

GOLDERN RULES FOR PRODUCING

After having directed, with great success, in America more than 70 productions including film, television series, advertising and theatre shows, Ron Richards became unsatisfied with his work and began to rethink the whole matter. Director member of the American Directors Guild, president of the television academy (defending the rights of television writers), also the only teacher qualified by the directors guild to teach its members. Ron Richards, perhaps for the first time has listed the goldern rules which one needs to know to become a good director. A method which Richards has regularly taught to Hollywood producers and directors, has recently appeared in an intensive seminar, organised for the first time in Rome by INTERNATIONAL FORUM.

Of the more interesting points on the " Production Method " worked on by the director are: the ways in which to avoid going over budget: a control list for planning and achieving the best results: also a thorough dictionary of different types of cinematic terms. Of all the different subjects brought up by Richards at his seminars, the most original one is that of the " tricks " a director can perform to help the production save money. " You are talking about a real operation which a director has to do ", explains Richards enthusiastically, " dividing the screen-play, set, locations etc . The director must, above all, work out in advance how many days he needs to shoot and how many reels of film he needs. This is to stop producers getting hold of the script, preparing the budget and then going on to tell the director to finish the film according to the budget."

According to Richards, in America, it is not only the director who has the final say on a film, like in Europe, but also the producer." It is also true, though, that if a television series is successful because of a certain directing style, the other directors must adjust to that style, so in one sense the success of the first director sets the trend with regards to the production of the series and sequels. Generally it is the executive producer that finds the subject or article from which he derives the plot, then calls the script-writer, guarantees a star then presents the whole package to a studio. There is also the creative producer who thinks, writes and produces. Then there is the line producer who's job it is to make sure that everything is running smoothly.

A directors pay, in the United States, is around 25 thousand dollars for an episode of a television series plus royalties. The pay for shooting a film depends a lot on the budget and time needed in which to do it. It can start around 100 to 150 thousand dollars and can go up as high as one million dollars, which was asked to shoot "Die Hard" with Bruce Willis. What problems do American directors find themselves up against?

Ron Richards: "Other than the usual personality clashes and problems arising from the late start of certain productions, often they have to bow to pressures from the

television networks ie at what time will the film go out on air. But above all the royalties which a director receives are always the same while, infact, they should be calculated on the profits made by the television companies including on the advertising. Perhaps the problem will never be resolved as the networks are now losing out to Pay-T.V which is starting to come into the field of T.V. and cinema production. At this time Pay-T.V. is beginnning to become a real threat to the power of ordinary television.

The accusations with which Ron Richards has pointed at the majority of representatives of Hollywood productions are by no means slight. "They are people who seem to own the studios but, infact, do not know how to put a film together. They have no idea of the work performed by artists and technicians, nor do they know what a director does. They are business men and money men who have come to Hollywood straight from the world of finance. They are not awful people, just people who look on cinema only as business not as creative art. They have taken over the old studio system where producers were real film makers who loved the cinema. Nowadays all the artists directors and script-writers are freelance and get contacted one by one.