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**FILMS FOR PAROLE AGENT TRAINING
AND FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION**

United States Department of Justice

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

Grant Number 348

John W. Young

Project Director

FOREWORD

The following report describes the experiences of a university teaching department of filmmaking in association with a parole and community services division of a state department of corrections combining mutual interests in the production of films for training and public information.

The objectives of the strategy were simple:

- To provide teaching aids directly related to the needs of a parole department.
- To provide films for interested groups and the lay public documenting what actually happens with agents and parolees in modern urban society.
- To provide an interchange of attitudes and ideas between the experienced professional correctional personnel and the somewhat naive, idealistically motivated, and bright university students.
- To provide an intensive, practical filmmaking experience for advanced film students.
- To establish a pool of filmmakers experienced in the correctional field and interested in

continuing this collaboration.

This report is the story of how these objectives were shaped, re-shaped, and set into priorities during the development of a grant from the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, U. S. Department of Justice.

Film, in its most basic analysis, is an objective medium; an object in front of a lens, an image recorded. Here the image is that of a parole agent and a parolee. Who is to be the agent and the parolee? What situations are to be recorded? How are these to relate to official policy, or to compare with ideal correctional procedure? This is the story of that cooperation, that trust necessary between filmmaker and subject before anything approaching 'truth' can be put on film.

Film is expensive and time-consuming in production. Hence this is the story of retrenchment in the number of films and students to be involved in the project. Too, state university bureaucracies and academic schedules are not attuned to film production, therefore frustration and changes become a part of the story also.

But most important, the story, in human terms, the dynamics of the project are found in the interaction between

filmmaker and agent, and filmmaker and parolee. That a warm cooperative attitude did develop is very much a product of the attitude of Walter Dunbar, former Director of the California Department of Corrections, and R. K. Procunier, present Director, along with that of Milton Burdman, Director of Parole and Community Services. These men have set a tone of freedom and innovation rarely seen in government agencies. This has filtrated to the lowest echelons and gave the filmmakers a fertile field in which to delve.

John W. Young
Project Director

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CHAPTER I

ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

From its inception in 1947 the Motion Picture Division at UCLA has been pressured by various interests to make films for the benefit of individuals, companies, and agencies. As a tax supported institution with equipment, facilities, and interested personnel, many people assumed that, like many other film departments in universities, we would be primarily a service agency with a peripheral interest in teaching, and hence seek outside projects for the staff. This was not the case.

We were organized strictly as a teaching department and have been that ever since. We became student-centered very early in our history and for the past fifteen years no film project has been done in the department unless it was brought in by a student.

In many instances projects would be brought to the attention of the students, but unless one of them volunteered to do the film, no further action would be taken.

Hence when Henry Greenberg approached the Division with his interest in corrections and his hope for cooperation with his friends in the California Department of Corrections, it was explained that unless interested students could be found no

project was possible. Informally the idea was broached to a group of advanced production students by John W. Young, Head of the Motion Picture Division, in the Spring of 1966.

Based on the interested response of these students a meeting was held with Walter Dunbar, then Director of the California Department of Corrections, Milton Burdman, Chief of the Parole and Community Services Division, Henry Greenberg, Colin Young, Chairman of the Theater Arts Department, and John W. Young. This meeting established the mutual interest and the authority to proceed to a plan of action. A committee headed by John Young and composed of Mr. Burdman, Mr. Greenberg, William Byrnes, then Administrator of Parole Region V, and Stephen White, a graduate film student with experience in parole and probation, was formed to implement a plan.

PRELIMINARY PLANNING

Obviously, several questions needed immediate answers. What area in corrections had the greatest need and potential for use of film? What aspect of that area should be presented? How could the students select their area of interest within this framework? How could they gain the necessary knowledge to make an intelligent, imaginative film proposal? If there were several proposals, how would the filmmakers be selected?

The Department of Corrections felt that their greatest need was in the area of parole, and within that area training was vital. It was hoped that films would be developed that would have multi-purpose uses based upon the innovations of imaginative training personnel. Recruitment of qualified applicants and the gaining of the interest, knowledge, and acceptance by the community at large of the progressive aspects of the correctional program were considered concomitant needs.

All of this was brought to the attention of qualified production students and volunteers were sought to make proposals. About fifteen students responded.

The students were introduced to parole work through Mr. Byrnes. Their specific activity was coordinated by Mr. White. The Summer of 1966 was spent by these students researching aspects of parole that interested them. They were free to spend as much, or as little, time as they wished. They traveled with agents, visited institutions, 'half-way' houses, camps, and sat in meetings and confrontations. A few who had the time and inclinations immersed themselves in the parole system for those few months. The end result was to be a film proposal from each of them.

CHAPTER II

THE PLAN OF ACTION

With many fine proposals before us the planning committee met in mid-October to organize a grant proposal. The following notes from that meeting summarize the plan:

1. We will proceed on the basis of a grant proposal to be made to the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance. The grant application is to be made by UCLA, with the University then to administer the grant. This decision was made following John Young's conferring with Vice-Chancellor York who indicated that the processing time for the grant through UCLA would be no more than two or three days.
2. The Project Director (known in University argot as the Principal Investigator) will be John W. Young. Henry Greenberg will be identified in this grant request as having appropriate supervisory responsibility and would represent the primary link between the University and the Department of Corrections. His official title as far as University designations are concerned would be up to the Motion Picture Division.
3. The first draft of the grant proposal is to be developed by the University, with the help of Henry Greenberg and Stephen White. Assistance as necessary can be provided by Parole Division personnel,

with the liaison representative being William Byrnes. With the completion of the first draft of the grant proposal, this may be sent to Milton Burdman's office for further review and suggestions there if necessary.

4. Our target date for the start of the grant is to be January 1, 1967. Accordingly we talked about the following sequence:
 - a. Between now and mid-November the three students selected for this film production would engage in further field work in paroles, to become further acquainted with the subject matter. In this connection Mr. Byrnes can help with arranging their activities.
 - b. Three subjects would be selected as film topics, to be explained in general terms in the grant proposal. Detailed outlines, if developed, could be sent as an appendix to the grant.
 - c. Director Dunbar will send a letter to Colin Young, confirming the joint agreement for this project and setting forth our general expectations. This letter would become part of the grant proposal submitted.
 - d. The foregoing steps we would hope to have completed by mid-November. They would

include the time for a review of the first draft in Sacramento, plus sending it back with suggestions, if any, such that the final proposal would be submitted to the UCLA Office of Research and Extramural Support no later than mid-November.

- e. The schedule would call for the final form of the grant to be sent to Washington no later than November 25th, hopefully earlier if possible.
- 5. Continuing liaison for the Parole and Community Services Division will be through Regional Administrator William Byrnes. As needed Mr. Byrnes will disseminate information to the Southern California parole offices so that personnel will be aware of the future activities.
- 6. The three film subjects identified above will be selected by John W. Young with concurrence by the Department of Corrections. The specific interest of Corrections will be to insure that the films would have utility as training and/or public information documents. This will be set forth in Mr. Dunbar's letter to Colin Young.
- 7. In the grant application, in addition to the Project Director on the University staff and Henry Greenberg with the appropriate title to match University personnel practice, the students would be identified as Research Assistants, part-time. Finally, it appears as though there might

be a need for some parole agent staff time on more than a casual basis, to work as consultants on the program content. It is suggested therefore that the grant request include part-time provision for this service.

GOALS OF THE PLAN

Perhaps the best expression of the goals is contained in the letter of confirmation from Walter Dunbar to the University:

"Looking ahead to the potential value of documentary style films featuring Parole and Community Services subject matter, I foresee their effective use in five distinct ways:

(1) Personnel training.

With the growing complexity of parole methods and the need to train many new and presently employed staff, we would have continued use for films on various techniques employed in parole work. For example, topics which come to mind are, making the complete pre-parole investigation and placement plan, importance of the initial interview immediately following institution release, group methods with parolees, Parole Agent relationship with family members, Parole Agent and employers, and many others.

(2) College and university student education.

"There is an impressive contemporary growth in college and university courses preparing students for work with adult and juvenile offenders. Films dealing with the essence of parole problems (seen both from the perspective of Parole Officer and parolee) would be a vital addition to curricula.

- (3) Resources for more effective information and treatment of inmates and parolees.

Films depicting typical parole problems, difficulties characteristic of persons newly released from institutions, could be of exceptional value as treatment resources. We would anticipate that films could be shown to inmates who would be scheduled for release and to parolees at various times in their parole tenure.

- (4) Orientation and counseling resources for family members, employers, others involved in the lives of parolees and inmates.

Fear, confusion, and misunderstanding often are the products of inadequate information or misinformation concerning crime, prisons, and parolees. Progressive parole systems feature the bringing together of family groups, employers, other interested persons to share information and ideas. The

"use of film media in such programs could make them particularly effective.

(5) General public information and understanding.

Part of the key to more effective crime and delinquency programs lies in the need for greater understanding and participation of citizen groups.

There would be major value in the development of effective films to show problems of the offender population in the community in relation to the expanded role of parole as a community protective and rehabilitative service.

The need for an enlarged citizen understanding and participation in correctional programs is great and could receive important stimulation from creative film subjects.

While a series of training, orientation, treatment resource, and information films would be helpful to us, they would also have much wider application for use of correctional organizations throughout the country which in the years ahead will surely witness a major growth in community-based correctional programs.

In summary, and as you already know, we in the Department of Corrections enthusiastically endorse the pilot project and look forward to our participation in it. Along with the film production itself, we believe

"it will have tremendous benefit in the further education of your graduate students in documentary filmmaking related to our often misunderstood field."

APPRAISAL OF PROBLEMS

In the development of the proposal, two major areas of concern became apparent. One was the student time and remuneration problem; the other concerned the production situation of interposing camera and recorder into sensitive agent-client relationships, as well as concerns about job security and career advancement.

Filmmaking on a professional level is a full-time activity; it was planned for the students to be so engaged. In nearly every case, the advanced filmmaker is an older graduate student with family obligations. Making the problem more severe is a University regulation limiting a full-time graduate student to half-time work, if he works for the University, which he would be doing under a grant such as the one proposed.

Several solutions were discussed: making them part-time students with limited enrollment; having them drop out for a short time and becoming full-time University employees; finding another resource, perhaps the Department of Corrections, to augment the half-time salary to be given to the filmmaker.

Since the students involved were eager to start the projects the final decision was made to pay them half-time and, under our course structure, to involve them full-time in the production of the films.

The second major problem is primarily one of attitudes and called for understanding, rather than decisions. The television documentary had become a negative example to the students by this time, hence they were most sensitive to the criticisms of such films, and determined to avoid the pitfalls if possible. They judged the ordinary documentary to be superficial toward its subject matter, glib and talky, with little, if any, attempt at depth of understanding or subtlety of idea or expression. They felt such films took a superior attitude toward their audience, and yet catered to the simple-minded and overly dramatic impulses which they associate with so-called 'Hollywood films' and network television.

Obviously, to avoid the pitfalls, the filmmaker, besides having a sympathetic and curious personality, would need to know his subject and the people so well, need to have their complete trust and cooperation beyond the normally candid relationships often seen in those who deal with society's outcasts and misfits, and need to have the time and production facilities to put all this on film. Indeed a difficult

situation.

The agent and parolee, for their part, must believe in the ultimate importance of this rather major interference in their lives and their relationship to one another. How will they appear in the final product? As they see themselves? As the parole supervisor sees them? Will they be summarily treated, used only as examples, and never seen as complete complex men? What happens if questionable decisions or practice is recorded? Will there be time for people to explain themselves in the film? If not, what happens to the man when the film is seen by his superiors?

Free and open discussion of these problems and questions were held over the ensuing months. Participation in the project was strictly volunteer and there were several changes of mind over the months of waiting.

CHAPTER III

APPLICATION REVISIONS

We received an informal response from the OLEA panel that studied our grant proposal on January 31, 1967. They were concerned about the articulation of specifics in terms of the training needs, how our proposal met those needs in terms of content and method, and how our evaluation component attempted to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the effort. It was also suggested that we may wish to develop an application contemplating one film, or one which offered alternatives of producing one, two, or three films with cost figures relating to each alternative. Again specificity in the description of each proposed film was emphasized, as well as ranking them in terms of priority of production.

At the same time we were informed of the probable lack of funds, even if the proposal were approved, until Fiscal 1967.

Taking into account the suggestions made, a revised proposal to produce two films over the period of one year was submitted on March 17, 1967. It was felt by the University in terms of educational investment to be uneconomic to propose less.

This revised proposal was approved by the Corrections Advisory Panel on April 7, 1967. It was asked that an advisory group or content control committee composed of university and correctional staff be built into the project so as to provide perspective in developing the theory base to support the pictorial representation in the films.

Such a committee was named, consisting of Bertram S. Griggs, Administrator of Region III, Parole and Community Services Division, California Department of Corrections; William T. Byrnes, Chief Assistant to Mr. Griggs; Maurice F. Connery, Professor of Social Welfare at UCLA; Henry Greenberg; and John Young as Chairman. In addition Mr. Burdman, Chief of Parole, joined the Committee as he could. A training officer and a representative parole agent were to be added later.

PROBLEM OF TIME AND THE STUDENT FILMMAKER

As might be imagined, a major problem of incorporating students into a grant is the length of time between submission and final approval of most grants.

By the end of the Spring term many of the filmmakers originally interested in the project were graduating or

involved in other interests. One of the three selected for the first proposal made in November had been hired by IBM to head a new experimental film unit. Another had quit school to work professionally; and the third decided to submit a script for his thesis and complete his terminal degree.

At this rate a new group would have to be recruited and made knowledgeable about the subject each year, if not each term.

BUDGET AND SCHEDULE REVISIONS

A new budget and schedule of production was submitted on July 21, 1967 to reflect changes in salaries and expenses required by the new schedules for the up-coming fiscal year. The substance of the grant proposal remained the same.

The next response from OLEA was late January, 1968, in a letter from Mr. Arnold J. Hopkins, Program Assistant:

"Several pressing questions have arisen relative to the revised line-item budget supporting the project plan to produce two thirty minute color films for parole agent training. Our remarks are based on a thorough comparative program analysis of several major film-making projects financed by this Office and supported by an

"evaluation of the instant proposal both as to substance and budget by a qualified independent consultant. ...

Our past experience has shown that as a rule of thumb, the maximum cost per finished minute of production did not exceed \$1,000 whereas the UCLA project has approximately a \$2,000 cost per minute of finished film. An analysis of OLEA film-making projects produced by both universities and television stations revealed that project costs have all been under \$300 per finished minute of production.

In a recent telephone conversation with Henry Greenberg of your staff, we were advised for the first time that as an integral part of the project, graduate research assistants were to receive training as specialists in correctional film productions. Aside from a brief remark to this effect in the original grant application, no mention of this was made in either of the two revised applications. It is, of course, possible that the additional training factors account for the inflated cost of the finished product.

Of particular concern as regards the instructional aspect of this project is that OLEA policy precludes trainees from receiving salaries while engaged in a training program. The consensus of opinion is that we would find it difficult, in view of our past experience,

"to entertain a film-making project the cost of which exceeds \$1,000 per finished minute of production. We believe that the training factor has a definite bearing on the 20 to 1 ratio of raw stock to finished production suggested in the Film Production Expense category of the project budget. A 10 to 1 ratio would, we assume, be well above the industry average for similar productions. If the training aspect was separated from production costs the \$1,000 figure could be reached. ..."

Further suggestions of lesser importance were made regarding the budget and schedule.

Extensive quotes are made from this letter because it was felt that the intentions, concerns, and goals of the original project had been misinterpreted and standard commercial film production, not even television documentary production standards, were being superimposed upon the project. There was serious concern about the continuation of the proposal; a strong response was formulated:

"We are not primarily a film production unit giving a few courses to excuse our existence within a University; we are only an instructional Department. Unless a project fulfills that goal first and foremost we have no reason to be concerned with it. It is the uniqueness

"of our Department, as well as the imaginative work of our students, that attracted Mr. Greenberg, Mr. Dunbar, and Mr. Burdman. We are internationally known and justly proud of our student work and our reputation.

Your budget analysis would seem to ask us to ignore our primary function and assume a schedule and budget competitive with standard commercial producers. The past few days have been spent in searching for alternatives; such as considering the proposal a faculty research project which might, or might not, involve student assistance. But frankly, the strong commercial tone of your budget analysis, and particularly your schedule, implies a far lower standard of creative research than our faculty is prepared to meet. Most of them are all too familiar with commercial production and its frequently boring, unimaginative result. ...

Film (raw stock) and time are two very important elements to creative filmmaking. Your analysis appeared firm on these points; are they negotiable?"

Our final changes in the proposal were submitted on April 2, 1968. They included shortening the project to six months; hiring the two original filmmakers as full-time employees -- they had maintained their interest and close contacts with the Department of Corrections and the University; making the budget reflect these changes, but still

maintaining the style of production originally planned. On May 24th we were informed that the Attorney General had approved the grant, now known as LEAA Grant Number 348.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRODUCTIONS

The two filmmakers selected were James Kennedy and Stephen White. Mr. Kennedy was to do the documentary film, following a group of agents and their parolees throughout a few weeks of their relationships. Mr. White was to do the scripted film using actors and non-actors, amateur and professional, in a series of scenes representing typical decision-making situations that an agent might experience.

The Advisory Group for the productions was Milton Burdman, William Byrnes, Clarence Blow, Howard Miller, Henry Greenberg, and John Young as Chairman. Others from the Department of Corrections and from the University participated at times on an informal basis, but were not involved in the final decisions.

THE DOCUMENTARY FILM (I'D RATHER BE A BLIND MAN)

Mr. Kennedy had spent so many months with the agents and parolees of Unit 3 that he was recognized as friend and confidant.

Unit 3 was supervised by Morey Green, assisted by Ted Fahey. The agents were: David Cephas, Lew Cosey,

Chester Jones, Mike Walgast, and Gene Arnold.

Each agent has about 35 men on his case load. This is called a "work-unit" load, generally made up of those men released from institutions with a program that prescribes close supervision; in other words, violence was generally associated with their crimes. The area covered was primarily South Central Los Angeles, though the parolees often worked outside this area.

The Unit was composed of very experienced agents, those with 5 or more years, and a couple relatively new agents.

The Unit was racially mixed, but the three negro agents usually had all negro cases, plus some Mexican-Americans, while the white agents had primarily white or mixed parolees. This appeared not to be Departmental policy, but rather caused by a new geographical assignment procedure.

Group therapy as a standard procedure was up to the individual agent. All but one had a group meeting once a week, usually at night.

The agents were assigned office duty one day a week.

And as a group they met every other week to discuss problems and parolees. Frequently parolees were invited to participate in these meetings.

Unit 3 was not a homogenous group with similar ideas and approaches toward parole work. Their backgrounds and beliefs varied, as did their attitudes, but they were most candid and cooperative during the filming. They had begun an experiment in team supervision in which two agents would work together on a joint caseload for a week at a time. This provided interesting meetings and the opportunity for excellent film footage.

The footage was shot over the period of one month, from the middle of July to the middle of August. Previous to filming, each person that might be included in the final product was invited to sign a release. Only those who did are in the film. They were told that there would be no forewarning of possible filming; the crew would simply show up with the agent at some time in the near future. Very few people refused to sign the release.

THE SCRIPTED FILM (CRISIS)

Though scripted several techniques were to be incor-

porated in the production. These involved filming in real locations, using professional actors with non-actors, using improvisation to increase the believability of the performances in some situations, and attempting to recreate specific moments most familiar to the people cast.

The situations selected were to represent common decision making areas. These were not to be resolved in the film; rather, at the crisis point, the image was to freeze, allowing the training officer to stop the projector and engage the training group in a discussion of all the factors leading to the crisis.

The Advisory Committee was most concerned with the negative aspects of the situations, and particularly those at the end of the film. This problem was resolved in the minds of the Committee in the editing phase of the production.

CHAPTER V

THE TRAINING GUIDES

The films were screened for various interested groups and used by training officers of the Department of Corrections in a few sessions before the development of the training guides. The final result is primarily the work of Clarence Blow and Howard Miller, two experts in parole training, along with Henry Greenberg and the two filmmakers.

Following are the guides:

CRISIS

by

Stephen White

A TRAINING FILM FOR PAROLE AGENTS

ON

DECISION MAKING

Produced in cooperation with the Parole and
Community Services Division, California
Department of Corrections.

Under a Grant from the Office of Law Enforce-
ment Assistance, U. S. Department of Justice.

Production supervised by John W. Young, Head
of the Motion Picture Division, Theater Arts
Department, University of California at Los
Angeles, California.

TO THE TRAINING OFFICER:

This is a film designed specifically for training and discussion. We are concerned here with attitudes and judgments, both of which are at the heart of parole agent and client relationships. We see what can happen when attitudes are not understood or handled properly, and how this can affect the vital business of making a good decision.

The film comes to grips with a series of typical, difficult problems. At the end of each dramatic episode, the film freezes. This is a signal to stop the film, turn up the lights, and start the discussion of what has just been seen. It means that an open discussion can take place immediately, while the problem is still fresh in the minds of the group.

The leading character in this film is a real-life parole agent. He portrays how an agent, though sincere and hardworking and believing he is doing a good job, ~~can~~ can actually miss the boat very badly. In the film, his role is to help everyone realize how important an agent's own attitudes can be. In solving the problems of his parolees he must realize how his own feelings, his own hang-ups can powerfully affect the parolee's attitudes and chances of making it in the community.

x x x x

AFTER FIRST FILM STOP
(Initial Interview)

(NOTE TO TRAINING OFFICER:

This is really an interview that doesn't "work." It sets a poor tone that will carry on into the future and make the agent's job harder.

The parolee has come to the office with the problem of having lost his job -- and he is apparently very hostile and accusing. But the agent shows a great lack of awareness. He is slow in picking up the indications of the parolee's attitudes. Most important of all, and most damaging, is the agent's own attitude. He came to work upset, dissatisfied, and underneath there lurks a feeling of hostility that affects his ability to act with compassion and intelligence.)

FOR DISCUSSION:

In stimulating discussion in the group, you may find it sufficient to offer a couple of questions like:

How do you feel about what you've just seen? Or --

What do you think about this interview -- what does it mean to you?

It is possible that you may want to throw a few questions into the hopper, as the discussion continues. They may or may not be necessary, depending on how aware any given group may be of the subtleties involved. But here are some suggestions:

How does the agent's attitude affect the parolee?

What is really the purpose of the initial interview?
And what are some of the ways an agent can meet its main objective?

How do you feel about reading the conditions of parole right away?

Why is the parolee so angry? Is race an issue -- really the issue?

How would you handle the accusation of being prejudiced?

Was this agent really sensitive to the true attitude of the parolee? What did he do to increase or decrease the hostility? What should he have done?