

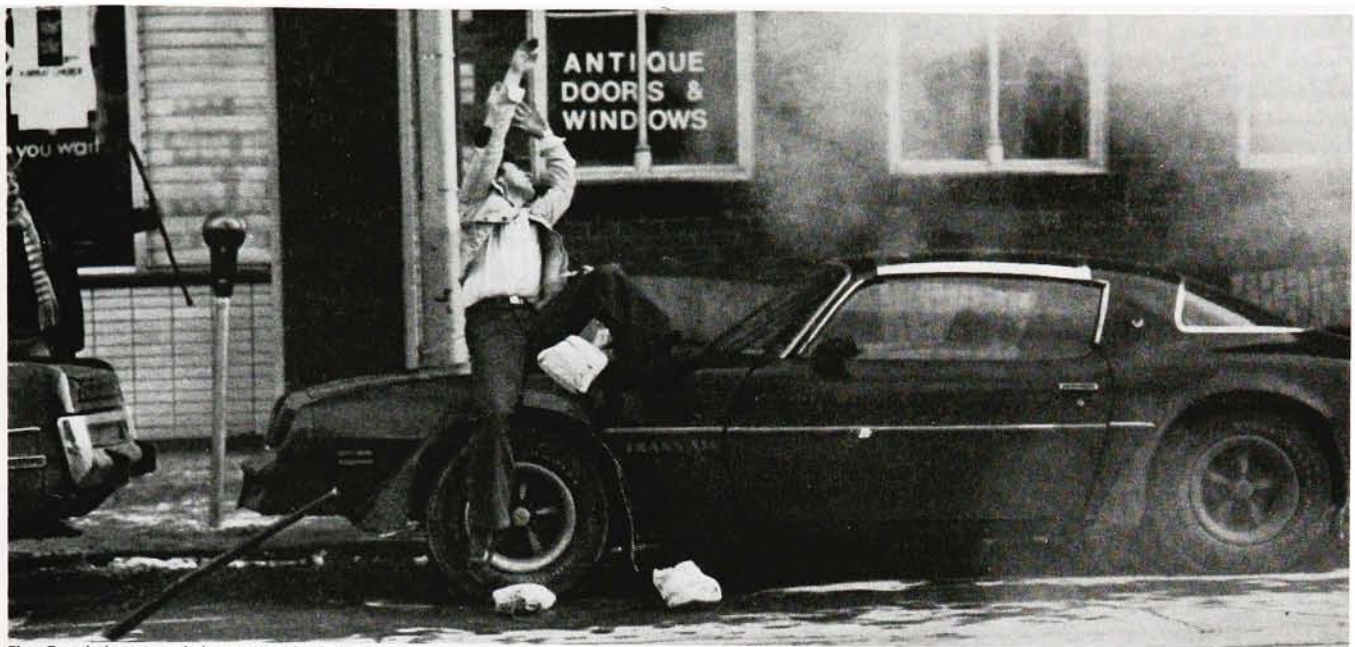
fast companies (1)

a low, low budget

There was a time when making a Canadian feature meant getting together a lot of faith, hope, friends and spare cash, and doing it. This year, a group spent a reported \$23,000 to turn out *Fast Company*. (Not to be confused with another film by the same name.) Enthusiasm for these films has always run high...



Coming into the bank from left to right: Eli Allon, Clay Borris and Rolf Kempf



Clay Borris is gunned down outside the bank

Fast Company (a Faster Film production), now in post-production, promises to be a fast film. It is the story of three small time bank robbers who think they are on their way to the big time. It offers crooked deals shootouts, bank robberies and a love story all packed into 75 colorful minutes.

The shoot was not without its own excitement. One day, in a bank, the three leads, Rolf Kempf, Clay Borris, and Eli Allon were running through the beginning of the robbery. A real Toronto policeman walked in, gun drawn. The man was, understandably, nervous. What would you do if you were a cop and were told over your car radio that a bank robbery was in progress and you arrive and realise this is not the sort of bank heist you are familiar with? True, there are three masked men running around waving rifles and shouting, but something is not quite right. People are strolling about casually, standing around calmly and the bank tellers do not look particularly frightened. Plus, the bank is dotted with lights. To everyone's relief, he put his revolver away.

A *Globe and Mail* photographer came down because he had heard about the robbery. He stayed on to take pictures of the leads who proceeded to ham it up.

After the policeman left, the bank front was littered with signs and a crew member was posted outside. There were no more problems of this nature for the remainder of the day.

Another super-exciting bit occurred when Psycho, played by Allon, had to crash through the doors, run into the street brandishing his shot gun, money bags jingling. I worried until he returned safely. What if he had been apprehended by another uninformed policeman? In this situation, do the police shoot first and ask questions later?

Although they have not quite been plagued by the police, **Fast Company** has had its share of problems with them. Earlier in the shoot, the script called for Billy, played by Kempf, to be beaten up by two cops. The scene was shot down by the lakeshore at four in the morning. Peter Wronski, the director, was in their police car, Billy was being beaten and the camera was a fair distance away. Two policemen appeared on the scene. They were confused. They did not know if they had

stumbled onto an ordinary beating or if two fellow officers were actually involved in this altercation. Everything was, fortunately, straightened out to everyone's satisfaction.

In another scene during the bank robbery, Ray played by Borris, had to smash his way through a window in order to get into the bank manager's office Borris was so intent on doing it properly, he badly slashed his hand. The scene was suitably dramatic.

The producers, Paul Eichgrun and Steve Klys, are neither flaunting nor hiding the fact that theirs is a Canadian film. According to Wronski and Eichgrun, **Outrageous** has paved the way for good commercial films and has proven that Canadian films can do well on the international market. For a film to be successful it is no longer necessary to pretend that it takes place in some anonymous American locale.

At this point, Wronski, Eichgrun and Klys are interested in making careers of putting out good, entertaining commercial films. They do not want to make art films or message films. They want to make films that they think people will truly enjoy. In the future they may change their minds and want to branch out.

For many of the people involved, **Fast Company** is a first. Wronski is 22 years-old and this is his debut as a feature director. Eichgrun and Klys have never written or produced a feature film. Kempf is a musician/songwriter who has never acted and has never had anything to do with films. Borris, a director for the last ten years, is appearing in front of the camera for the first time. Many of the extras are also relatively untried and are working on **Fast Company** out of interest or to expand into different fields.

Although Wronski and his cohorts are neophytes when it comes to feature films, they and the crew have solid experience under their belts. Wronski and Faster Films have done dramas and documentaries for the C.B.C. Eichgrun has worked with the N.F.B. and C.T.V. and on other productions in several capacities. Klys has worked on features and shorts for the N.F.B. and the C.B.C. Eichgrun says his people are "dynamite."

Fast Company is a non-union production. Filming is much simpler this way, not to mention cheaper. Producers can push dollies freely and direct, should the need arise. Grips can dress sets. Everyone can double and do whatever is necessary without worrying about rules and extra time-consuming problems. For a production on a tight budget, working in this manner makes a tremendous difference.

Everyone is optimistic about the future of **Fast Company**. Kempf is writing the score and there are plans afoot for a record tie-in. They would like to see the theme released as a single prior to the release of the film.

From all appearances, they were justified in their optimism. The rushes look good. Kempf and Borris work well together and have presence. With the exception of one or two bit parts which, in all likelihood, will be edited out or around, the performances are strong and well done. Joe Sutherland is a seasoned photographer and it shows. Kempf is an excellent musician. **Fast Company** looks like it will quickly paced, exciting and dramatic.

Sheila Paterson

Sheila Paterson is a free-lance writer who lives in Toronto.

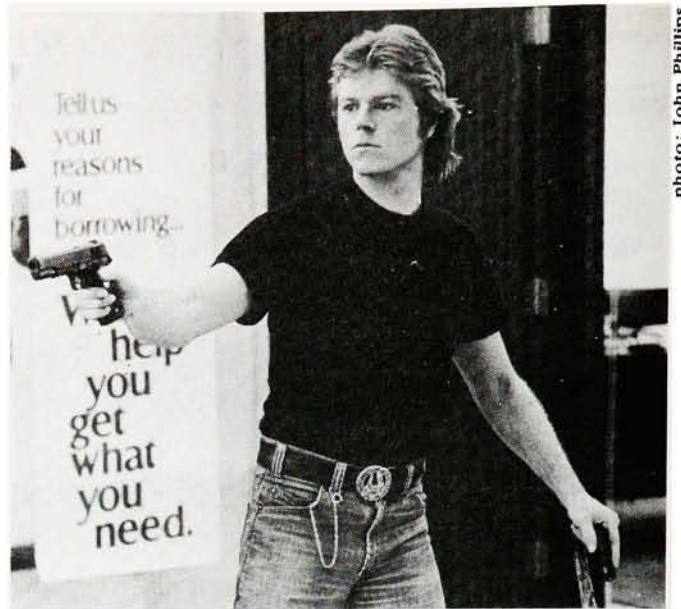


photo: John Phillips

Fast Company's leading actor, Rolf Kempf about to help himself

Fast Company is a story of people in jeopardy, a love story set among small time bank robbers aspiring to the big time. The producers, Paul Eichgrun/Steve Klys and director Peter Wronski are not interested at this time, in making an "artistic" film or a "message" film. We want **Fast Company** to be an entertaining, interesting, and at times touching film, free of cumbersome statements on the meaning of life.

The tight budgeted production had a shooting schedule of twenty-one days, with three six-day weeks, averaging just ten hours per day. "The cardinal rule of a tight budget film is pre-production planning of all phases of the production process, with equal attention paid to the pre-production and post-production phases, said Paul Eichgrun. "This involves careful consideration in the determination and selection of staff, cast, crew, equipment, supplies vendors and shooting sites."

"In doing pre-production homework, it is essential to weigh all decisions against the "time-cost factor." Time is money, and production time is more expensive than most single budget items. Save money where it counts... in production time."

Peter Wronski, in his feature directorial debut with **Fast Company** said, "We've tried to give the public entertainment. We decided at the beginning, during the concept stages, that general appeal would be a prime force in direction and goal."

All the shooting was done on location in Toronto. The director of Photography, Joe Sutherland, is a highly experienced technician, who after working entirely on documentaries has photographed his second feature within a year. "I feel we got what we set out to get" said Sutherland. "We wanted a big city feeling, fast living personified."

The film was shot in 16mm for blow-up to 35mm. A shooting ratio of 6:1 was budgeted for and ended up by exposing 64,000 ft. of color reversal 7542, for 75 minutes of finished film.

The cast is headed by Rolf Kempf and Clay Borris in principal roles with Liesja Wagner, Sandra Scoville, Eli Allon,

Wayne St. John and Gene David Paulson supporting. The casting was handled by Paul Eight Eichgrun who auditioned and screen tested about one-hundred and twenty-five potential actors and actresses. Overall, close to three hundred applied to the casting call. "We decided to go non-ACTRA for budget reasons. The choice was between the allocation in the budget to talent costs or budgeting the sum into the action sequences. We chose the latter and I'm happy to say, without regrets," says Eichgrun.

"What we set out to get" says producer/writer, Steve Klys, "was a fast paced action feature shot in the smoothest way possible as a small budget would allow. A film that would have international appeal and marketability. As producers and writers Paul and I decided that **Fast Company** would be one Canadian feature that would not have that regional look as many Canadian films have. To avoid this we decided that **Fast Company** would not be a personal film, but a film that we feel the public wants to see. We got what we set out to get. The crew and cast were terrific, their spirit and energy made this film. That rare occasion of a crew working each day as a family.

The Producers

FAST COMPANY

d. Peter Wronski, sc. Paul Eichgrun, Steve Klys, ph. Joseph Sutherland, light. Ron Watts, ed. Bob Schreoder, cont. Yasmin Karim, sd. John Gundy, a.d. Tibor Takacs, m. Rolf Kempf, cost. Tania A. Mimnagh, l.p. Rolf Kempf, Clay Borris, Liesja Wagner, Sandra Scoville, Eli Allon, Wayne St. John, Gene David Paulson, p. Peter Wronski, Steve Klys, Paul Eichgrun, p. assit. Jeff Walderman, Jim Bradley, Mike Rea, p. manager. Kalli Paakspuu, p.c. Faster Films Production, 1978, col. 16mm. running time 75 minutes.