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The Cutting Room

By BILL BUELL

The scene is Nevada. The date is 1885. But "The Oxbow Incident" is a typical western movie in setting only. It is an intense psychological study of an extremely unpleasant but typically American social phenomenon—the lynching—of the men who make up the lynching mob, and of their victims.

Sleepy Opening

The story opens one sleepy afternoon in a sun-cracked cowtown. An excited messenger brings a story that a local rancher has been murdered, his cattle stolen.

The sheriff is out of town. In spite of the protests of the local judge an illegal posse is formed to find and hang the killers. In the middle of the night the missing cattle are found, and with them three strangers who are accused of the crime. A hasty mock-trial follows in which only 7 of the 23 men present vote against immediate execution. The victims are allowed to live until daybreak, then hung from a great misshapen tree.

The Wrong Men

As the posse rides away from the scene of the execution the legal sheriff overtakes them with the news that they have punished innocent men.

Although this is a story filled with violent action, the emphasis is not upon the action itself but upon the psychology of the men who take part in it. In the hours between the forming of the posse and the actual hanging, the character of every man in the mob is scraped bare.

Henry Fonda plays a stubble-bearded, whiskey-gulping, sexually frustrated cowhand who realizes the injustice of the situation but is too afraid of his own skin to protest very strenuously. Harry Davenport, a mild-mannered storekeeper, protests actively but ineffectively.

Frank Conroy, as the sadistic civil war veteran, dresses up in his Confederate major's uniform to lead the mob. William Eythe plays his effeminate son who hates the idea of violence but is too weak-willed to cross his father.

Also in the mob are a slobbering, morose sadist who ties the hangman's knots; a command whose dominating thought is to avenge the murder of his friend; and a Negro preacher who comes along only to pray for the dead men's souls, and to sing spirituals in front of their limply swaying bodies.

Producer Lamar Trotti and Director William Wellman achieve in "The Oxbow Incident" a unity of mood seldom attained on the screen. That mood is dark, somber and one of grim foreboding and smoldering violence. With the exception of the tattered ends of an old love affair of Fonda's, which are dragged into the picture for no apparent reason, every speech and action contributes to the general effect.

"The Oxbow Incident" is not a "pleasant" picture, but it is a very fine one. It is stark in its realism, penetrating in its psychology, serious in its intent.

Not So Funny . . .

A lesson in democracy came to the University Saturday night. She sang on the stage for an all too brief hour or two, and went her way.

Marjorie Lawrence opened her program with an aria by Russians, three other Germans, two Frenchmen, a Spaniard, an Anglicized German. She continued it with works by three and an American woman. All these pieces were presented side by side, irrespective of nationality. Encore numbers included compositions from France, Scotland, and Australia.

But the significant fact about the concert is that probably not one among the nearly 2,000 students, soldiers, and others who attended gave the matter a thought, nor saw anything remarkable in the representation of such a cosmopolitan group of composers. For America it was not a remarkable program. In other times it would not have been remarkable for most of the rest of the world. But in view of our present world of blood and fire, it would be well if we would stop to realize how fortunate we Americans are in regard to the arts, and how liberty or bondage in them directly reflects conditions of freedom or bondage in peoples.

How many of you remember that sprightly Broadway production of a few years back entitled, "I'd Rather Be Right"? This little comedy satirized the president, the first lady, and much of the rest of our government to a fare-thee-well. The paintings and pottery of emperor-worshipping Japanese repose in our largest art museums and galleries, constitute some of their most prized items. The movie, "Mr. Smith-Goes to Washington" took a healthy punch at government corruption to become one of the prime examples of freedom of expression in the grimy arts.

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These are rather obvious examples that serve to illustrate a fact which is before us as plain as the noses on our faces, and yet is missed by most of us. If you think the subject too self-evident to bother discussing, consider the contrast in Miss Lawrence's program had it been given under an American dictatorship. No Wagner—he married a lady of Jewish blood. No Schubert—he was a draft dodger, although you could hardly blame him, considering the discipline and conditions prevailing among the armies of his day. And no "Waltzing Matilda" as an encore—it might encourage the soldiers to complain about their packs.

Sounds ridiculous? You bet it does. But ridiculousness handed the reins of power, turns abruptly into tragedy. Let Americans be caught napping some day and have to live under this sort of regime, and they would find it not so funny.

—N.Y.

Little Enough to Ask . . .

Despite Shakespeare's cautioning, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be," we all borrow things sometimes. We borrow a quarter or a kerchief or a Kleenex. Nor do we usually, as the bard warns, "lose both loan and friend." Sometimes, it is true, the loan is not paid back. But we know, and the borrower understands, that when it's our turn to go a-borrowing, we will seek our debtor and demand of him what we want. That's what most everyday, small-time borrowing amounts to—the lending back and forth of little things like notebook paper or the use of a pencil. There is never any serious expectation that these things will be returned—never even any real desire that they should be. But—everyone knows this without discussing it—there is always an obligation between student and student to help when help is asked.

Perhaps, though, we should discuss it—that obligation to help fellow students when help is asked. Recently we've been forgetting that obligation we owe to students everywhere—not just to those from whom we've borrowed things, or those from whom we may possibly borrow something sometime, but all students. That obligation to help other students goes beyond "lending" them a cigarette or showing them how to do an assignment. The obligation one student owes to another is deeper and more fundamental and more important than the above-

UO Fix-it Plant Is Always Busy

Down by the railroad tracks at 1193 Onyx street stands the establishment that keeps the physical wheels of the University well oiled. Although a 10-year old grey wooden barn-like structure with an uninteresting aspect, the University physical plant contradicts this conclusion upon investigation.

"Presided over" by the man with the eye-shade storekeeper, Ben Wechsler, the physical plant is the most popular place on the campus when anything goes wrong with electrical, mechanical, or plumbing facilities in sororities, women's dorms, and the halls and fraternities occupied by soldier students as well as the University buildings. Leaky bathtubs, "overstrained" lecture stands, and blown fuses, are just daily routine to the plant's two plumbers, three to four carpenters, and three electricians.

Too Much Business

War conditions (arrival of the army trainees, priorities, etc.) have doubled the business at the plant and caused great difficulty in obtaining plumbing equipment, copper, iron, and steel especially.

The main section of Oregon's fix-it headquarters is given over to "storage." Under this general classification is amassed a collection of utilitarian Americana that is a second-hand man's dream. Lawnmowers, stoves, tables, a couple of cement mixers, pipes, bolts, soap, fire extinguishers, shovels, doors, chairs, and wire fences, not to mention a complete hardware store and

A Slip of the Lip

By BOBBI BEALER and LIZ HAUGEN

Reports have reached us of a rugged weekend spent by both civvies and army men alike. The Holland and Eugene hotel did a rush business Saturday night, due mainly to army pay-day, no doubt.

Gathering at the ever-popular room from Persia, were a pair of Sigma Chis, including Bill Johnson and Bill Lilly of the junior ROTC.

machine shop, provide variety of surroundings. No humans have as yet been reported permanently missing in this maze of equipment, although the men who take the yearly inventory were once not heard from for three days.

This Room's Full, Too

On the second floor is a room filled with little-used articles—old class records, files, a dusty Victrola, football banners, traffic signs, spotlights, stools, iron chandeliers, and clock cabinets.

In a corner a "Men's Pool" sign leans against a bathtub artistically draped with rolls of lemon and green crepe paper emanating from boxes on the floor. Here also are stored asbestos, cork, and window glass of all shapes and sizes.

Articles stored by the army at the plant include piles of blankets, mattresses, and a demonstration airplane motor—M.S.

Carey Woofter, Glenville State college, West Virginia, has on display more than 385 arrowheads, spearheads and Tomahawks.

It was Navy night Friday at the Eugene hotel officers' club, with one-strippers Bill Loud, Beta, and Bill Skade, Phi Delt, showing off snappy uniforms to their female companions.

Quite an Affair

The Spencer hall (alias the Pi Kap house) shindig turned out to be quite an affair also. Due to a confounding entry system, many of the "shipyard workers" present found themselves in the basement instead of the dance floor. Man shortage or not, freshman Milt Sparks found it tough keeping track of his date, lush TD pledge Marilyn Rackow.

Two in-the-service Delts who returned to the campus for a visit last week, got mighty red faces when they went up to take a look at their old house, Birch lodge. As they approached the doorway, a figure streaked across the living room in a fetching knee-length nightgown, with a large pink feather on her pin-curved head. Matters weren't improved much when President Georgia Dussin explained that the apparition was just Dorothy "Frenchy" Hermans' dressing appropriately for fun night.

In the Best Circles

They're still doing it in the best circles—getting engaged, of course. Check the sparkler ADPi Betty Davis received from Lieutenant Jim McGuire—it'll knock your eye out.

The Chi Os list a new ATO pin among their ranks—donor is Ed Allen, while recipient is blonde Dorothy Shepherd.

Strictly

"Strictly Instrumental" and "strictly smooth" was the Hawthorne lodge dance last Saturday eve. Musical notes, large and small, silver and black, covered the walls, while a musical score ran up the stairway. Practically an all-blind date affair, it turned out dreamily, we hear tell. And for a "purely platonic" friendship, Gloria Marchi and Gail Meyers friendly.

—J.N.

mentioned borrowing-lending arrangement, which is, however, typical of that underlying and more significant obligation.

The phrase "to help fellow students when help is asked" means all students everywhere who are in real need of help.

Throughout the world today there are thousands of students whose need is so great that we in our comfortable rut cannot comprehend it. Students have been driven out of their schools by German and Japanese bombers. Students are living in mountain caves, and in buildings half-destroyed by bombs. Students are studying in blacked-out cities. Students are near starvation because their subsistence diets will barely sustain life.

That is the obligation of students to other students—to help when help is asked. It is an obligation which cannot be denied or shirked. It is ever-present and continuing. The obligation will last while the need goes on.

The World Student Service fund is continuing its University of Oregon campaign. While we still can, let us give our fellow students a helping hand—that is the most important thing students can lend each other.