



• Nicholas Campbell in a business opportunity as Robert Kennedy

"The Kennedys, especially Bobby, pissed off a lot of people...Bobby thought he was being politically astute and doing the right thing, but he had no idea what he was actually doing," he explains.

"I think after his brother died he went through a tremendous metamorphosis. He started to realize that he couldn't just do the safe thing or the right thing politically. He had to analyze things more from a personal view and that's when he became this folk hero."

Asked about working on an American story being shot in Canada, Campbell replied that it really boils down to a business opportunity.

Campbell said he is completely opposed to Canada content regulations that he describes as holding back the development of "decent" quality Canadian productions.

"I think we really handcuff ourselves with that," he explained during a break from filming.

He says just because **Hoover vs the Kennedys: The Second Civil War** is about the Kennedys doesn't mean it doesn't have Canadian content. Campbell says it is written by a Canadian (Lionel E. Siegel) and is being "produced by one of our prominent up and coming

producers.

"This is definitely a Canadian production as well as an American one. I don't know that there should be a difference between Canadian actors or Canadian stories or American actors or American stories. I don't think it really matters.

"I consider myself an actor, not a Canadian actor," Campbell explained.

Despite Canadian content regulations Canadian producers and actors face as difficult a task as always, he added.

Campbell praised the organization of the production, the script and directing and added that he is really pleased when he looks back on the day's work.

"I don't think that Bobby has ever been portrayed as clearly as he is in this script."

Rod Steiger was originally cast as Hoover, but was forced to withdraw with Jack Warden now taking his place. Heather Thomas plays Marilyn Monroe. Robert Pine will play John F. Kennedy with LeLand Gantt as Martin Luther King Jr. and Barry Morse as Joseph Kennedy. Michael O'Herlihy is director.

The production wraps the week of July 7 with the mini-series scheduled to air on Operation Prime Time in November 1987.

Attracting Attention

The scene is the Music Gallery Room, Hart House, University of Toronto. Streamers and lanterns create a party atmosphere. A few couples are slowly dancing around the room, while others are sipping punch in clear plastic cups. At the back, seated on folding chairs, three young girls giggle self-consciously. A feeling of anticipation and fraternity permeates the air. It all seems so real...yet, there is no music and a closer look reveals a single camera, a dolly, scaffolding and film lights.

We are on the set of **Sandor**. The scene in progress is a parish hall dance involving the two main characters, Sandor (Paul Babiak) and Sally (Christina Holditch) as well as some 60 extras. It is intended to be a romantic boy-meets-girls scene and will last a minute or so.

In a corner, crouching against the wall, the director Aaron Shuster surveys the scene, a look of intense concentration and pent-up energy on his face.

Suddenly, breaking the magic spell, Ron Hewitt, the assistant-director, strolls to the middle of the room and starts rounding up the extras in a loud voice. "O.K., can I have your attention. We're going to shoot the dance sequence. But we need more couples, don't be shy ladies, find yourself a partner."

Beside me, a young girl dressed up in her party best, eagerly scans the room...as per usual there are more women than men. Looking disappointed she sits back and proceeds to check her make-up in a pocket mirror. In answer to my question, she tells me that most of the extras are friends of the director. Then pointing to an older man who is trying to round up more dancers, she informs me that he is Shuster's father. Near the window, there is his mother and over there on the dance floor, his sister. Everybody is pitching in.

As the evening progresses, the dancers' faces become blurred with fatigue...like in real life, some have taken off their shoes, others chat quietly sprawled out on the sofas around the room.

Everyone I've spoken to has expressed admiration for the crew and enthusiasm for the project.

"Aaron is a genius," says Babiak (Sandor), the production's only professional actor. "He's managed to reconcile me with a profession I was about to abandon. Directors like that are hard to come by."

Sandor will be a film about alienation. The story of a young Hungarian immigrant, recently arrived in Canada, who is struggling to adjust to a new culture and way of life. The film, seen through the eyes of Sandor will consist of a series of flashbacks. And through it will be essentially a psychological portrait, the production is filled with scenes of action, drama, romance and sex.

Sandor will have a total of seven scenes and will be 10 minutes long.

Written and directed by Aaron Shuster, this mini-film is neither the product of a short attention span nor of a lack of imagination but rather an unusual solution to a common problem: lack of funds. The idea came to Shuster after unsuccessfully trying to raise the money for a full-fledged project entitled **The Summer I Went to the Moon**.

Sandor is his attempt to prove that he has both the talent and the knowledge to direct a feature-length film.

"Each scene encapsulates a different film style while maintaining continuity," he says. "It is my way of showing what I can do, with a shoestring budget."

The son of a film studies teacher, Shuster developed an interest in film at a very early age. He made his first movie with a super-eight camera when he was 10 years old and since then his love of film has never waned. Prior to **Sandor**, he wrote and directed a short film entitled **Barbara** based on a story by Herman Melville, which was shown at the Montreal Festival du nouveau cinema et video and received a creative writing award.

Sandor is a tribute to determination and teamwork. It is a small project with big ambitions. The film has a budget of around \$50,000, part of which is a grant from the Ontario Arts Council. Most of the crew, particularly Ron Hewitt (assistant director), Marty McNally (camera) and Steve Tsushima (lighting) are friends of Shuster's who previously worked with him on **Barbara**. But though **Sandor** already has a slew of fans in Shuster's friends and family, what it needs is to attract attention on a wider scale.

And in the end, who knows, with **Sandor** to his credit, perhaps Shuster will have acquired that elusive 'track record' which often seems to be more important than talent to the powers that be, both public and private.

Josée Miville-Dechene •

• A scene of 'alienation' from Sandor

