was just another out-of-work Harvard graduate in New York City. He started his own band, eventually recording and releasing three albums, but none succeeded commercially. Discouraged after seeing three records die on the charts, Kraft thought of quitting the music business. But things moved in a new direction when he got a call to compose a song for the television series "Fame." He has since become very active as a composer and producer of music for film, television, and video.

Theme songs—like Kraft's music for the series "Who's the Boss?"—are especially rewarding financially, because the composer receives a payment each time the show airs. "I call it horizontal money," Kraft says with a grin, "because I get paid while I sleep."

As he leaves the Columbia Bar and Grill after lunch, Cloris Leachman waves and blows a kiss, while at a corner table Tony Danza smiles and nods. On his way out the door, Shelley Long breaks a purposeful stride to stop and say hello. Many actors know and like Steve Kolzak, and he returns their positive regard. "As a casting director, you see the best side of an actor," Kolzak observes. "They're looking their best, projecting their personalities. After all, your job is giving them work."

As senior vice-president for casting and talent at Embassy Television, Kolzak is one of the most important casting directors in the business. "To do this, you need an extraordinary memory," he says. "Luckily, mine is a photographic one. I have a working knowledge of 10,000 actors in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, London, and Los Angeles. Not only what they look like but what they've done, what they cost, and who their agents are."

Casting directors match actors with roles, and their finely tuned work, though largely unsung, vitally influences the fate of a film or television series. A sitcom like "Cheers," which many call the best-cast series on television, gains much of its appeal from the special chemistry between the actors and their characters. Steve Kolzak's well-informed intuition saw that potential when "Cheers" was nothing but words on paper. "I closed the last page of the 'Cheers' pilot script and said, 'Shelley Long and Ted Danson,'" he says.

After having such an insight, the casting director must next persuade sometimes-reluctant actors to take the part, and also persuade the powers that be—producers, directors, or whomever—to hire the chosen players. In this latter task, Kolzak sometimes applies his dramatic sense. When casting male and female leads, for example, he may orchestrate the order in which three pairs of candidates audition. The first pair will be actors who are almost but not quite right, the second a significantly worse fit, and the third Kolzak's choice for the roles. The first audition creates hope, the second despair, the third excitement.

"I seek to guide the process of producers and directors in realizing the intention of the page," Kolzak says, and his own acting talent constitutes a major resource in doing so. He began acting at Harvard, where he performed in many Loeb and

House productions. He was so successful on stage that at one point Kolzak took a year off to play a lead role in a rock-and-roll musical that had an eight-month run in Washington, D.C. However, he recalls that "I was getting cast in too many character parts, and that wasn't the type of acting career I wanted."

A turning point came when he read for a part in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at the Loeb and "gave a terrific audition"—but didn't get the role, since the casting came down to a question of hair and skin coloring. "These were variables over which I had no control, and to put myself in that kind of situation was too vulnerable for me," Kolzak says. "I also didn't want to starve in a fifth-floor walk-up in Hell's Kitchen doing off-off Broadway showcases."

After college Kolzak drove across the country with all his possessions in a U-Haul trailer and arrived in L.A. knowing nothing about the film business and having no contacts in the industry. Well, there was *one* connection: his mother knew Tip O'Neill, who was friendly with Lew Wasserman, chairman of MCA and one of the most powerful men in Hollywood. An interview with Wasserman led to a job as secretary to a casting director at MCA. "Then, in January, came something called 'production hiatus.' In other words, you lose your job," Kolzak recalls wryly. "I thought, if security is what I'm after, I can forget about this business."

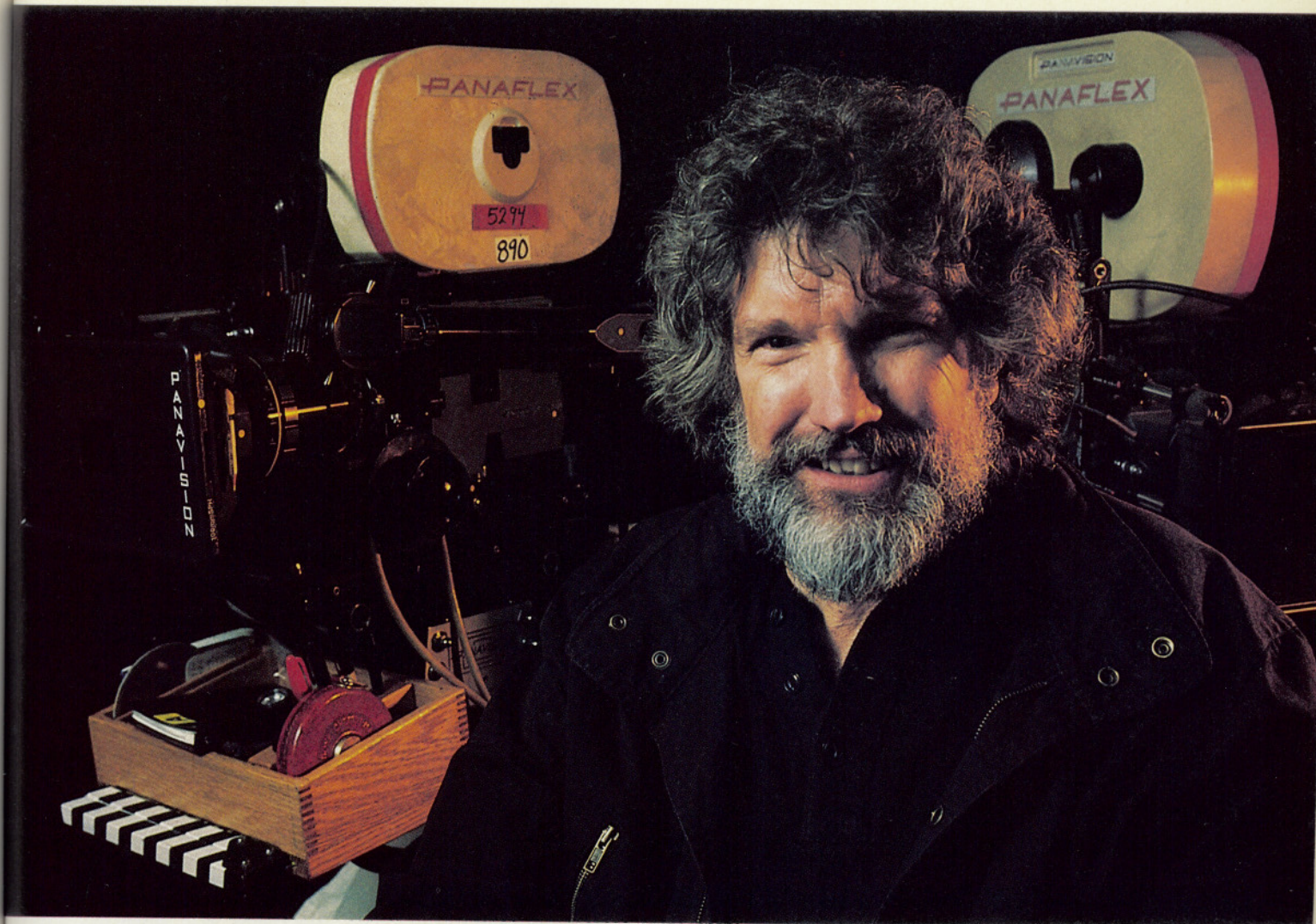
But by then he had some skills, experience, and contacts and was able to hustle up freelance casting work. Eventually Kolzak went to work for a talent agency, but on his first day there the casting director for the "Starsky and Hutch" television series offered him a job as his assistant. He left the agency for "Starsky" and six months later got a break: his boss departed for Paramount, and Kolzak became casting director for the last half of the "Starsky and Hutch" final season.

Since then, he has supervised the casting of many television series, including "Facts of Life," "227," "Married With Children" and "Different Strokes." Kolzak has also cast the feature films *Altered States*, *Heartland*, and *Bachelor Party*. "The initial choice of starring roles is the hook which grabs the audience," he says. "But to populate a show with wonderful characters, to support your leading players with other fine actors, is crucial."

Although the people who do make-up and hairstyles can receive Academy Awards and Emmys for their creative contributions, the industry gives little public acknowledgment to casting directors' work. The satisfactions they extract remain mostly private ones. "You must feel that what you're doing contributes to an elaboration of the human spirit," Kolzak says. "This is a very tough town if you're just chasing the dollar. You need to be passionately committed to your work. It had better touch something deep inside you."

Theater is a writer's medium, television is a producer's medium, and film is a director's medium." Or so goes the common wisdom. In each arena a particular creative function exerts most control over the final product. David Rintels '59 is a former Writers Guild of America president and a highly esteemed television writer and producer. "Producing gives you more control than writing," he says. "But control is ultimately less satisfying than creating."

The *auteur* theory, devised by French critics and filmmakers in the 1950s, describes the director as the "author" of the film, the source of its artistic statement. Far from being an esoteric film aesthete's conceit, the *auteur* theory is deeply ingrained in



MICHAEL RITCHIE, Director.

"For a film to be seen at all, to *exist*, it must reach a certain level of popularity. Otherwise, they really do disappear."

the consciousness of American filmgoers. Audiences glibly chat about "the new Marty Scorsese film," "*Jaws* by Steven Spielberg," and "Coppola's *Godfather* pictures." But on the other side of the lens, the people who actually make movies know that the *auteur* theory is something of a joke.

At least Hollywood movies aren't made that way. "Maybe Truffaut designs his own sets and possibly Fellini operates his own camera and conceivably Kurosawa edits every inch of film he directs," says screenwriter William Goldman in *Adventures in the Screen Trade*. But studio filmmaking is, perhaps, the ultimate collaborative art. "The writer needs a pen, the painter needs a brush, and the filmmaker needs an army," goes the adage, and anyone involved with major productions knows that a host of individual creative talents all contribute to the final look, sound, and feel of a movie.

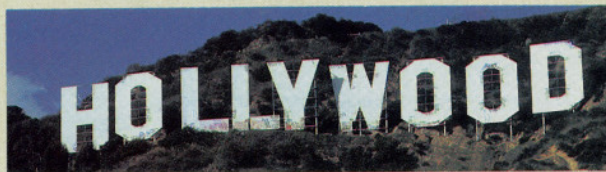
The *auteur* theory particularly rankles writers, who, after all, create the screenplay on which everything else stands. Rintels once published an essay in the *Los Angeles Times* suggesting that, with the growing recognition of the screenwriter's central role in giving a film "direction," it was time for a new theory

that made writers the key creative force. With a fine sense of irony, Rintels dubbed this "the *directeur* theory."

But the human mind likes to define a single individual as responsible for a work of art, and for purposes of shorthand, a film director may serve. A screenplay, however excellent, is not a movie. For most features, the director is the person who provides the greatest continuity of vision, the one who stays with the project for the longest time, and the one who shoulders the ultimate responsibility for synthesizing its thousands of elements. "Directors," says Charles Champlin, "have more responsibility than is good for them."

In 1986 *The Golden Child*, starring Eddie Murphy, opened to savage critical reactions but nonetheless quickly climbed to the top of the charts for box-office receipts. Its director, Michael Ritchie '60, has been one of Hollywood's most consistently successful talents over the past twenty years. In an industry in which the phrase "commercial success" sometimes seems a tautology, directing financially profitable pictures can become a prerequisite to

A HARVARD IN



FILMOGRAPHY

This filmography selectively lists Harvard and Radcliffe alumni on the "creative side" of the film and television industries and offers a sampling of their film-TV credits. It is far from comprehensive. The listings omit "business side" people, since their specific production credits tend to be difficult to define, and do not include projects that will be released or aired in the near future. For simplicity, no distinctions are made regarding collaborations (e.g., co-author vs. sole author of screenplay), directness of involvement (e.g., novelist-author of original story vs. screenwriter), and hierarchies within a function (e.g., associate producer vs. producer).

KEY: (w) writer; (p) producer; (d) director; (ed) editor; (ce) creative executive; (c) composer; (cd) casting director.

Danielle Alexandra-Huberman '80

Forward Pass (p)
How to Host a Murder (w,p)
The Heart of the Lion (w,p)
The Sisterhood (p)
An American Heiress (p)

Danilo Bach '65
Beverly Hills Cop (w)

Thomas Baum '62
The Manhattan Project (w)
Carry (w)
Simon (w)

Leonard Bernstein '39

On the Town (c)
On the Waterfront (c)
West Side Story (c)

Jonathan Boorstin '67

Dream Lover (w,p)

Andy Borowitz '80

"Easy Street" (w,p)
"Facts of Life" (w)
"Square Pegs" (w)
"Archie Bunker's Place" (w)

Susan Stevenson Borowitz '81

"Family Ties" (w)
"Webster" (w)
"E.R." (w)

Richard Button '52, LL.B. '55

"The Superstars" (p)
"Battle of the Network Stars" (p)

Peter Choi '82

"Hotel" (d)

Liz Coe '73

"Cagney and Lacey" (w,p)
"Family" (w)
Games Mother Never Taught You (w)

Rob Cohen '71

The Wiz (p)
A Small Circle of Friends (p)

J. Michael Crichton '64, M.D. '69

The Andromeda Strain (w)
Westworld (w,d)
Coma (d)
The Great Train Robbery (w,d)

Kevin Curran '79

"Late Night With David Letterman" (w)

Carlton Cuse '81

Sweet Dreams (p)
St. Elmo's Fire (p)
"Crime Story" (w)

Philip Dearborn '66

Young Lust (p)

Michael Dinner '78

Heaven Help Us (d)
Miss Lonelyhearts (d)

James Downey '74

"Saturday Night Live" (w)

Philip Dunne '29

How Green Was My Valley (w)
Pinky (w)
The Robe (w)

Eric Ellenbogen '78

"Those Wonderful TV Game Shows" (p)

Philip Feldman '43, LL.M. '49

The Wild Bunch (p)
The Toy (p)
Blue Thunder (p)

Lucy Fisher '71

The Witches of Eastwick (ce)
The Color Purple (ce)
Innerspace (ce)
Gremlins (ce)

Sanford Frank '76, J.D. '81

"Late Night With David Letterman" (w)

Al Franken '73

"Saturday Night Live" (w)
"One More Saturday Night" (w)

Parmer Fuller '71

"Easy Street" (c)

Tony Ganz '69

Gung Ho (p)
Into Thin Air (p)
Bitter Harvest (p)

Marshall Goldberg '68

"Crime Story" (w)

Johnny Green '28

Easter Parade (c)
An American in Paris (c)

André Gregory '56

My Dinner With André (w)

John Hancock '61

Bang the Drum Slowly (d)
Let's Scare Jessica to Death (d)

Richard Heffron '52

Futureworld (d)
Outlaw Blues (d)
I, the Jury (d)
See How She Runs (d)

Rupert Hitzig '60

The Squeeze (p)
The Last Dragon (p)
Wolfen (p)
Cattle Annie and Little Britches (p)
Happy Birthday Gemini (p)

Tim Hunter '68

Tex (d)
River's Edge (d)

George Jackson '80

Crush Groove (p)
Disorderlies (p)

Glenn Jordan '57

The Women's Room (d)
The Buddy System (d)
Heartsounds (d)

directing *any* pictures. Ritchie's track record and talents have kept him in the director's chair for thirteen features in the past eighteen years.

Many of Ritchie's films have gathered critical acclaim as well. Comedies such as *The Bad News Bears* and *Semi-Tough* have reached semi-classic status, while filmgoers fondly remember his early work with Robert Redford in *Downhill Racer* and *The Candidate*. His satirical mosaic of a Young Miss America pageant, *Smile*, originated in the director's own experience as a judge in such a beauty contest.

"Usually the final shooting script bears only a slight resemblance to the first-draft screenplay," Ritchie says, "though I've never had the arrogance to think that my writing would be better than that of genuine writers. The casting alters every-

thing, too. If Bruce Dern is Big Bob Freeland [a character in *Smile*], that's a different story than what's on the page."

Ritchie is well aware of the connection between a film's popularity and its survival. "We are in a business which is there to make money," he says. "For a film to be seen at all, to exist, it must reach a certain level of popularity. Otherwise, they really do disappear. You can't go get a film you want from a library, like a book; you can't research an out-of-print film."

Ritchie argues for the importance of considering the audience by quoting the elusive French writer-director Robert Bresson. "Bresson says that the filmmaker's job is to find out what he wants and then make the audience want it, too," he says. "But nobody has seen a Robert Bresson film." He believes that the Hollywood star system gave films a longer life

Jeremy Kagan '67

The Chosen (d)
The Sting II (d)

Martin Kaplan '71

Ruthless People (p)
Tough Guys (p)
Off Beat (p)
Hello Again (p)

Lee Katzin '57

"The Mod Squad" (d)
 "Mission Impossible" (d)
 "Police Story" (d)
 "Miami Vice" (d)
Le Mans (d)
The Salzburg Connection (d)

Ronni Kern '68

A Change of Seasons (w)

Steve Kolzak '75

PBS's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (cd)
 "Cheers" (cd)
Altered States (cd)
Heartland (cd)
Bachelor Party (cd)
 "Starsky and Hutch" (cd)

Robert Kraft '76*

ABC's "Wide World of Sports" (c)
Seven Minutes in Heaven (c)
 "Who's the Boss?" (c)
 "Fame" (c)

Jon Lemkin '83

Hill Street Blues (w)

David Madden '76

Children of a Lesser God (ce)
The Untouchables (ce)
Gung Ho (ce)

Terrence Malick '65

Badlands (w,d,p)
Days of Heaven (w,d,p)

John Manulis '78

"Comedy Zone" (p)
Intimate Strangers (p)

Jeff Martin '82

"Late Night With David Letterman" (w)

Pat McCormick '50

"The Tonight Show With Johnny Carson" (w)

*Kraft also produced Bruce Willis's debut album, *The Return of Bruno*, on Motown Records.

Jeff Melvoin '75

"Hill Street Blues" (w,p)
 "Remington Steele" (w)

George Meyer '78

"Saturday Night Live" (w)

Robert Ellis Miller '48

Reuben, Reuben (d)
The Girl From Petrovka (d)
The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter (d)
Any Wednesday (d)

Diane Nabatoff '78, M.B.A. '82

The Golden Child (ce)

David Odell '65

Dark Crystal (w)
Supergirl (w)

Mark O'Donnell '76

"Saturday Night Live" (w)

Steve O'Donnell '76

"Late Night With David Letterman" (w)

Glenn Padnick '68, J.D. '73

"Facts of Life" (ce)
 "Different Strokes" (ce,w)
 "Silver Spoons" (ce,w)
 "Who's the Boss?" (ce,w)
 "227" (ce)

Thomas Parry '74

Airplane! (ce)
Star Trek: The Motion Picture (ce)

Frank Pierson '46

Cat Ballou (w)
Cool Hand Luke (w)
Dog Day Afternoon (w)
A Star Is Born (w,d)

Jonathan Prince '80

"What's Hot, What's Not" (w)
The Sky's the Limit (w)
The Fine Touch (w)

Judith Rascoe, A.M. '65

Endless Love (w)
Who'll Stop the Rain? (w)
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (w)

Road Movie (w)**David Rintels '59**

Fear on Trial (w)
Gideon's Trumpet (w,p)
 "Washington: Behind Closed Doors" (w,p)
Sakharov (w)

"Clarence Darrow" (w)

Michael Ritchie '60

Downhill Racer (d)
The Candidate (d)
The Bad News Bears (d)
Semi-Tough (d)
The Golden Child (d)

Rick Rosenthal '71

Halloween II (d)
Bad Boys (d)
American Dreamer (d)

Jeff Sagansky '74, M.B.A. '76

"Cheers" (ce)
 "Family Ties" (ce)
 "St. Elsewhere" (ce)
 "Miami Vice" (ce)
About Last Night (ce)
Peggy Sue Got Married (ce)
Nothing in Common (ce)
Blind Date (ce)

Edgar J. Scherick '50

Take the Money and Run (p)
They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (p)
Sleuth (p)
The Heartbreak Kid (p)
The Stepford Wives (p)
Shoot the Moon (p)
Mrs. Soffel (p)

Gregory Scherick '83

Footloose (ed)
Protocol (ed)

Peter Seaman '74

Trenchcoat (w)

Erich Segal '58, Ph.D. '65

Yellow Submarine (w)
Love Story (w)

Daniel Selznick '58

Blood Feud (p)
Reagan's Way (w,p,d)

Wallace Shawn '65

My Dinner With André (w)

Andrew Susskind '76

On Our Own (ce)
Loving Couples (p)

Daniel Taradash '33, LL.B. '36

From Here to Eternity (w)
Picnic (w)
Bell, Book, and Candle (w)
The Other Side of Midnight (w)

James Toback '66

The Gambler (w)
Love and Money (w,d)
Fingers (w,d)
Exposed (w,d)
The Pick-Up Artist (w,d)

Joseph Toplyn '75, M.B.A. '79

"Late Night With David Letterman" (w)

Rob Ulin '84

"The Jeffersons" (w)
 "Facts of Life" (w)
 "Love American Style" (w)

Brock Walsh '75

Secret Admirer (c)
Windy City (c)

Claudia Weill '68

Girlfriends (d)
It's My Turn (d)

Tom Werner '71

"The Cosby Show" (p)
 "Taxi" (ce)
 "Soap" (ce)
 "Barney Miller" (ce)

Winifred White '74

A Christmas Snow (ce)
 Jim Henson's "The Storyteller" (ce)
Stone Fox (ce)
The Incredible Ida Early (ce)

Maya Williams '84

"Amen" (w)

Paul Williams '65

Dealing (d)

Robert Young '49

Extremities (d)
The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez (w,d)
One Trick Pony (d)
Alambrista (w,d)

Edward Zwick '74

About Last Night (d)
Special Bulletin (d)
Paper Dolls (d)
 "Family" (d)

because a star's presence "functioned as a brand name, like 'Colgate.' I'd say that 70 percent of my favorite films are star vehicles."

Regarding the issue of "colorizing" classic films, Ritchie says, "The biggest issue is not whether the film belongs to Ted Turner or John Huston. Great films really belong to the people; they are a public treasure. Does anybody have the right to do anything to them? When we released *The Bad News Bears* in France, we learned that even juxtaposing Bizet's music with Little League baseball is against French law."

Before directing feature films, Ritchie worked in television on such shows as "Omnibus," but he got his first directorial break at Harvard. "I wouldn't be in show business if it weren't for *Oh Dad, Poor Dad*," he recalls. "The Adams House Play

Reading Society got a \$500 grant for a contest, which Arthur Kopit won with *Oh, Dad*. I got to direct."

Ritchie gives credit to Harvard's "informal environment, where people with no credentials whatsoever could produce something without faculty supervision." A standing offer by the Harvard Dramatic Club to underwrite "lunchtime productions" enabled his directorial debut. "Anybody who wanted to could get \$15 to direct a play at lunchtime. I had never directed anything at all, but I did *Krapp's Last Tape* on the \$15 budget," he recalls. "Most of it went for bananas." ▢

Craig Lambert '69, Ph.D. '78, wrote his sociology doctoral dissertation on the television production industry. He is now at work on a screenplay about elite-level rowing.