THE TECHNIQUES OF CREATIVE FILM EDITING

(Part 3)

Final steps in preparing the edited film that enable the laboratory to produce the answer print.

WE CONCLUDED the second article in this series last month by stating that after all the tangible alterations have been made, in the processing of editing the rough cut, the narraion should then be read while the rough cut is projected; this will enable the director to determine if there is enough appropriate photography to cover each narrative thought.

Assuming that the workprint is pretty well edited at this point, and the effects are all marked, the next step is the actual recording of the narration.

Up to this point, the workprint is still "loose" so that the photographic matter can still be trimmed easily to fit the final narrative track. This is a popular method; many directors prefer to work this way so the narrator can more easily concentrate on delivery and emphasis during the actual recording.

Pre-recording "Musts"

Before the recording session begins, there are still a couple of mechanical preparations to be made: 1) the narrator's script should be neatly typed, orderly, and double-spaced—and incorporate all final changes. Revisions should be typed instead of left as pencilled notations on margins. 2) each page should then be attached, top and bottom, to sheets of blotter paper so that extraneous paper noise will not be picked up during recording; otherwise, the rustling of the undamped paper sheets will be difficult to control.

The narrator's cues should be marked on the narration script. These cue marks are usually slant lines in red pencil immediately ahead of all sections of copy that need to be cued to specific visual sections. Thus, the narrator may read to a mark and wait for the next cue before proceeding. (Incidentally, it is essential that a synchronous projector and tape recorder be used for this work).

Cueing The Narrator

Once the recording session has begun, go all the way through and complete narration, giving the narrator his cues to read at the proper points in the projected workprint. Meantime, make notes of mispronounciations, wrong emphasis, long copy, noise—any places which are unsatisfactory. After the entire show is recorded, go back and re-do the defective areas. This can be done with aid of a stop watch and by re-recording over the bad paragraphs or on a fresh tape. Whichever way it is handled, do the correction immediately and listen carefully for voice match. The delay of even a few hours can result in a very noticeable change in the narrator's voice quality.

The Printed Track

Once the director is satisfied with the complete track, it should then be transferred from the quarter-inch tape to sprocketed 16mm magnetic film so both sound and picture films can be placed in the synchronizer for the final cutting. The final check of this interlock, whether on a screen, a Moviola, or on an editing table, represents the last time changes in the placement of the narration can be conveniently made. An interlock check will rarely show that no changes are needed. More commonly, sentences will need to be shifted one way or the other, or scenes shifted slightly, often extended or even replaced. If the changes are extensive, a final interlock check is advisable before preparing the sound effects and music tracks.

When music and sound effects are required, separate magnetic tracks are prepared for each—again using the final version of the edited workprint for exact scene and overall length. For

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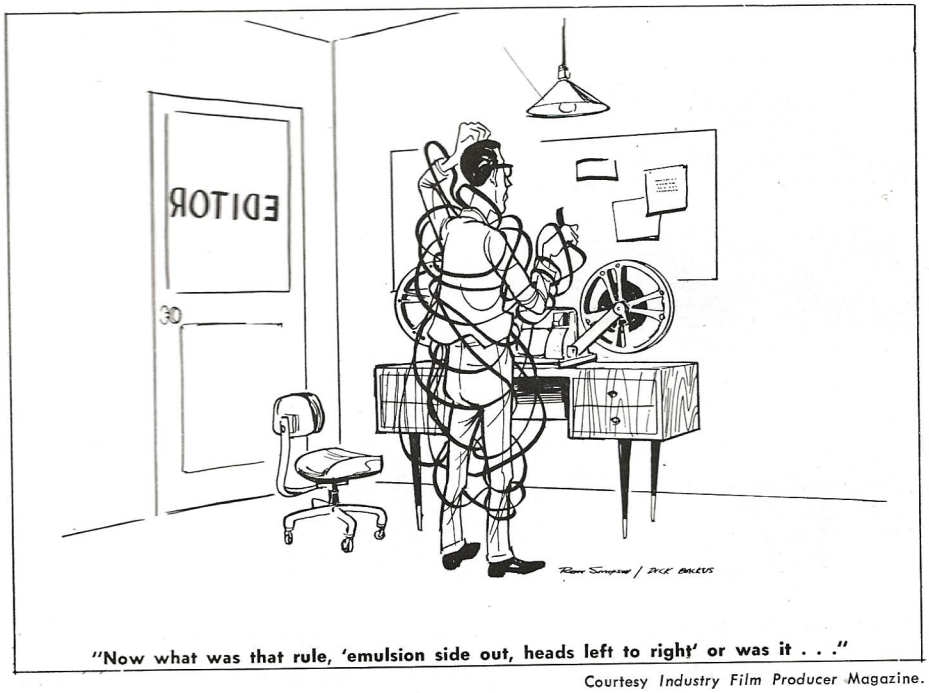

"Now what was that rule, 'emulsion side out, heads left to right' or was it . . ."

Courtesy *Industry Film Producer* Magazine.

SET LIGHTING

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does not tell us if it is the right ratio——that is, the lighting ratio we desire for the results we want photographically in a particular scene. When a cinematographer works on the basis of ratio figures alone, he subordinates creativity to mathematics. The man who wants his work to transcend the ordinary, wants his photography to show thought, individuality and creativity—won't depend solely on lighting ratios to get by. Creative cinematography depends on the photographer's ability, knowledge of composition, artistic tastes, knowledge of portraiture, plus the mechanical aspects—knowing how to handle the lights. One of the most important attributes of a successful cinematographer is knowing all the available set lighting lamps and what they will do—and more important, how to use them to produce the sort of lighting that contributes to true creative photography.

When you light a scene, you are creating an image or an effect that ultimately you will put on film. To thus create, you must see the effect with your eyes as you build your illumination. And if you have that intuitive perception and imagination that makes a good photographer, you'll know when you have everything just right, lighting-wise.

***Q*—Doesn't an exposure meter play an important part in lighting a set—especially in checking the lighting ratios? And don't all directors of photography rely strongly on their meters? Or do the veterans depend more on their eyes—their experience?**

A—Most all of the cinematographers I know read only the key light. They know they want the negative to print within a certain range—say 10 to 15. They have in mind, of course, the kind of result they want on the screen and this depends upon the quailty of the negative that is produced. A heavy negative will result in an entirely different effect, picture-wise, than a thin or medium negative.

***Q*—If you don't meter the fill light, just how is the intensity of this light determined for a given scene?**

A—After the key light is set, the director of photography generally backs off a bit to take in the set and then directs the placement of the fill light. The position and intensity of this light is determined by experience—by eye. I feel that a light meter is of little use here. It can record the intensity of the light but it won't tell you the result you'll get from the combination of key and fill light. When you add the fill light, there's nothing better than your eye to tell you how it's going to come out on the screen.

***Q*—It is your belief, then, that a light meter should not be relied on to give you all the answers to set lighting.**

A—That is right. Cinematography—of theatrical films, at least—is a creative art that depends on the director of photography's overall photographic ability—his knowledge of composition, lighting, lenses, the techniques of portraiture in lighting and filming close-ups, and the treatment of various types of backgrounds, etc. The mechanics — the handling of lights and lighting accessories and the camera and its related equipment—I think, is the easiest part of it.

(To Be Continued)

FILM EDITING

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synchronous music or effects, it becomes necessary to edit these tracks on the table.

The various tracks are then mixed together and fed to an optical recorder to obtain a photographic printing track. After it is processed, the final preparation of the rest of the printing materials can be completed.

Conforming The Originals

At this point, the edge numbers on the workprint pay off, in spades! During the editing process, scenes have undoubtedly been shifted and moved about to the point that the edge numbers (as far as sequence is concerned) are completely out of order. With edge numbered film, there is never a problem in conforming. The conforming editor goes to the vault and gathers all the original film connected with the particular show. He then breaks the original down into 400′ reels and labels each reel with the beginning and ending numbers in that reel. He then places all the reels by his editing table and begins conforming. If the first edge-number on the workprint is A 0643, for example, he takes the original reel labeled A 0400 to A 0800

and runs about 200′ into the reel, finds the A 0643 number and matches it exactly against the workprint and cuts in the scene—allowing sufficient overlap for whatever optical effect the workprint may call for at that point. This process is repeated until the cutting is completed.

The advantages of this method become obvious when one visualizes the laborious method of eye-matching picture content, scene for scene, from an average of 6,000 feet of original to 800 feet of edited but *un-edge-numbered* workprint.

Thus, with edge numbering, the workprint serves as a coded set of instructions, a pattern for the finished film. The original film is not spliced into a single roll exactly like the workprint. Rather, it is made into "A" and "B" rolls, one containing the odd numbered scenes, the other the even numbered scenes. During printing, the run with one roll exposes every other scene to the raw stock. The second run, with the other roll exposes all the missing scenes.

With this system, double-exposure effects, such as dissolves, wipes, double-print titles, etc., become possible. Furthermore, splices are concealed by the black leader which is used between scenes.

The completely-edited film is now ready for the laboratory. If approvals have been frequent and firm during preparation, changes should be of a minor nature. If the answer print results in extensive changes, a second answer print should be made for approval before proceeding with the release prints. ■

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DANNY THOMAS SHOW

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counteract the effect of this exclusively overhead lighting, DeGrasse has a 300-watt lamp placed low as possible oneach camera dolly. A Baby Junior with snoot is mounted on each of the side cameras to put sparkle in the eyes of players in closeup shots. The snoot pin-points the light at about 14 feet—the average distance for a closeup shot with a 4-inch lens. Each of