



who should start?...should I?...you don't care?...ok...this is Gerald Saul and I am sitting here with Brian Stockton, the renowned co-director of 'wheat soup'. so Brian, tell me, what am I doing here and what am I supposed to be asking you?

BEFORE WE BEGIN GERALD, I'D JUST LIKE TO SAY THAT THOSE ARE THE SECOND LOVLIEST SPURS THAT I'VE EVER SEEN. IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION, WHY DON'T YOU ASK ME HOW MY CAR IS RUNNING.

thats because i know how your car is running, we just went to Burger King. i am constantly reminded of that 'meal' as i can feel the flem in my throat from that shake. I think what our faithful Splice editor, Nora, had in mind when she asked us to do this two monthes ago was to talk about that film thing wedid last year. You remember, you spent the prize money.

YOU MEAN THAT WHEAT SOUP THING? PRIZE MONEY IS ALWAYS LESS SATISFYING WHEN YOU HAVE TO SPLIT IT IN TWO. JUST ASK ANGELOS HATZITOLIOS AND MARC LAFOY WHO HAD TO SPLIT THE BEST SOUND AWARD DOUGH. SPYRO EGARHOS SHOT THE THING ALONE SO HE DID'NT HAVE TO SPLIT THE MONEY WITH ANYONE, SO WHY IS HE SO DEPRESSED? COULD IT BE BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME A WELL PUBLICIZED FACT THAT THE ONLY THING HE WILL EAT AT BUGER KING IS THE VEAL PARMEGIAN?

but seriously, your car is running great. it's thirty below out there and i actually felt a little bit of heat inside there. that '73 gremlin you drive is almost as good a production veicle as that 1960 station wagon we used during 'wheat soup'. everyone should remember it from the very last shot in the film, oh, or am i giving too much of the story away? but back to this interview, do you percieve the writen word to be the best way of expressing our intentions towards the two dimensional form we were attempting in that film, this being written on relatively flat paper and all?

FIRST OFF, UH, WHAT WAS YOUR NAME AGAIN?

let me introduce myself, i'm the tall one. the tall talented one. and you, your the one with the car, right?

NO, TWO CARS. AND IT'S A 72, NOT A 73 GREMLIN. AS FOR THE WRITEN WORD, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS. NOW I REMEMBER YOU, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO GOT INTO FILMMAKING BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T SPELL.

thats right, not too good with the word, but at least i can operate a stapler properly. having any more problems putting those tommy douglas posters up? i'm stuck for how to get us onto the topic of our film again. (like we ever were).

COUGH! COUGH! EXCUSE ME, I CAN BARELY SEE THE TYPEWRITER THROUGH THE DUST.
SO WHY THE HECK DID WE SHOOT WHEAT SOUP IN BLACK AND WHITE ANYWAY GERALD?

well, if i remember correctly, everyone told us not to, it lowered the commercial potential for it, and the labs only processed it once a week so if we got rushes within seven days, we considered ourselves lucky. what more reason did we need to shoot black and white? the more misery we can bring into our lives the better. one thing i'd really like to know the answer to is 'whats it about?'. thats the one i keep getting asked. what do you tell them?

I EXPLAIN THAT I HAVE TO GO TO WASHROOM AND I EXCUSE MYSELF. WHEN I RETURN SOME HOURS LATER THEY'VE USUALLY LEFT, IF THEY HAVEN'T LEFT I MUMBLE A LOT AND SAY SOMETHING ABOUT A POST NUCLEAR WASTELAND AND SAM, THE LAST SURVIVING WHEAT FARMER, AND HOW HE TRAVELS THROUGH THE WASTELAND TO FIND OUT WHY THINGS ARE THE WAY THEY ARE, AND RUNS INTO VARIOUS SURREAL AND HOMOUROUS CHARACTERS AND SITUATIONS, AND THEN I APOLOGIZE FOR SPEAKING IN RUN-ON SENTENCES.

gee, thats a lot better than i can do. i usually speel off something about two and three dimensional spaces in conflict in a 75 minute metaphor which also pretends to be a story. that seems to get me a lot of strange looks and very few dates. so brian, don't you have any difficult questions for me...come on, do your worst.

O.K., WHO IS THE ONLY FEMALE WHEAT SOUP CAST MEMBER WHO HASN'T HAD A BABY SINCE WE COMPLETED SHOOTING?

i know that one, it was toronto based film director and actress, marsha herle who plays the sassy strutting gristle farmer who had the hots for ralph, who was played by some unkown. name that actor brian?

THAT WAS ME, BRIAN STOCKTON. MAYBE IF YOU WROTE YOURSELF PARTS FOR YOURSELF LIKE MINE, YOU'D GET MORE DATES. THE CHARACTERS OF RALPH AND SAM ARE NAMED AFTER THE CHUCK JONES/WARNER BROTHERS CARTOON CHARACTERS SAM THE WOLF AND RALPH THE SHEEP DOG. SORRY, THAT'S RALPH THE WOLF AND SAM THE SHEEPDOG. ANYWAY, THESE TWO CARTOON CRITTERS FOUGHT EACH OTHER TO NEAR DEATH, BUT WHEN THE FIVE O'CLOCK WHISTLE BLEW, THEY DIDN'T TAKE THEIR JOBS PERSONALLY AND DEPARTED FROM WORK AS FRIENDS. SORT OF LIKE CIVILIZATION IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOOD CHAIN.

the food chain, ah, i agree with the concept. and speaking of food, fred flinstone sure could pack it away. what i really don't understand is why he was so hungry in that episode where he was confronted by himself who defied him to try to live with himself, and went on to eat all of fred's food. in reality, the alternate

fred is just fred's subconscious so he really ate all the food himself and just imagined someone else did it. for more recaps of flinstones stories, who ever is reading this should watch that film of ours. like you told that reporter fellow, 'every aspect of life can be explained in relation to an episode of the flinstones'. that would sum up our cartoon references in wheat soup, unless you count the presence of anvils, a motif inspired by warner cartoons as well. i was just looking at some script notes from may/85 in which we had not decided on whether to use an anvil or a moviola!

THE EPISODE WHERE BETTY AND BARNEY FIRST GET BAM BAM WAS ON THE OTHER DAY, AND I'M SURE MOST CRITICS WOULD AGREE WITH ME THAT IT WAS THEIR FIRST BIG CHANCE TO DO SOME SERIOUS ACTING. I KNOW THEY FELT SLIGHTED WHEN THEY WEREN'T MENTIONED AT EMMY TIME. FOR THE RECORD, WHEAT SOUP IS A FILM BORN OF THE DEPRESSIONIST ART MOVEMENT, A TERM COINED BY ME, NOT BY SPYRO EGARHOS, AS HE HAS CLAIMED. SO I JUST COINED THE PHRASE, GERALD, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

darryl asked me that before the premiere. i explained to her that it does not mean that the films we make are depressing, nor does it mean that the films are necessarily about depressed people but simply that they are made by people who are depressed the majority of the time. 'cheer up' she would say to me. 'things will improve'. they wouldn't improve of course. in fact, one of the most recent developments is that the nfb lab says our neg is worn out and the splices are too thick. i'm told that people react in many different ways to shock, like when you lose a limb and are lying on the mill floor bleeding like crazy. i think it's funny. i laughed for half an hour after getting off the phone with that lab, and even longer in the ambulance. i no longer expect the worst, i live it. that is what being a depressionist means. the first official meeting of the depressionists was may 29, 1985 - just over two months before we began to shoot, and almost two years before we completed the script.

THROUGH SOME MIRACLE THOUGH, OUR WORN OUT NEG WAS ABLE TO PRODUCE A PERFECT ANSWER PRINT. THAT IS, A PERFECT ANSWER PRINT IS RUMOURED TO EXIST AFTER BEING AT THE NFB FOR NINE MONTHS. LIKE GERALD JUST SAID, "YOU CAN CREATE A HUMAN BEING IN THE TIME IT TAKES TO GET A PROPER ANSWER PRINT FROM THE NFB." BY THE WAY, THE REASON NFB PERSONEL ARE ALWAYS GOING TO MONTREAL IS BECAUSE OF THE LARGE HEALTH SPA LOCATED AT THE NFB LAB. HOT TUBBIN' WITH COLD BREWSKIES IN MONTREAL IS GUARANTEED IN THE STANDARD NFB CONTRACT.

i was talking to sandi happy, who plays 'al' in the film. she missed the premiere but i gave her a video copy later. she enjoyed it and showed it at the bar she works at. the jury is still out. she showed it to the staff after closing and i have a feeling no one watched the whole thing, or if they did, they were to drunk to absorb it. it's not really the type of thing you can watch at 4 am over a few stiff drinks after a long shift in a top forty bar. what is the perfect situation to watch 'wheat soup'?

WITH A CORRECT ANSWER PRINT. BUT SERIOUSLY, SINCE THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, "WHEAT SOUP" SHOULD BE WATCHED ON A COMFORTABLE COUCH WHILE CONSUMING ICY SQUARES AND A SUPER BIG GULP OF DR. PEPPER. IN THE "WHERE ARE THEY NOW" FILE, SHAF, WHO PLAYED SAM, IS NOW STUDYING JOURNALISM AT THE U OF R, WHERE HE'S LEARNING HOW NOT TO MAKE TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS LIKE THOSE FOUND IN THIS INTERVIEW. AND CO-DIRECTOR GERALD SAUL IS CURRENTLY IN THE NEXT ROOM TRYING TO STAPLE HIMSELF TO A BUST OF TOMMY DOUGLAS IN AN EFFORT TO GET MORE DATES.

and where is everyone else? mike benny who played 'ic' moved to prince george, b.c. where he is an on-air peronality on a radio station. some pick-up lines we needed from him, he recorded there and mailed them in to us. i'm still looking for robyn jodoin who played zeke. she is probably in town somewhere, caring for her infant and somehow dodging contact with us. i have not seen her in over a year and if she did hear about the premiere, she didn't come. i was a bit disapointed by the turnout at the premiere, even though we got a big crowd. we would have filled it if we had had any coverage before hand. patrick, who wrote an article on us for the paper. he didn't get our press release until the monday following the screening, even though i hand delivered them the previous tuesday. what else are we bitter about brian?

WE'RE BITTER ABOUT THE POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION OF NEEDING PICK-UP LINES FROM MIKE BENNY. HE MEANT LINES OF DIALOGUE FOR THE FILM. WE CERTAINLY DON'T NEED AND PICK-UP LINES FROM MIKE BENNY. AT LEAST I DON'T. BY THE WAY, MIKE BENNY HAS LOST WEIGHT SINCE WE SHOT THE FILM, AND HE'S NOT NEARLY AS SWEATY LOOKING ANYMORE. TIME TO WRAP THINGS UP, SO LOOK FOR WHEAT SOUP TO SHOW AGAIN AT THIS YEAR'S FILM WEEK. HAPPY TRAILS.

film week? is it coming already? oh joy, what a festive time, the decorations, the exchanging of gifts, the chesyetmans roasting on an open fire and the encounters beneath the mistletoe, it IS my favorite time of the year, march 13 to 19. seasons greetings.



gerald saul



BRIAN STOCKTON

January 8, 1988

