

Cover: The new year is going to be the Year of the Tube. With pay-TV set to go on-air Feb. 1, pre-launch nerves—and budgets—are stretched to the limit. Photographer Ron Levine's artistry captures the prevailing spirit, and Lucie Hall's report from Toronto captures the words of the principal players, beginning on page 18.

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Is there life after co-production ?



DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA/LA GUILDE CANADIENNE DES RÉALISATEURS

May 27th 1982.

Judith McCann,
Canadian Film Development Corporation,
Suite 220,
800 Place Victoria,
Montreal PQ, H4Z 1A8.

Dear Judith,

Re: *LITTLE GLORIA HAPPY AT LAST*—a theatrical feature film applying for status under the Canadian/British co-production treaty.

A United States network buys a mini series concept based on a biography of a living American socialite, schedules two American stars for the leading roles, contracts the deal through Edgar Sherick Associates who own the literary rights and commissions a four hour script for the mini series from a reliable Hollywood writer. Sherick, meanwhile, hires a member in good standing of the Directors Guild of America through a wholly owned subsidiary, Four Seasons Company.

Have you got the outline of the Canadian/British co-production of this "Theatrical Feature" crystal clear? No? Let me help some more.

Taking exception to my description of the "feature" as clearly a lift out of the mini series, Michael Proupous, lawyer for the Canadian end of things said "we are not lifting a feature film out of a mini series; we are building a mini series onto a feature". Of course they are.

That's why: the mini series script was written first, the Canadian writer has no rights in or to the original literary material. The Canadian script reads for page on end word for word the same as the mini series.

The same building process is revealed in the production plan for the mini series. Having spent seven weeks in Canada obtaining one and a half hours of finished film for the "Feature", in only two scant weeks of spectacular effort the remaining two and one half hours of photography will be accomplished in the United States. As Mr. Proupous explained, "none of the material shot in the United States will be used in the feature"

But most revealing of the soundly Canadian and British nature of the feature is the willingness of the American network to provide every penny of financing for this feature in return for allowing its footage to be utilized in the mini series.

And what will happen to the feature in the end? How questions concerning the timing of its release clutch at the heart. Will the mini series tend to lessen its income at the box office? Will it be released first? Second? Never? Not to worry. This theatrical film is being distributed by an American subsidiary of an American TV network whose business is the syndication of TV shows to TV stations, none other than Metromedia. That should take care of any questions about theatre release.

Does it bother anyone that this is the first feature film in memory whose director is not under contract either to the Canadian or British producers but is on loan from a similar though of course distinctly different production? Shooting simultaneously?

Should any of these hilarious shenanigans be going forward? Why not? Reality is frequently absurd, but the Directors Guild of Canada takes distinct exception to this production attempting to dress itself in treaty colours. For our part if an American network wants to sub-contract work in Canada, we could not be more pleased; but we believe fiction should be on screen, not off it.

In the language of a recent CRTC decision we remain unconvinced by the arguments and explanations of the Canadian producer that in any except the most subservient way they are the producers of the project truly at hand or that any kind of initiative generated by them constitutes a project which can be dignified as a Canadian British co-production under the treaty.

Sincerely,

Lew Lehman,
President,
Directors Guild of Canada

Upcoming in **CINEMA CANADA**, you can read all you ever wanted to know about **the fact and fiction of Canadian co-production treaties.**

Also in upcoming 1983 issues: ● complete analysis of 1982 Canadian film production
● dishing it out: the impact of home satellite TV systems
● TV guide as thick as a phone-book: the marriage of the computer and television