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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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

CHAPTER I

Origins of the Project	1
Preliminary Planning	2

CHAPTER II

The Plan of Action	4
Goals of the Plan	7
Appraisal of Problems	10

CHAPTER III

Application Revisions	13
Problem of Time and the Student Filmmaker	14
Budget and Schedule Revisions	15

CHAPTER IV

The Productions	20
The Documentary Film (I'd Rather Be a Blind Man)	20
The Scripted Film (Crisis)	22

CHAPTER V

The Training Guides	24
Crisis	25
I'd Rather Be a Blind Man	34

CHAPTER VI

Screenings and Evaluation	39
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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?

AFTER SECOND STOP
(Mother's Tirade)

(NOTE TO TRAINING OFFICER:

This is a pretty recognizable situation. We have an irate citizen, with a large investment, economic as well as emotional. But the key to the problem here is the agent's own emotional response. He's so busy handling his own emotional hang-ups -- he wants no conflicts, no emotions; he doesn't even want to see the woman. She threatens him, and he threatens her back. Never once does he concentrate on helping her.

Our chief concern, in showing this film, is to awaken the parole agent's own sense of awareness, his recognition of the part played by his own emotions and attitudes.)

FOR DISCUSSION:

You may find it sufficient to begin the discussion with the simple question:

How do you feel about this scene?

Or, what's really going on here?

Other questions, leading into more specifics, may be:

How would you handle this kind of hostility?

How does the agent's own hostility affect the handling of the mother?

How would you change the focus of the mother's attitude?
How divert her hostility?

What is truly bothering this mother? How can you best help her as well as yourself in this rough situation?

AFTER THIRD STOP
(Confrontation between Policeman & Mother)

(NOTE TO TRAINING OFFICER:

This agent has allowed himself to be caught in the worst kind of dilemma. He has two people in his office who should not be there together. He has allowed the woman and the policeman to take over his role, when he should be the one who is handling the situation with full command.

The impact of the total film is beginning to grow, as we see the agent becoming more and more the victim of his own hang-ups and inability to cope with a difficult situation.)

FOR DISCUSSION:

Again, the first question is a general one of feeling:

How do you react to this scene?
How do you feel about the Parole Agent, in this situation?

Others, suggested:

How should the agent deal with this conflict?

How would you handle the situation?

In what way is this agent contributing to his own dilemma?

How do you feel about the way the agent allows the police officer to identify with him in a "common cause"? Does this add to or eliminate the conflict?

AFTER FOURTH STOP

(Addict's Cop-out)

(NOTE TO TRAINING OFFICER:

Once again the agent is in a bad dilemma, through his own actions. Obviously, he has tried to play the good guy, the parent, right from the initial interview. Remember, in the film's initial interview, how the agent began by trying to be the "good guy?" By over-committing himself this time, he is unable to face the situation honestly. He really doesn't know what to do. This is an extremely sensitive area of a parole agent's work -- how to keep from getting trapped.)

FOR DISCUSSION:

Remember the scene in the coffee shop? It might be valuable to recall it to the group and wonder why the agent is so compulsive about being on the move, on getting to the next client's problem, without taking time to relax like the other men . . .

Suggested questions:

Do you think this agent has a good relationship with the parolee?

How is he really relating to the man?

How do you think the agent sees himself?

How do you see him?

How would you handle this problem?

AFTER FIFTH STOP

(Husband-Wife Conflict)

(NOTE TO TRAINING OFFICER:

The film continues to add up. The agent is constantly contributing to his own problems. He creates his own dilemmas and is caught in them. It's true any agent might find himself in such a situation. But it becomes important to anticipate trouble and forestall it as much as possible. In this case, the agent could have been more alert to the husband's return; he should have handled it quickly and properly.)

FOR DISCUSSION:

The first important question, then, is:

How do you feel the agent is handling this domestic "beef?"

Is he taking sides?

More important, why is he really taking sides?

As a matter of policy, how could he had avoided being physically caught in the middle?

AT CONCLUSION OF FILM

(NOTE TO TRAINING OFFICER:

The vignettes at the end, as the agent wends his way homeward, seem to indicate that all the people might have been using him to their own purposes. The black parolee, the mother, the policeman, the addict, the wife -- each may have involved him in his dilemma. Because of the agent's lack of sensitivity and awareness, he failed to react and come to grips with the true problems. If he'd been more perceptive, he would have been able to seek out the underlying motives and handle the situations more skillfully.

An agent has to have an understanding of how people feel, how they operate in the light of their own inner needs, not always what they reveal to him.)

I'D RATHER BE A BLIND MAN

By

James Kennedy

A DOCUMENTARY FILM ON THE DAILY WORK
OF A PAROLE AGENTS' UNIT

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.

1.

TO THE TRAINING OFFICER:

This film is a realistic documentary on parole work. It is a direct, honest study of a group of parole agents facing their everyday problems.

The film was shot with real-life agents -- a typical unit in the urban setting of metropolitan Los Angeles. There is no attempt to cut out or gloss over problems and differences. The parolees are filmed, as things actually happened in real offices, homes, places of work, in the cars and on the streets. Nothing is made up. Everything is "like it is."

In introducing the film to your groups of parole agents and/or trainees, you may want to point out that here is an overall view of what the guts of parole work is really about. Here too is something of the important teamwork that is involved. Some feeling of the different attitudes, different techniques and approaches. Maybe a realization of how complex this job can be.

The film will be followed by a discussion period. We hope that, with a lot of give and take, it will help "loosen up" the thinking and attitudes of parole agents -- "free them up" to consider things outside themselves they hadn't thought about before.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Just as each Training Officer may have his own way of introducing a film such as this, so you may want to lead the discussion according to your own feelings or the special nature of your own group of men.

In many cases it may be enough to throw the discussion into high gear with a single question. In others, it is possible that you may need to ask some leading questions.

The film is a complex one. But throughout there still runs a central theme: it is the team. The agents work as a unit. They function and perform together. They help one another solve the complexities and doubts of their daily work. They meet in staff to further resolve difficult problems. It all leads up once more to a greater awareness of themselves and of their parolees.

There is a training purpose to this film: to give a strong overall view of what parole work is all about -- the different and complex problems -- and how each man pursues his work according to his own "style" of life and yet be a participant in the team.

FOR DISCUSSION:

Possible Questions -

How did you relate to what the agents in the film were doing?

As a result of watching this film, what do you think is the agent's impact on the parolee?

What is the impact of parolee on agent?

What are some of the dilemmas you recognized in the parole agent's development of self?

What do you think is the agent's true role?

What is he attempting to do? What are the tools at his disposal?

What was the significance of the still photos at the beginning of the film? What are things the agent has to understand about life of the parolee before he came out?

What happens to a parolee, emotionally and socially, during his incarceration that are bound to affect his attitudes in society?

How do you feel about the group sessions?

What is your reaction to "staffing" -- the participative process in decision making and problem-solving?

What are some of the parole agent -- parolee attitudes that interrupt communications? Which ones foster better communications?

How well do you think these agents managed to cope with hostility?

How do they cope with reality, with facing harsh facts in their parolees' lives and behavior?

NOTE TO TRAINING OFFICER:

In addition to a general discussion of the Film, it is useful to ask the viewers to recall specific scenes or happenings -- ones with "impact" that demonstrate attitudes, skills, different techniques or special problems.

Some training officers may find it advisable to run this film a second time -- and to stop it at key points for immediate discussion.

IN ALL THIS IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU AS A TRAINING OFFICER NOT TO GIVE ANSWERS. RATHER, IT IS BEST TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION THAT WILL ALLOW THE GROUP TO COME UP WITH ANSWERS OF THEIR OWN. WE HOPE A FILM SUCH AS THIS ONE CAN LEAD TO THIS KIND OF GROWING AWARENESS.

CHAPTER VI

SCREENINGS AND EVALUATION

The following pages constitute the various screenings and the audience reactions as understood by the members of the Advisory Committee present.

In addition, letters from experts in parole, giving their reactions to the films, are included.

The letters are from the following people:

1. William T. Byrnes
2. Milton Burdman
3. Milton Burdman
4. R. K. Procunier
5. Milton Burdman

(Produced under Grant LEAA - 348)

FIRST FORMAL SHOWING: January 27, 1969. Audience included:

Department of Corrections Personnel (State of California) with whose cooperation films were made.

Parole agents and parolees, who appeared in films.

University of California staff and friends.

GENERAL AUDIENCE REACTION: Good to excellent.

Both films held complete interest of audience and provoked considerable discussion afterwards.

PROFESSIONAL REACTION: Complete approval of both films by the consultants.

It was their decision that these films could and would be used in California for years to come, for training purposes. In addition to the three sets of films authorized by the grant, five new sets were ordered -- so that each district of the state could have them for immediate training purposes.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

1. "CRISIS"

Virtually unanimous feeling that this was a fresh, valuable explicit approach to understanding the importance of attitudes and awareness in parole decision-making.

2. "I'D RATHER BE A BLIND MAN"

A realistic film showing things as they are. As a result, more complex and subtle -- but filled with many inner values for training purposes. The film brings out the realization that there are no easy solutions to many of the difficult human problems in parole work. So it becomes important to be more flexible in one's ideas and attitudes. Above all, there is great value in the team approach, in working out problems with associates and fellow parole agents.

IN ADDITION TO THE FILM'S VALUE FOR TRAINING, IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD HAVE SPECIAL VALUE FOR SHOWING TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND/OR TO SPECIAL GROUPS.

SHOWING OF FILMS AT SACRAMENTO, February 13, 1969

Audience included:

Several state legislators.

A number of top Department of Corrections personnel, headed by:

Mr. R. K. Procnier, Director of Corrections

Mr. Milton Burdman, Deputy Director of Corrections
Parole and Community Services

Mr. Keith Griffith, Chief of Research

Professional Reaction:

Strong approval of both films.

Belief that each in its own way can be an extremely
valuable training aid.

Indication that "I'd Rather Be A Blind Man" might
be useful in institutions for showing to pre-release parolees.

(SEE ACCOMPANYING LETTERS, FOR OFFICIAL REACTIONS AND APPROVAL)

SHOWING AT CHINO, CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR MEN, March 6, 1969

Audience included prison administrative staff and about fifty pre-release parolees.

Reaction:

Film stimulated discussion on the nature of parole and parole officers. Parolees felt it was a good film, an honest film, not "phony."

Staff felt film's value would be in presenting to pre-release parolees a view of parole agents at work, and in provoking honest discussion on what parole can and should be.

Suggestion: That film be shown and discussed with pre-release parolees and the parole agents who would be working with them on their parole.

SHOWING AT PAROLE AGENTS' TRAINING ACADEMY, California
Rehabilitation Center, Norco, California, March 20, 1969.

FILMS USED AS PART OF TRAINING SESSION FOR PAROLE AGENT PERSONNEL.

Shown to three separate training groups. Considerable time allotted for presentation and discussion of each film.

REACTIONS FROM PAROLE AGENTS IN TRAINING:

1. "CRISIS"

Unanimous approval of film as a training aid.

Provoked discussions on nature of parole agent's work, his attitudes, his reactions to parolees and their problems, his own need to be more aware of underlying ideas and motivations.

Excellent reaction to concept of stopping film at key intervals, for immediate discussion of what had been seen.

Expressed statement, by agents, that this was "one of the best training films ever made."

2. "I'D RATHER BE A BLIND MAN"

First, the realization that this is a totally different kind of film -- documentary in nature, designed for showing to general public as well.

As a training film for parole agents, it stimulates discussion on what is the true nature of parole work. Revealing the complexities of the work, it brings home the strong realization that parole problems

cannot be solved with easy answers.

A number of agents felt the film helped "free them up" a little in relation to their work. "You can't be so sure you're always right," said one, "when you know how often you can fail, no matter how hard you try."

Many agents were surprised at the amount of teamwork involved, the use of staffing, the discussion of problems among agents. They indicated this could be valuable to them. They felt they could benefit by discussing cases and working out problems with other agents.

General opinion that film would be most valuable, if properly introduced and led by training officer.

Use of accompanying text, with its provocative questions, is virtually a must.

Suggestion: That film be shown once for general reaction, then a second time for more specific discussions. The second time, it might even be valuable to stop the film at key points, for immediate discussion, while the topic was alive in everyone's minds..

To: John W. Young

From: James Kennedy

Subject: Additional screenings of "I'd Rather be a Blind Man"
 As a part of the evaluation trip sponsored by
 the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance.
 March 26-April 1, 1969.

Screening: March 27, 1969. United States Information Agency
 Washington, D.C.

I showed the film before an audience of 25 documentary producers and directors, staff members of the Information Agency. Their response was strongly positive. At the conclusion of the screening they asked many questions related to film techniques employed in the film, but they also expressed a feeling that many parts of the film moved them. They said that they had a real feeling for parole work in California.

Screening: March 31, 1969. The American Foundation:
 Institute of Corrections.

The film was screened for Mrs. Curtis Bok, president of the foundation and several of her staff members. Mrs. Bok has been very interested in correctional work for many years. She has produced, through her Institute, three commercially made films dealing with prison reform, courts and probation. Her comments were very perceptive. She felt that the film captured many attitudes which exist in parole work and, though she felt that many of them were working only in California, I felt that she would use the film in her many speaking engagements.

Screening: April 1, 1969 VISTA: Office of Economic Opportunity
 Washington, D.C.

The film was screened for the Associate Director, Thomas Powers, and his staff, in the office of Planning and Evaluation and Training. There was not much discussion after the film, though there were several questions about techniques used in the production of the film. In later discussions with Mr. Powers and his assistant, George Koch, many issues were raised. They wanted to know how the film would be used in training parole agents and how the methods used in this film could be applied to their training needs.

VISTA

They commented specifically on the use of real situations

and real people playing themselves. We talked about the problems involved in making documentary films for a client and the dangers of censorship.

They would like to use the film in training some of their volunteers who are being sent to work with parolees in New York City.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

PAROLE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

Rm 3014, 107 SOUTH BROADWAY
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

February 18, 1969

Professor John W. Young
Motion Picture Division
Theater Arts Department
UCLA - Westwood
Los Angeles, California 90024

Dear Professor Young:

I recently had the privilege of viewing, with great pleasure, the final training films developed by your students Jim Kennedy and Steve White.

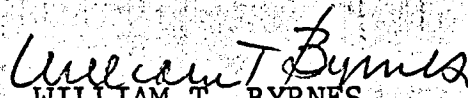
These documentaries will prove extremely useful in training parole and probation agents, as well as other case workers in the correctional field.

Other personnel who also viewed these films stated that they would be useful tools in the training of field and supervisory personnel.

We sincerely hope that the funding agencies approve your request for a continuation of funds for this program. There is a great need for this type of training film in correctional work and many other problem areas could be developed in the same manner.

Thank you for inviting us to this showing and it is our sincere hope that you are allowed to continue the project.

Sincerely yours,


WILLIAM T. BYRNES
Narcotic Regional Administrator

WTB/lf

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

PAROLE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

STATE OFFICE BLDG. NO. 1
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

February 26, 1969

Mr. Stephen White
Mr. James Kennedy
UCLA Theater Arts Department
University of California
Los Angeles, California

Dear Steve and Jim:

I suppose I should write a separate letter to each of you but somehow can't separate my responses and sentiments in reflecting upon the films. My desire mainly is to convey to both of you the tremendous satisfaction followed upon the two sessions in seeing the motion pictures each of you turned out.

The films were excellent - each in its own way - and they will be used to tremendous advantage in training. They also have unusual value for public enlightenment on very difficult subject matter, too often presented superficially and over-dramatized.

Steve, the work on the parole crises is a beautiful job for explicit training purposes. Motion picture medium is near perfect for reproducing the sights, sounds, and feelings which are so recognizable in the difficult problem situations depicted. When the film was seen by both working parole agents and other people, one could sense the "itching" to get into discussion and analyze what was happening.

As for the film covering the cross section activities in the West Los Angeles Parole Office, Jim, the response is tremendous. It is amazing to me how many people remarked about the superb "acting and writing" - which I guess is the ultimate and unwitting compliment to the truly documentary quality of the material being so authentic. The picture is good for analytical training and beyond that portrays a sensitive appreciation of the complexities, frustrations - as well as the balance and humor in the parole agent's job.

Both films are superb and quite frankly exceeded my expectations of what could be done. I feel very benefited for having had the association with the UCLA group and with both of you personally. My future hope now is that we can use these films as a basis for getting more resources to produce others which could be equally helpful in training and understanding.

Cordially yours,

MILTON BURDMAN
Deputy Director

cc: Professor John W. Young

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

PAROLE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

STATE OFFICE BLDG. NO. 1
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

March 4, 1969

Professor John W. Young
Head, Motion Picture Division
Theater Arts Department
University of California
Los Angeles, Calif. 90024

Dear Professor Young:

As you know, I have seen the two films, "Crisis" and "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man", but we have not as yet had an opportunity to use them as training aids in the Parole and Community Services Division and elsewhere in the Department.

After we have had such an opportunity our training staff will give you specific evaluations as to the effectiveness of these films as training instruments. In the meantime, I wanted you to know that I think that both these films are superb in their depiction of typical and difficult parole situations. Both should prove to be particularly valuable in training Parole Agents. I don't recall seeing any films in the field of corrections which portray so vividly and accurately the involvement of the parole agent in the day-to-day job.

"Crisis" should stimulate productive discussion by being illustrative of both a negative and positive example. The technique of the "freeze frame" at the moment of crisis it seems to me is an excellent method to focus attention and discussion within a limited but important sphere of time and action.

I know that "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man" was filmed without a script. The actions and words of the agents and parolees really reflect "how it is" in the life of some parole agents working in the southwest area of metropolitan Los Angeles and the feeling and reactions of some of the parolees supervised by those agents. I think this film can be most effective in stimulating parole agents and other correctional workers to examine their own attitudes and develop better insights concerning parolees in our rapidly changing urban society.

As a documentary film, I believe that "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man" can also help the public better understand the parole agent's job and problems, as well as provide increased awareness that parolees are human beings with strengths and weaknesses and varying capacities to live law-abiding productive lives.

I am looking forward to extensive use of the films in the Parole and Community Services Division and, if it isn't premature, hoping that our staff can collaborate with UCLA in the production of additional training films.

Very truly yours,



MILTON BURDMAN
Deputy Director

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

SACRAMENTO



March 5, 1969

Professor John W. Young
Head, Motion Picture Division
Theater Arts Department
University of California
Los Angeles, Calif. 90024

Dear Professor Young:

My recent preview of the two films "Crisis" and "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man", produced under your supervision was a really exciting experience.

I am certain that both films will be valuable training aids for the Department. "Crisis", with its "freeze frame" technique, should be particularly effective in helping agents focus on important issues in parole supervision.

I think that the realism of "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man" will make it a good training instrument for professional staff as well as an exceptional documentary film which should help a wider audience better understand the parole agent's job and range of problems. The impact of the real life parolees in the film should stimulate correctional workers to examine their own attitudes about parolees. Other viewers should gain more awareness that parolees, though former offenders, are human beings with problems common to many and diverse capacities to lead socially acceptable, meaningful lives.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. K. Procunier".

R. K. PROCUNIER
Director of Corrections

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

PAROLE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

OFFICE BLDG. NO. 8 - 714 P Street
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

July 1, 1969

Professor John W. Young
Head, Motion Picture Division
Theater Arts Department
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

Dear Professor Young:

In the approximate three and a half months since the Parole and Community Services Division received a number of prints of the two films, "Crisis" and "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man," both films have been shown to a large number of P&CS Division staff throughout the State. The films have also been shown to staff in some Department of Corrections institutions, and, in at least one facility, they were shown to a large group of inmates. Other viewers have included some California Youth Authority parole staff. "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man" has been shown to at least one college class. "Crisis" has been shown to staff in some county probation departments.

With little or no exception, "Crisis" has received favorable comment particularly as being a good to excellent training film for professional probation and parole staff. As will be noted below, "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man" has received a wider range of response from "very good" to "poor."

The use of the "freeze frame" technique in "Crisis" lends itself particularly to utilization of the film in training sessions. Stopping the film at the "freeze frame" permits discussion of the immediate problem presented in that portion of the film while the situation is very fresh in the minds of the viewers. "Crisis" is generally reported as stimulating productive discussion by the viewers in "What went wrong, why, and how could the Parole Agent have done a better job." The staff at the California Department of Corrections institution which permitted "Crisis" to be shown to inmates had some misgivings about allowing the inmates to view a film which depicted a Parole Agent as making so many "mistakes." Inmate reaction was positive, however, as they felt that the Parole Agent was trying to do a good job under difficult circumstances including significant pressures in his own family life.

One report indicated that "Crisis" was seen as being most effective with the newer Parole Agent. There was some feeling that the more experienced agent was a little less responsive as the series of "mistakes" seemed somewhat obvious.

July 1, 1969

Regarding "I'd Rather Be a Blind Man", at least one group of agents and supervisors had a generally negative response. The group felt that the film had little value as a training film for professionals and that it gave a somewhat distorted picture of the parole supervision so that it should not be used as a documentary to show outside groups. These agents felt that the film was repetitive, hard to hear on occasion and that some of the group counseling scenes were too long. There was also concern expressed that the film gives a distorted picture of the racial balance of parolees and Parole Agents. This seemed to be a minority view, however. Another group of agents thought "Blind Man" was particularly effective with the experienced agent. This group of agents thought the film was an accurate portrayal of "how things are" in the life of a Parole Agent and in the life of some parolees, particularly some minority group parolees. The film generated considerable discussion of parolee-Parole Agent value systems, the effect of prejudice, the role of the agent in a rapidly changing society and the like.

The inmates thought the willingness of the Parole Division to have these films made and shown speaks well for the Division and the Department of Corrections. This, in reference to showing "mistakes" of the Parole Agent in "Crisis" and particularly in "Blind Man", that agents are often perplexed, don't always have the "right" answers and are willing to admit it.

College students remarked on the effectiveness of "Blind Man" in showing the variety of difficult situations often facing the Parole Agent, the different roles required of the agent in his relationship to the client, law enforcement agencies, the community and the parolee's family.

"Blind Man" was seen by a number of viewers as worth seeing a number of times to be sure of recognizing the meaningful nuances. The film was also considered by some to be especially well made with the spontaneity of parolees and Parole Agents being particularly effective. The film was also described as a good example of modern film making of the "cinema verite" school.

In summary, for the most part "Crisis" was seen as strictly a training film for use by professional Corrections staff. Although some viewers felt that "Blind Man" was also a good film for training professional staff, apparently a larger number thought "Blind Man" would be more effective if shown to other groups as a documentary showing the varied roles of the agent and some of the complexities and satisfactions of the job.


MILTON BURDMAN
Deputy Director