

Delight down under

(Letter addressed to Cinema Canada correspondent Barbara Samuels)

I've lost count of the surveys of Australian cinema penned by visiting or anti-podean journalists. Poorly researched, badly written, infuriating.

So you can imagine my delight to read part one of your epic effort. (Cinema Canada No. 110) Impeccable. Admirable. Accurate.

Please accept my thanks and gratitude.

Phillip Adams,
Chairman,
Australian Film Commission
Sydney, Australia

For the record

Your article in the September issue of Cinema Canada entitled "Darcus Slots Three" contains a very misleading and inaccurate statement. You write that he is "finishing a screenplay called *Poker Night*." While Jack Darcus has in the past worked as a script consultant on my film, I wish to go on record as being the sole creator and writer of *Poker Night*. The film has, by the way, received development funding from Telefilm.

Katherine Neilsen
Lauren Productions Inc.
Vancouver.

Critical bank overdrawn

Bruce Malloch's review of *Overdrawn at the Memory Bank* in Cinema Canada's October issue is in keeping with your magazine's cherished traditions of shoddy journalism and negativism towards the Canadian Film Production Industry (except for its most marginal elements).

Yours is the single negative review this film has had anywhere in the world. Your critic, however, does not limit himself to his own opinions. Rather, he manufactures false information to substantiate his views whenever convenient, and leaves out essential facts that may mitigate against his own credibility.

Mr. Malloch claims that "Superchannel passed on *Memory Bank*", which was then "picked up by the CBC's moribund Variety Department." While I think the business transactions that transpire regarding a show are none of your reviewer's affair, since the matter has been raised, let us set the facts straight: Superchannel did not pass on the film; in fact, it made a firm offer to license, as did CTV and CBC. RSL chose to accept the offer from CBC. (Incidentally, the Variety Department, moribund or otherwise, had nothing to do with the deal.)

While you inaccurately claim that the program was rejected by Superchannel, you fail to mention that *Overdrawn at the Memory Bank* is the first Canadian drama to be licensed by PBS' American Playhouse, the most distinguished drama series on U.S. Television.

Alas, Cinema Canada is the only remaining regular film industry publication in this country. You are supported and financed by government agencies and by the industry itself. As such, at the very least, you have the obligation to accurately report on the industry's activities and accomplishments.

Whereas critics are entitled to take a negative view of the films they review, they are most definitely not entitled to fabricate at will. Nor is your magazine entitled to print false information which could so easily have been verified.

Robert Lantos,
president
RSL Entertainment Corp.
Toronto.

Bruce Malloch responds:
When Cinema Canada assigned me to review *Overdrawn at the Memory Bank*, I telephoned Superchannel to arrange a screening. I had heard of their interest in the project while I worked as Cinema Canada's staff reporter, a position I held for 33 months. I was surprised when Superchannel informed me they no longer had the film and that CBC had licensed it, since this meant it would go on Canadian TV without first having a pay-TV window. From this I assumed Superchannel "passed" on *Memory Bank*.

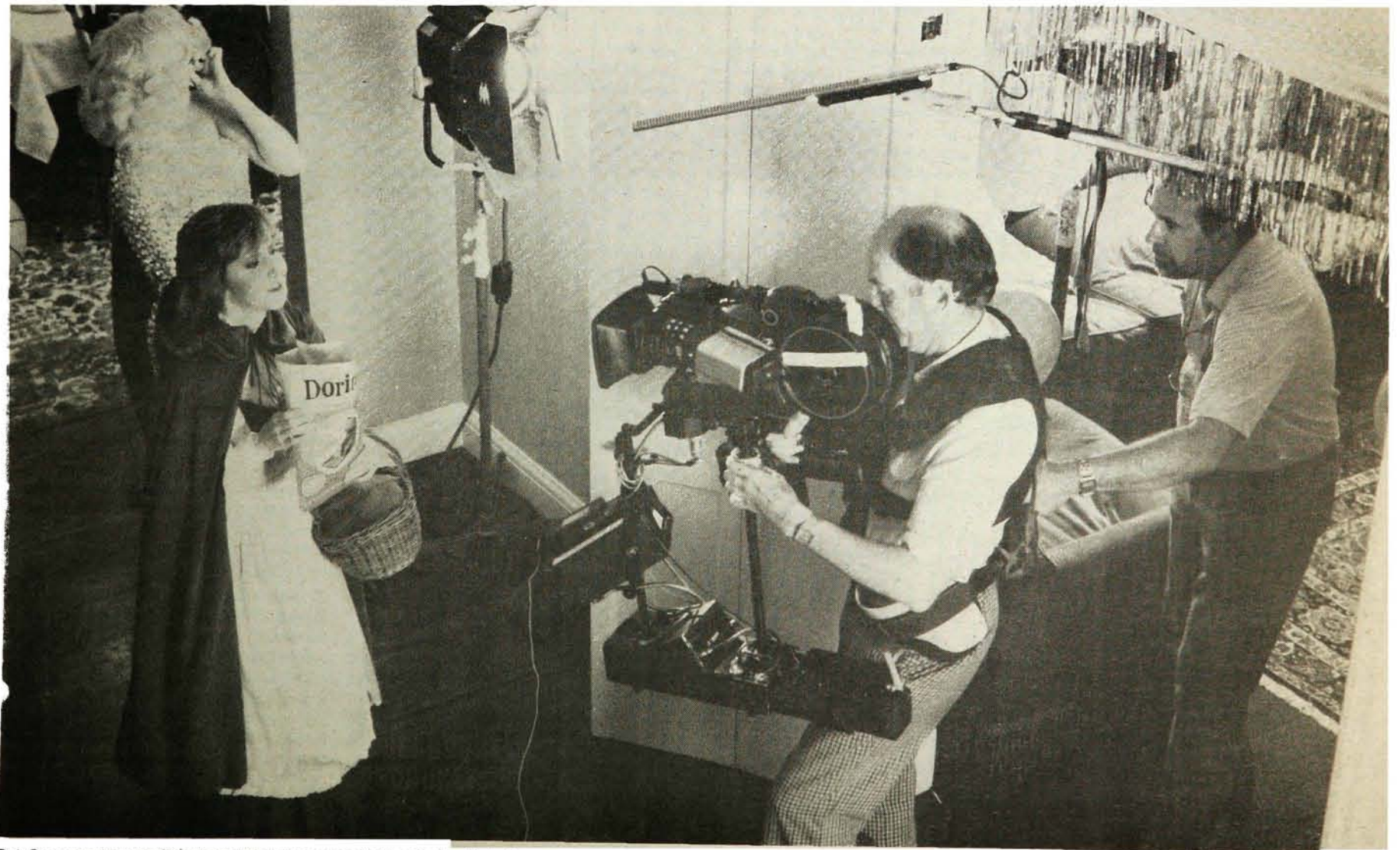
Since receiving your letter I have learned from two Superchannel executives that a *Memory Bank* deal had been in the works, but for various business reasons and what they termed a lack of communication the deal was

never signed. It still looks like Superchannel, in effect, passed on a chance to buy *Memory Bank*, but not for reasons based on the film's artistic quality.

I apologize for placing their actions in this context in my review. I misinterpreted events, jumped to a wrong conclusion, perhaps made an error in judgment. But I hardly willfully manufactured false information just to substantiate my views.

As for your other comments, be fair. You say this information could have been easily verified, but I doubt any Canadian film producer or television executive would ever admit to a reporter that a film had been rejected on artistic grounds. And be consistent. You say a program's business transactions are none of a reviewer's business, then chide me for not plugging the license to PBS. And while producers are entitled to take a negative view of unflattering reviews of their films, they are not entitled to misquote that review in angry letters, which you do in your third paragraph.

ERRATUM - In issue No. 110, two errors were made in the article p. 35 about distribution concerning the film *The Bay Boy*. As already noted in a letter from the Directors Guild of Canada in the last issue, the production did indeed sign a contract with the DGC prior to shooting. Second, the text stated that the film was being distributed by Orion. While this is true for U.S. distribution, the film is being distributed in Canada by Pan Canadian. We thank producer John Kemeny for bringing these errors to our attention, and apologize for them - Ed.



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