



***Artistic Directions: The Challenge of English Canadian Cinema
Past, Present and Future***

Speech delivered by

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THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TODAY.

I BELIEVE IT WAS FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT WHO SAID “THERE ARE NO GOOD AND BAD MOVIES, ONLY GOOD AND BAD DIRECTORS.”

BUT OF COURSE I DON'T BELIEVE THAT, EXCEPT WHEN I AM MEETING WITH THE WGC.

I AM A CHILD OF THE CINEMA... THAT IS TO SAY I AM OF A CERTAIN AGE WHEN GOING TO THE MOVIES WAS MORE POPULAR THAN WATCHING TELEVISION – PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE THERE WAS ONLY ONE CHANNEL IN OTTAWA AND IT WAS DIVIDED BETWEEN ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAMS.

FILM HAS HAD AN IMPACT (LITERALLY) ON ME SINCE THE FIRST TIME I WENT TO THE MOVIES – I WAS ABOUT 5 OR 6 AND MY OLDER SISTER TOOK ME TO A MATINEE IN OTTAWA... ANTHONY MANN'S *WINCHESTER 73*, A WESTERN STARRING JIMMY STEWART.

IT WAS WINTER, AND AS I WAS CROSSING THE STREET I WAS HIT BY A CAR.

NOT TO WORRY, I SURVIVED.

A DRAMATIC BEGINNING... BUT MY LOVE OF MOVIES... AND FEAR OF AUTOMOBILES... WAS FIRMLY PLANTED.

WINCHESTER 73 IS OF COURSE AN AMERICAN FILM – IN THE MID FIFTIES THERE WASN'T MUCH CHANCE OF FINDING A CANADIAN DRAMATIC FEATURE IN ANY OF THE MOVIE PALACES OF THE DAY.

THE NEXT DRAMATIC FILMGOING MOMENT FOR ME – WITH EQUAL BUT LESS PAINFUL IMPACT – WAS SOME YEARS LATER, WHEN AS A TEENAGER LIVING IN THE WEST END OF TORONTO, I SAW MY FIRST CANADIAN FEATURE.

IT WAS DON OWEN'S *NOBODY WAVED GOODBYE*, STARRING PETER KASTNER AND JULIE BIGGS.

DON'S FILM CAME OUT THE SAME YEAR AS A *HARD DAY'S NIGHT* AND *GOLDFINGER*, TWO VERY ENJOYABLE AND ENTERTAINING FILMS.

BUT THEY DID NOT HAVE THE SAME IMPACT... THEY DIDN'T RESONATE THE WAY DON'S COMING OF AGE STORY DID.

HIS FILM WAS NOT MERELY ENTERTAINING – IT WAS ENGAGING... MY WORLD, MY CITY, MY NEIGHBOURHOOD, AND MY FEARS AND APPREHENSION OF THE TEENAGE YEARS.

NORTHROP FRYE SAID IT BEST: “ALL CULTURE IS LOCAL AND REGIONAL, ROOTED IN THE IMAGINATION AND WORKS OF ART.”

A FEW YEARS AFTER THE RELEASE OF *NOBODY WAVED GOODBYE* – PRODUCED ON A MINIMAL BUDGET THROUGH THE NFB – THE CANADIAN FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – NOW TELEFILM CANADA – WAS ESTABLISHED.

NOW, MORE THAN 40 YEARS LATER THE LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY.

THE 500 CHANNEL UNIVERSE, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, THE INTERNET AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB, CELL PHONES, VIDEO ON DEMAND, 30-SCREEN MULTIPLEXES, GOOGLE, YAHOO, MYSPACE AND YOUTUBE.

A REVOLUTION IN TECHNOLOGY THAT MARSHALL MCLUHAN WOULD MARVEL AT... AND EMBRACE.

BUT I BELIEVE THOSE BASIC PRINCIPLES AND QUALITIES COMMITTED TO IN 1967 – AND THAT WERE INHERENT IN DON OWEN’S FILM AND DON SHEBIB’S FILM, *GOIN DOWN THE ROAD*, CONTINUE TO MATTER TODAY:

CANADIAN TALENT MAKING CANADIAN MOVIES THAT ENGAGE AND ENTERTAIN CANADIANS AND THE WORLD.

IN 2001, AFTER A YEAR OF CONSULTATION WITH THE INDUSTRY ACROSS CANADA, THE CANADIAN FEATURE FILM POLICY WAS CREATED WITH \$100 MILLION ANNUALLY TO SUPPORT CANADIAN CINEMA.

IT HAD AN OVERRIDING GOAL... TO ACHIEVE A MODEST 5% OF THE CANADIAN BOX OFFICE OVER THE FIVE YEARS OF THE FUND.

BLUNT THOUGH THAT GOAL IS, IT CONTINUES TO SERVE AS THE PRIMARY MEASURE OF THE POLICY’S SUCCESS TODAY.

IN 2005 WE ACHIEVED OUR GOAL ONE YEAR AHEAD OF TIME –
AND MODESTLY EXCEEDED IT AT 5.3%.

THE REALITY AS WE KNOW IS THAT THIS ACHIEVEMENT WAS
MAINLY – BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY – THE PRODUCT OF A
RENAISSANCE IN QUEBEC CINEMA. A RENAISSANCE NEVER
BEFORE EXPERIENCED THAT AT ONE POINT REACHED 26.6%
OF THE DOMESTIC FRENCH-LANGUAGE MARKET.

IN ENGLISH CANADA OUR SUCCESS WAS MUCH LESS
IMPRESSIVE – ACHIEVING A HIGH OF 1.6%.

A CONSIDERABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT NONETHELESS
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU REALIZE THAT AN INCREASE OF 1%
IN ENGLISH CANADA MEANS AN ADDITIONAL \$7 MILLION AT
THE BOX OFFICE.

OVER THE FIVE YEARS THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BOX OFFICE
GREW AN INCREDIBLE 600% – FROM \$2 MILLION ANNUALLY TO
APPROXIMATELY \$12 MILLION TODAY.

THAT SUCCESS WAS THE PRODUCT OF FILMS SUCH AS: *MEN WITH BROOMS*, *MAMBO ITALIANO*, *THE BLUE BUTTERFLY*, *WATER*, *WHITE NOISE* AND *THE CORPORATION*.

AND MORE RECENTLY THE HIGHEST GROSSING CANADIAN FILM EVER WITH \$12 MILLION, *BON COP*, *BAD COP*, FOLLOWED BY THE ONE OF THE BIGGEST OPENING FILMS EVER IN ENGLISH CANADA, *TRAILER PARK BOYS: THE MOVIE*.

TO PUT THIS ACCOMPLISHMENT MORE IN PERSPECTIVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT OUR \$82-MILLION BUDGET FOR THE CANADA FEATURE FILM FUND IS DIVIDED ONE THIRD/TWO THIRDS FOR THE TWO LINGUISTIC MARKETS, AND IS FURTHER DIVIDED BY FUNDS FOR DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND MARKETING.

SO THAT IN FACT THE PRODUCTION DOLLARS AVAILABLE ANNUALLY FOR ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CANADIAN FEATURE FILMS, INCLUDING CO-PRODUCTIONS, TOTAL A LITTLE MORE THAN \$40 MILLION.

BUT TO MAKE THE MOST OF OUR RESOURCES, TELEFILM ALSO COLLABORATES WITH INDUSTRY PARTNERS LIKE YOU WHO MAKE CINEMATIC DREAMS A REALITY.

WE'RE CONSTANTLY GATHERING FEEDBACK FROM OUR TWO INDUSTRY WORKING GROUPS THAT ACT AS AN ADVISORY BOARD. YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAMELA BRAND, IS IN THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE GROUP, ALONG WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE WGC AND ACTRA AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, EXHIBITION AND BROADCASTING SECTORS.

OUR WORKING GROUPS AND TWO INDUSTRY-WIDE IMMERSIONS IN 2006 (WITH THE NEXT FOCUS GROUP BEING ON MARKETING IN EARLY 2007) HAVE BEEN ADVISING AND SUPPORTING US IN THE CHANGES WE'VE BEEN MAKING.

AS A RESULT WE ELIMINATED DEADLINES IN THE ENGLISH SECTOR. WE CLARIFIED OUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR PROJECTS ON A REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL. AND WE MADE ASYMMETRICAL GUIDELINE CHANGES FOR THE FRENCH- AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MARKETS. IN EFFECT, WE HAVE FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THESE TWO LINGUISTIC MARKETS HAVE DIFFERENT NEEDS, DIFFERENT CHALLENGES AND DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS.

AND WE MUST THINK ABOUT HOW WE CAN SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF FILMMAKERS.

AS OUTLINED IN OUR CORPORATE PLAN – *FROM CINEMAS TO CELL PHONES* – THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE MULTIPLATFORM ERA ARE ENORMOUS FOR CANADIAN CREATIVE TALENT.

ONLY 18 PER CENT OF HOLLYWOOD REVENUES CAME FROM TICKET SALES IN 2004.

DISTRIBUTION PLATFORMS ARE PROLIFERATING, FROM THE MORE TRADITIONAL DVD RENTALS AND VIDEO ON DEMAND, TO THE INTERNET, MOBILE PHONES AND GAME CONSOLES.

MOBILE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ARE ACTIVELY PUTTING CONSUMERS IN CHARGE – WHAT THEY WANT, WHEN THEY WANT IT, AND ON THE PLATFORM THEY CHOOSE... ON OCCASION EVEN ON THE SILVER SCREEN.

JUST AS THE CANADIAN INDUSTRY CANNOT SURVIVE BY PRODUCING ONE PARTICULAR GENRE, A PROJECT CAN NO LONGER BE THOUGHT OF IN TERMS OF A SINGLE-PURPOSE FORMAT

SO, WHAT OF THE FUTURE...

TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD DAVID LEHRE FROM WASHINGTON, MICHIGAN HAS MADE OVER 50 SHORT FILMS WITH HIS BEST FRIENDS.

HE POSTED *MYSPACE: THE MOVIE* ON YOUTUBE EARLIER THIS YEAR AND IS NOW FIELDING OFFERS FROM SEVERAL U.S. NETWORKS AND STUDIOS BECAUSE HIS FILM RECEIVED OVER 30 MILLION VIEWS.

THERE ARE ALSO TWO YOUNG MEN FROM MADISON, WISCONSIN WHO PREMIERED THEIR SHORT *CHAD VADER, DAY SHIFT MANAGER* ON *GOOD MORNING AMERICA* AFTER PRODUCERS SPOTTED IT ON YOUTUBE. THEIR BIG INVESTMENT WAS A PIECE OF PVC PIPE TO CREATE THE VOICE EFFECT FOR DARTH'S LESS ACCOMPLISHED BROTHER.

JACK LONDON ONCE SAID, "YOU CAN'T WAIT FOR INSPIRATION. YOU HAVE TO GO AFTER IT WITH A CLUB."

WE'RE HERE TO GIVE YOU THE TOOLS TO GRAB THAT INSPIRATION.

THANK YOU.