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THE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION OF BOYS' STATE:

A DOCUMENTARY 16MM MOTION PICTURE

By

Richard H. Gerrero

AN ABSTRACT OF

A THESIS

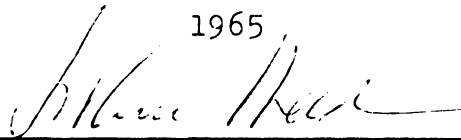
Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Television and Radio

1965

Approved

  
Major Professor

## ABSTRACT

### THE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION OF BOYS' STATE: A DOCUMENTARY 16MM MOTION PICTURE

by Richard H. Gerrero

This study consists of two parts, a motion picture film and this volume. The film is a twenty minute black and white sound film sponsored by the Michigan Chapter of the American Legion. It is a documentary film of the Boys' State Convention held on the campus of Michigan State University during the week of June 18, 1964. The writer was involved in the filming, scripting and editing of the film. This volume reports the problems of filming, the efforts of scripting and the techniques of editing the Boys' State film. The filming was done in a "newsfilm" fashion. That is, the cameramen were only assigned to cover specific events and thus did not shoot to a script or story outline. The script was developed from the existing footage. In addition to outlining a method of developing a script from existing footage and a technique for pursuing an abstract film style as used in the music montage, this study suggests that a creative thesis done while working in an actual production situation can provide the graduate student with a realistic and beneficial creative experience. It

seems possible to justify student employment in a production unit provided that professional standards can be maintained.

The production of the Boys' State film has provided the writer with a learning experience not normally afforded the student of film or television. Under the excellent tutorage of the head of Film Production, the project has not only allowed a realistic and beneficial creative experience, but has, at the same time, resulted in a professional quality end product considered to be completely satisfactory by the sponsor.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the many persons who assisted in the production of the film and the completion of this volume. I am deeply grateful to Mr. Layton Mabrey for his courage in hiring a conscientious but inexperienced student. In the production of the film, I am indebted to the members of the film unit who's friendly spirit and unselfish help provided an atmosphere of learning: Mr. William Hughes, production manager; Mr. Jack Leonard, cameraman; Mr. Ron LaMothe, sound supervisor; Mr. Harry Howard, location sound recording and Mr. Mike Gilmore, titles and artwork. The writing of the script and editing of film was possible only through the encouragement and tutorage of Mr. Edward McCoy. I wish also to express my appreciation to my advisor, Mr. Arthur Weld, for his confidence in the project and his help in the organization of this volume. And last, but not least, I do not know how to adequately express my indebtedness to my wife, Hildegard, for patiently proofreading the scribbled pages of copy and tolerating my neglect to family.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A creative thesis in television or film is a difficult venture, not that trying to do something creative is more of a problem than an objective search of history or an evaluative study of existing materials, but because of the tremendous equipment and facility demands imposed by any television or film production. Outside of his own abilities, the student of history needs only time, a good library, and a supply of paper. The evaluative study may involve an audience survey, some statistics, and perhaps several minutes of computer time, but even this is usually within the financial resources of the individual student. However, a student attempting a creative film or television production, once he has written the script or program outline, needs an extraordinary amount of equipment. The problem is not only that the equipment rental is far above the average students resources, but also that the equipment is simply not available for his use. Michigan State University has well equipped television studios as well as film production facilities; however, these departments have production commitments of their own and budgets that do not permit them to donate manhour and studio time to independent productions.

And then, there is also the problem of talent. Professional talent is expensive, and willing friends always sound and look like willing friends. And so, by the time the student reduces the program to bring down the cost of film or video taping, simplifies the script so that it may be handled by willing friends, sacrifices complex lighting and staging so not to offend the volunteer crew, and restricts camera action to that suitable to limited studio rehearsal time, he finds that the end product is not at all a representation of his abilities nor an acceptable product when judged by professional standards. Also the learning experience gained under these conditions is open to question. The natural tendency is thus for the graduate student to choose a thesis that avoids such complications. And yet, the experience of working with a full scale production in addition to a well planned program of formal classwork is a practical and beneficial venture for the student desiring to enter professional production.

Aware of these limitations and yet desirous of the experiences, I began to investigate the possibilities of work with a production unit that would at the same time provide material for a thesis. I knew that I would never be able to support the cost of a production on my own and thus an alternative was to find a production job on campus that would provide the actual working experience I desired and permit a situation whereby material for the thesis could be accumulated.

In my formal coursework, I was fortunate in having taken two cinema courses under Layton Mabrey, who was also head of the MSU Film Production Unit at that time. A good many hours were spent with Mr. Mabrey in informal discussions after the scheduled classes. We had often talked of the thesis problem; and in one such discussion he informed me that he was considering taking a contract with the American Legion to produce a Boys' State movie. A similar picture had been done for the Legion by the MSU Film Unit several years ago and they wished a new and updated film made. This production would be in addition to the unit's normal work load and thus would require some addition to the staff. The possibility of my working with the unit was discussed. This was the type of opportunity that I was looking for; the only problem was that, since I was a student, I would have to be hired at the students rate, which was quite a sacrifice when compared to my normal income. However, with opportunities of working with film production being far and few between, I took a three-month leave of absence and accepted a position as cameraman with the Film Unit. I filmed the Boys' State activity as planned and stayed with the unit after the three month period to work on other productions. In September of that year (1964), Mr. McCoy replaced Mr. Mabrey as head of the Unit. Under the direction of Mr. McCoy, I eventually wrote the script for Boys' State and was assigned also to edit the film. The

end result was a learning experience that would have been completely impossible had I attempted a production on my own.

Admittedly the greatest value of this thesis is the learning experience I personally derived from the project. Nevertheless, a reader faced with the problem of developing a script from existing footage may benefit from the experience reported particularly in Chapter III; and the technique of developing a free form musical montage, as reported in Chapter IV should provide a starting point for one interested in pursuing an abstract film style. It would seem that this volume would be of greater value should the reader have an opportunity to view the Boys' State Film. In addition to the sixteen prints in circulation through the Michigan American Legion Posts, a copy is available at the film library of the Michigan State Audio Visual Center.

If nothing else, this thesis seems at least to suggest a way in which the graduate student might approach the Master's Thesis and derive a realistic and beneficial creative experience in the effort. There is a fundamental and very real difference between being hired by a production unit and working only for credit. When a unit is paying an employee, the unit has an investment in that person. He must produce or he constitutes a financial loss for the unit. The student working only for credit, on the other hand, is indirectly a source of revenue to the unit and

can be tolerated provided that he stays out of the way and does not slow down production. Thus the student ends up observing the operation and writing a term paper. It is not that the producer or department head has no interest in students, it is simply that the unit has an obligation to its client; and even though the client be the chemistry department or the local school system, it expects and deserves a professional quality production. Should the department be forced to use any and all students signed for the course, quality could not be stable. Then too, a student is not normally available eight hours a day, five days a week, and thus cannot be successfully integrated into a production crew. However, when a student takes a full time job with the unit, even though it be only at the student rate of pay, the relationship between him, his fellow crew, and his supervisor undergoes a drastic change. He is integrated into the actual crew and, because he is being compensated, is assigned authority and is expected to accept responsibility. True, the quality of the production and the obligations of the department to the sponsor of the production cannot be sacrificed for training of students, but the close supervision and patience displayed by Mr. McCoy in the development of the Boys' State film has, in this particular case, provided a valuable training experience for this student as well as a respectable product for the sponsor. If this study be judged successful, then perhaps

future students will find the courage to undertake a similar course of action, and perhaps film and television producers in the academic environment will find encouragement in Mr. McCoy's example and give the graduate student similar opportunities--even though it might require more of their already overtaxed time.

The professional film and television fields are difficult to enter, somewhat like the prospective seaman's dilemma. You cannot sail unless you possess seaman's papers and you cannot obtain papers unless you have sailed. On the pages that follow is a report of my year with the Michigan State Film Unit. This report concentrates on the learning experience and practical training gained in the filming, scripting and editing of the Boys' State Film. The creative thesis done under actual working conditions may indeed break the seaman's dilemma; it has, at least, for this writer.

## CHAPTER II

### FILMING

It was 8 AM, and although the freshness of the morning had not yet worn off, the air was already heavy. There was no doubt it would be a hot day. The sky was clear and deep blue, an f/22 day. It was clear, too clear, not a cloud in sight. The shadows would be deep today. Reflectors would help but using reflectors in unscripted shooting is a most difficult procedure. The lighting man never knows what the cameraman wants to shoot and, without a director, it becomes an impossibility. This was going to be an every man for himself type of coverage. If you don't get it, well, they sure are not going to do it over just for you.

Twelve hundred and fifty boys would be arriving on the campus of Michigan State University for the Twenty Seventh Annual Convention of Wolverine Boys' State, and we were assigned to make a movie of them, a twenty minute documentary of their week of activity.

We loaded the equipment into the truck and headed for the Brody Complex. The boys were already arriving when we got there. Boys with baggage were getting out of busses, trucks and train type motor vehicles that the American



Legion use in their parades. We parked the truck in the center of the complex and a Kodak Cine-Special was mounted on top of the truck for high angle coverage. An Arriflex and a second Cine were used for ground coverage and close up action.

We had the equipment set up just in time to catch an American Legion train-mobile pulling into the area. I climbed on top of the truck, framed up the camera and followed the vehicle through several trees and into the area. The train made an interesting shot, coming through the trees with its bell swinging and great puffs of smoke billowing from its artificial smoke stack. Bill Hughes was in close with the Arriflex to cover the boys getting off the train, Jack Leonard was back a little way and got the boys walking towards the buildings. We wanted a variety of arrival scenes so we moved over to where the busses were unloading and then to the cars. By 10 A.M. we had shot about 800 feet of boys, bags and vehicles.

We then moved inside to cover the boys signing in at the registration desk. The registration tables had been set up in the hallway of Brody. The lighting in the hall was very low so we brought in six scoops from the truck and changed to Tri-x film. By using a ColorTran transformer on the scoops, we were able to flood the general area and shoot at f/3.5. We set up the camera for a long cover shot of the area and then moved in for some cut-aways of badges

on the table, boys signing the register and commissioners pinning a badge on a boy's shirt. We then moved up to one of the dormitory rooms to get a scene of a boy unpacking his bag and meeting his roommate. The small room would not require as much lighting as the hallway scene; and, without running long feed cables from the fuse box, only the regular 110 volt room outlets on 15 amp fuses would be available, so we took along a portable set of Lowel lights. This is a set of six reflector floods packed together with clamps, folding stands, barndoors and extension cords in a neat lightweight compact case, and serves very well in limited lighting situations. The scene had to be staged, that is, two boys were selected and told to walk into the room, shake hands with the roommate and then unpack their bags. The room was a little too small for comfortable shooting. Even with a 15mm wide angle lens, it was impossible to get a good view of the room, a view that would identify it as a dormitory room.

After lunch, we were back outside again to cover the city meetings. There were some twenty groups scattered about the grounds, each with fifty boys. Each group was a city, complete with flag. This was their first meeting and they were getting together, out on the lawn, to pick city officials. We decided to try a traveling shot of the groups. With the camera mounted on top of the truck and running at 48 frames per second to smooth out the travel,

we drove slowly past them. We then went close in on one of the groups for shots of the boys making speeches, voting, and close up facial expressions.

It was three o'clock by the time we had finished with the city groups. We would need the rest of the afternoon to set up lights for the evening assembly. We set up two kegs (2,000 Watt spots) and two scoops on the right side of the auditorium and two kegs and four scoops on the left. Special 220 feed lines had to be run from the fuse box and heavy cables laid across the hall. The lights were set to cross-light a large speaker's table in the front of the room. The table could seat about twelve people. The kegs were flooded out to get as wide a coverage as possible, and even with a total of about 10,000 watts, we could get only a  $f/2.8$  reading. This gave adequate lighting for the speakers table but it would be impossible to light the auditorium or take reaction shots of the audience. We built a four foot high platform on the left side of the auditorium about one-third of the way back and set up a Mitchell studio camera for general 45 degree coverage of the speakers table. A lightweight camera would be moved in and out of the center isle for head-on shots. An Ampex tape recorder was set up in the hallway and tied into the P. A. system. No system of camera-sound synchronization was set up. The plan was simply to record all the sound and then later match the sound to the picture where needed.

At the finish of the first days shooting, all the camera gear was placed in a special store room and locked for the night. The lights were left set up in the assembly hall; activity was scheduled for each day in the same room. To set up and take down the lights each time would require an additional two or three hours each day. The availability of a locked storage room also resulted in a considerable saving of time by eliminating the necessity of loading and unloading the truck daily to return the equipment to the studio.

The shooting schedule, day by day, was taken from the official daily program. Each evening, upon receiving the revised program from the camp office for the next day, the events to be covered were scheduled. Since many of the events were new to us, a camp counselor was usually found that was willing to describe the activity scheduled. He would also suggest the events that he thought would be the most interesting. Following are the events covered for each of the seven days.

Thursday, June 18

- Arrival of Boys
- Registration
- Dormitory Room
- City Meeting
- General Assembly

Friday, 19

- Inspection of Quarters
- Law Classes
- Band Practice
- City Election

Saturday, 20

- Flag Raising
- Breakfast
- State Convention
- Newspaper
- Jennison Field House Rally

Sunday, 21

- Church Service
- Band Concert
- Glee Club Concert
- General Election
- Inauguration of Officers
- American Legion Zouaves Performance

Monday, 22

- Radio Broadcast
- Clinics
- Wrestling
- Mock Trial

Tuesday, 23

- County and City Government Meetings
- Office Staff
- Post Office, Bank
- Talent Rehearsal
- General Assembly

Wednesday, 24

Speech Contest  
Football Clinic  
Retreat  
Talent Show

Thursday, 25

Parade to Capitol  
Governor's Speech on Capitol Steps  
Inside Capitol Building  
Commencement  
Departure

In addition to the above events, each cameraman was free to pick up events of interest when and where he found them. Many shots of boys in informal conversations, marching to meetings, talking to visitors, etc., were accumulated in this way. As can be anticipated by the variety of events covered, a good amount of film was exposed during the seven days--about 10,000 feet. The footage was sent to the laboratory for processing at the end of each day's shooting. When returned, in order to avoid unnecessary scratching of the original, only portions of each reel were viewed to check exposures and proper operation of the various cameras. The film was then stored away until needed. As there were several jobs in various stages of production scheduled for completion prior to the Boys' State Film, the original was not sent out for work-printing until several months later.

## CHAPTER III

### SCRIPTING

Late in September attention was once again directed to the Boys' State project. A series of meetings were held with representatives of the American Legion to determine the type of movie they might want. We came away from the meetings with a list of statements. There were points that they wished made and points that they wanted ignored and a list of events to be shown. The list of statements is given below.

#### Points to be Made

1. Give credit to the American Legion, Detroit Edison, Consumers Power and Michigan Bell for making the motion picture possible.
2. There were 1,165 boys attending Boys' State this year.
3. The boys ate well.
4. This is the 27th year of Boys' State in Michigan.
5. The boys are juniors in high school now, will be seniors next year.
6. The staff and teachers of public and parochial high schools help in the selection of boys to be invited to attend Boys' State.

7. The armed forces send men to Boys' State to act as counselors.
8. There have been over 700,000 men graduated from Boys' State since 1939.
9. Boys' State is not for underprivileged or delinquent boys.
10. Boys' State is democracy in action.
11. The boys learn first-hand how State government works.
12. Boys State may be small in size but it is large in purpose.
13. The American Legion works a full year to prepare for the seven days of Boy's State.
14. Boys make friends at Boys' State as well as profit from its unique experiences.
15. They enjoy the various activities available at Boys' State.
16. There are three types of Sunday religious services held at Boys' State.
17. Not all good things are on the program,--bull sessions, new friends, informal get-togethers, etc.

#### Points to be Ignored

1. Do not mention the current year, the film should be usable for several years.



2. In some cases the boys are selected solely by the principal of the High School.
3. The camp service office provides the boys with games and sporting equipment to be used when they do not have scheduled activities.
4. Girls' State at the University of Michigan sent representatives to visit Boys' State this year.
5. Sports should not be considered an important feature of the Boys' State program.

#### Events to be Shown

Arrival; registration; American Legionnaires participating where possible; assignment of room; introduction of Boys' Nation President, Richard Stratton, by Mr. C. O. Hammond; nominations for city and county officials; voting; various clinics; talks given by various VIP's; feeding boys; visiting parents; newspaper; entertaining parents; election and campaigning for governor; voting; office personnel; getting mail; banking; mock trial; first aid; band boys pledging to flag; heads bowed in prayer; reveille; retreat; fun night; marching to Capitol; graduation; awards; packing and leaving Boys' State.

#### Film Length

The film length should be between 16 and 20 minutes so that it can be used at dinner and luncheon meetings.

Audience

Future candidates for Boys' State, American Legion Posts, and other service clubs and organizations.

The above list was not intended to be a required list of points necessary for the film but more of a suggested list of items that the sponsor felt should be included. It must be remembered that the actual footage had been shot some three months earlier and it was quite possible that there would not be pictures available for some of the points mentioned. In this case, it was felt that the points could be made, nevertheless, through the narration.

Viewing the Footage

With the list of suggested statements from the sponsor, the next step was the viewing of the total footage. The original film had been work-printed and thus could be handled and viewed as much as wanted without danger of damaging or scratching the original. Along with viewing, discussions with Mr. McCoy and Mr. Leonard were quite frequent, and since there was a total of about ten thousand feet, the viewing took almost a week. The purpose of the discussions was to evaluate the technical quality of the various takes and also to identify scenes that could be used in support of the points suggested by the sponsors. A log of footage was kept by Mr. Leonard. This was an important step, for the various scenes were

not on the reels in any particular order. Several takes of a breakfast scene might be on reel three while close ups of the same scene taken with a different camera might have been printed on reel seven. The viewing functioned to find out what you had, how good it was, and where you could find it when you wanted it.

In the viewing of the footage, even though the scenes are random, one starts to develop impressions of the total footage. One such impression to the disorganized footage was that Boys' State was a military type of training camp. This, no doubt, was caused by the abundance of marching scenes present in the footage. It is a natural tendency for cameramen to be attracted to moving subjects. Since several cameramen were working independently through the week, each attracted by scenes of boys marching to chow, to meetings, etc., the coverage of marching was disproportionate to coverage of other activities. In fact, when the footage was broken down, almost 40 per cent of the total footage involved some type of marching. It was obvious that care would need to be taken in the writing and in the editing in order not to give Boys' State a military look. It is interesting to note that a substantial financial saving in film and work print could have been realized if marching footage had been limited or controlled. This may be one of the stronger arguments for pre-scripting. However, one could argue that raw film is probably the

least expensive item in a film production and also that if the total footage had a military flavor, this was, in fact, the way it appeared to a documentary cameraman. In this case though, the sponsor's interests had to be served and a military youth camp flavor was not felt to be in the sponsor's interest.

### Breakdown of the Footage

After viewing the workprint, the next step was to break down the footage into some useful grouping of subject matter. This was necessary before any attempt at editing was made; for, as mentioned earlier, various scenes of the same subject and even various takes of the same scene were often found in different reels of the workprint. Should an editor wish to put together a one minute breakfast scene, he would first have to go through the entire ten thousand feet of workprint and collect all the breakfast footage. The breakdown is simply the cutting out of the various subjects from the 1,000 foot workprint reels and placing the scenes of like subject together. This is also a useful step for the script-writer. It is hard to know how much time can be spent on food service until you know how much footage you have and of which meals. In this case, breakfast was the only meal covered and the total footage was quite limited. Working from the viewing log, scenes were combined under headings and sub-headings until sixteen major categories were developed. The pigeon-hole breakdown

file available in the editing room made it impractical to use more than sixteen categories. The classifications used were as follows:

- A. Arrival, Registration, Boys with Bags, Autos, Buses
- B. Room Scenes--Unpacking, In Bed, Visiting, Inspection
- C. Marching--General
- D. Marching--Reveille, Retreat
- E. Outdoor City Meetings
- F. State Conventions, County Party Meetings
- G. Campaigning,--Jennison Rally, Posters
- H. General Assemblies--Welcome, Commencement, Oath of Office
- I. Special Assemblies--Variety Show, Mock Trial, Zouaves
- J. Voting
- K. Visitors Day--Visitors Outside, Church Service, Concert
- L. Activities--Wrestling, Football, Lectures, Newspaper, Radio
- M. Services--Bank, Post Office, Nurse, Office Staff
- N. Parade to Capitol--Outside Capitol, Inside Capitol
- O. Departure--Boys with Bags, Autos, Parents
- P. Miscellaneous Events--Breakfast, Commissioners, Individuals

Once the footage had been broken down, it was possible to view all of a given category for editing and scripting consideration.

Boundaries of the Story

The first consideration of scripting was establishing or limiting the stage of activity. There is a lot of the Boys' State story that takes place outside the week spent on the campus of Michigan State. Legionnaires work all year making arrangements for the physical accommodations needed at M.S.U. Committees meet in almost every city in Michigan to pick candidates. Individual boys and their parents consider the merits and values of Boys' State before they attend and, after the week of activity, they retain some impression of it. All this, and no doubt much more, is involved in the story, and although it is possible to touch on many things in a rather short period of time, it would also be possible to do a twenty minute movie on the personality conflicts found in but one committee meeting. It was thus necessary, early in the scripting, to make some tentative boundary of activity and time. The stage of action was to some extent already determined by the footage that had been collected. This footage was limited to the one week of activity found at the convention held on the campus of Michigan State. Even so, it would be possible to visit the home of a Boy Stater or a committee member and thus extend the boundaries of the story. This would involve additional shooting and of course additional expense. Several meetings were held at which alternatives to the

story line were considered. One approach considered was to find a former Boy stater who had since gained national prominence in sports or business, start the picture in his office and let him narrate the activities. He, of course, would be able to say or imply how the week was of value to him. Another approach was to have a boy, returning from the week of activity, visit with a group of his high school friends and tell them about his experience. Many other approaches were considered, however, none seemed impressive enough to warrant the expense of additional shooting. A decision was thus made to limit the story to the footage on hand--that is, the week on the campus of Michigan State.

#### Time Order

Although it had been decided to limit the story to the week of activity previously recorded, it would not be necessary to tell the story in the order in which it had happened. The story could start at virtually any point in the week and then the various activities related to this point. It would be possible, for example, to start on the last day of Boys' State, the march to the Capitol. As the march progressed (and we had plenty of parade footage), the various events that led up to this day could be reviewed. It would also be possible to start the movie at the inauguration ceremony of the newly elected boy

Governor receiving his oath of office. Or the first scene could have been the boy Governor sitting at Governor Romney's desk. The importance of picking the right opening scene is that it allows you to place the audience immediately in a key or high interest situation. The first scene can also announce who and what will be important in the movie. It seemed, if the inauguration scene were to be used as the first scene, that the key concept would be the winning of the election and that the value of Boys' State to the individual boy would be in terms of whether or not he was able to win. This was not the effect wanted from the movie and thus a more or less natural time order pattern was eventually decided on. The week, and the movie, started with the boys arriving at Michigan State and ended with them departing for home. All political activity was presented in the actual sequential time order; however, sports and other activities were handled together regardless of when they took place in the week in order to deal with them more quickly and to avoid conflict with the political development sequence.

#### Story Viewpoint

Another pre-scripting consideration was the story viewpoint, that is, who would be telling the story. Several viewpoints would be possible; a boy who had lived through the event; a news commentator who had watched the event; an



American Legionnaire that had planned the event; a parent who had visited the event; or even a building janitor that had been inconvenienced by the event. The most interesting person to talk about the event seemed to be a boy experiencing or who had experienced the week. Also, if we were allowed to hear the boy tell the story, it might be possible to develop some sort of individualism and in part offset the mass of impersonal effect previously noticed in the viewing of the work print. This coldness was felt to be due to the abundance of mass scenes, of groups of boys doing this and groups of boys doing that, and very little attention to individuals. If it were possible to develop a likable, believable boy in the sound track, the camp-like effect of the footage might be softened. Now it must be remembered that no single boy was followed throughout the week and thus the created boy would have to exist without being visually identified. It was felt that this could be done if care was taken not to have the boy speak at the same time that an individual boy might be on the screen for any extended period of time. This consideration was most important early in the movie. If the boy's voice were to be heard for the first time at the exact time that a close up of some boy were to come on the screen, then the audience would assume that this is the boy that is doing the talking. However, if the voice were first introduced over a crowd scene of boys, there would be no attempt

to tie the voice to any particular boy. Once the audience got the idea that they were not seeing the boy that was speaking, more liberties could be taken. The boy, if handled properly, could be each boy and every boy at the same time.

One of the problems that became apparent in the first attempt to write a boy's story was that there were many things that had to be said that would not seem likely or believable coming from a teenage boy. The boy could say how he felt about what he did and what he saw, but he certainly would be too young to comment on the value of simulated experience as opposed to classroom discussions in the learning about American democratic processes. You would not expect him to know much about the history and development of Boys' State nor the exact number of boys attending. He would be more likely to have the impression that there were just a lot of boys there. For this reason the first draft utilized two viewpoints. In addition to the boys' viewpoint, a second viewpoint, that of an adult commentator, was used. The final draft, some eight rewrites later, ended up with a total of four viewpoints, that is, four separate voices on the narration track. These four viewpoints were: (1) The boy with an impressionistic viewpoint; (2) A typical narrator with a film makers viewpoint; (3) A Boys' State organizer with a philosophical viewpoint; (4) Actual sound recordings of

the activity, used as a continuity factor rather than background sound, as an objective viewpoint. An example of this objective viewpoint is Governor Romney's speech to the boys from the steps of the State Capitol. Here the content of Romney's speech was important to the story development and thus served as more than background sound for the film. Although a certain freedom was gained in the use of several viewpoints, it was difficult to go from one narration voice to another, and certain relationships had to be worked out.

#### Narration Relationships

One type of relationship that had to be worked out was that between the narrators or voices. It would be possible, for example, to have each narrator aware of the other voices, somewhat like a round table discussion. Each line would influence that which followed; and what followed would, in part, be the consequence of the preceding ideas. Even though the voices would change, some thread or idea would weave its way through the several voices. On the other hand, it would also be possible for the various voices to exist totally independent of each other. In this case, each would go on his way, unaware that he had, from time to time, been interrupted by other voices.

A second type of relationship that needed to be defined was the relationship of the narrator to the pictures on the screen. Here again several possibilities exist. Is the narrator aware of the pictures on the screen, that is, is he watching them and thus commenting on what he sees? If so, has he seen the pictures before and does he thus know what will happen in the next scene? Or perhaps the narrator is part of the recorded action and thus has no awareness of the total scene nor the ability to anticipate succeeding events. This relationship between voice and screen may not be questioned by the audience but it must be questioned by the scriptwriter and some idea must exist of who it is that is doing the talking.

A third type of relationship is the relationship of the narrator to the audience. The narrator may be conscious of the audience and intentionally explain things to them or he may be thinking or talking totally independently of an audience, with the audience permitted to hear him only through the magic ears of the camera. The relationship here would not only influence the style of writing but also the choice of words. A person would not talk to an audience of five hundred in the same manner that he might talk to a friend or think aloud to himself. The choice of words would be somewhat different in each case.

Since several types of narration or voice relationships have been mentioned, perhaps a listing would serve to clarify them.

I. Narrators' relationships to each other.

A. Aware of other voices.

1. Each voice influences succeeding comments.
2. Dialogue develops between voices.

B. Not aware of other voices.

1. Independent but parallel stories.
2. Continuity continues through the various narrators even though they do not seem to be aware of other information existing.

II. Narrators' relationship to pictures.

A. Narrator aware of picture.

1. Comments on the scenes as they appear on the screen but does not seem aware of succeeding scenes.
2. Has seen the film before and knows what will happen next.

B. Narrator not aware of picture.

1. Someone talking or thinking about the event, but at some later time.
2. Recording of someone talking at an event and the recording used in the narration.

III. Narrators' relationship to audience.

A. Narrator aware of audience.

1. Talks directly to audience.
2. Explains things for the benefit of the audience but does not talk directly to them.

B. Narrator not aware of the audience.

1. The audience is permitted to hear his private thoughts.
2. The audience is permitted to hear someone say something to someone in an apparently private situation.

This list is not an attempt to exhaust the possible treatments of a narration track, it is only a list of the considerations made in the development of this particular script. These relationships were not decided on at the pre-scripting stage; in fact, they became apparent only after an attempt was made to use more than one voice in the narration. An example of the need to change relationships is seen in draft one. In this draft, two narrators were attempted, an adult voice and a boy's voice. The boy's voice is not introduced for some time and when it is introduced, it is obvious that the boy is aware of what has just been said.

ADULT VOICE: . . .he steps up to the table, signs his name, and at that moment becomes a citizen of Boys' State, the mythical fifty-first state of the union and once registered, is entitled to all the rights and privileges. He can plan to run for office, work to be nominated and worry about being elected Mayor, Police Chief, Governor or (fade voice under)

BOYS VOICE: It wasn't how to become Police Commissioner or Governor that I was thinking about. I wanted to know where to put my bags, how to find my bed and where they hid the food. . .

The boy's contradiction to the adult voice made a nice device to introduce the new voice but it would mean that

the boy was aware of everything that the other narrator might say. Thus the boy would be in effect reviewing the film with the adult narrator. This approach was abandoned in following drafts because the effect wanted from the boy's part was that the audience should watch the boy live through the week and witness a development in the boy's thinking about politics.

### Story Outline

The advantage in making the boy live through the week rather than reviewing the events of the week is that it would be possible to show a certain amount of change or development in the boy. This change would not be something strikingly obvious but more of a social development or maturation. It seemed that it might be more effective to watch the boy learn the meaning of "good loser" or "good sport" than to have him tell the audience that he had learned the meaning of consensus. Thus it seemed that a good way to outline or structure the movie might be to develop a boy's story that would involve him in the various political activities and to have him come away from the week with some type of gain or growth as the result of the experience. The boy would need some type of motivation. The motivation factors, no doubt, started before he arrived at Boys' State. The group that sponsored him probably expressed their confidence in his ability to bring

back honors. This would at least motivate him to try and run for some type of office or post. The next step would be his becoming involved with some political party. At Boys' State, the boys are assigned to a city and to a political party, given a city name and a flag. However, after a few cheers and a march around the campus, that group of fifty boys will be certain that they are the best city at the convention. This team spirit is a well known phenomenon. Be it company A of the First Battalion or the reserve team of the West Side High, "our team" is always best. Put fifty boys together in one wing of Emmons Hall, give them a flag, a city name, and you have a political party out to win the election. Somehow our boy would have to become actively involved in the political activity. This he could do by nominating his roommate for office and later himself being nominated to the state convention. Once the boy was running for office, a decision had to be made on whether he should win the election. If he were made to win the election, it might seem that the value of the Boys' State experience should be measured in terms of success, how successful the individual had been in becoming elected. What was learned about the democratic process would, as a result of the emphasis on winning, seem to have little or no value to the individual boy. However, should the boy be made to lose, it would then be possible to have him discover how in a democracy the losing party



accepts the choice of the majority. He does not start a war or set up a standing fight with the winner, but actually turns around and supports the choice of the majority. This simple underlying agreement among all involved that they will accept the choice of the majority is a vital element of the democratic process. In the losing of the campaign, our boy can show a growth or social maturity by the way he reacts to the winning opponent. This, then would be the value that the individual boy might gain from the Boys' State convention, and this could be the story line skeleton of the Boys' State Movie.

#### Script Outline

With a good idea of what the boy's story should be like and a list of points that the American Legion wanted in the movie, it was possible at this point to outline the movie. This was done before the first draft of the script was attempted. The outline was revised after the first draft to incorporate additional voices. The revised outline is given below.

NARRATOR	TYPE	VIEWPOINT
Boy	Impressionistic	A typical Boy Stater
Dr. Rich	Philosophical	Boys' State Organizer
Narrator	Factual	Film Maker
Live Sound	Actual	Objective

<u>SOUND</u>	<u>PICTURE</u>	<u>CONTENT OR POINT</u>
Rich	Montage	History
Narrator	Cars, Train, Bus Baggage, Boys Arriving	Where the boys are from
Boy	Buildings	My first impression
Narrator	Registration	The American Legionnaires help them get settled.
Boy	In Room	Meet other boys
Boy	Marching	We are a group
Live Sound	General Meeting	First General Assembly "Welcome to . . ."
Narrator	Outdoor city meeting	Structure of political activity
Boy	Outdoor Meeting CU of boys	I nominated someone
Boy	Retreat	We felt proud
Narrator	Reveille Flag Raising Breakfast Inspection of Quarters Political activity	Typical Morning
Boy	Election Room	I voted
Boy	County party meeting	I represent others
Narrator	State Convention	Process of politics
Boy	Making posters	Letting others know
Live Sound	Rally--Jennison	Everyone became involved
Boy	Voting Scene	We voted
Narrator	Church Service Band Concert Tour	Parents visited

<u>SOUND</u>	<u>PICTURE</u>	<u>CONTENT OR POINT</u>
Boy	Inauguration	We accepted the results of the election
Narrator	Wrestling Football Law Classes Lectures Newspaper Speech and Radio Competition A Bank A Post Office	The boys are provided with many experiences
Live Sound	Mock Trial	Judicial System in action
Boy	CU of boys talking	We had time to make friends
Live Sound	Variety Show	They entertain each other
Boy	March to Capitol	We had someplace to go
Live Sound	Romney's Speech	America needs leaders
Boy	In Offices	We were accepted
Narrator	Commencement	They took their week of experiences home with them
Rich	Departure	Was it successful?

The above outline was used throughout the entire scripting even though there were changes in detail at each draft. The order of events as set up in the outline remained pretty much the same. The changes made were mainly wording changes with the pictures remaining mostly the same. There was also a considerable amount of changing among the narrators used to carry the various ideas. The outline above has Dr. Rich speaking only twice. The final draft used him, as Narrator I, a total of eight times. An attempt was

made to place him throughout the script so that the audience would not forget who he was, as may have been the danger if he were made to speak only at the beginning and end of the movie. Also, as the script developed, it was evident that a philosophical viewpoint was needed for several points originally assigned to the boy. The other voices were also broken down into smaller units. Narrator II made eighteen appearances instead of the original eight outlined. The boy's segments were increased from thirteen to fifteen. The end effect was a greater interplay between the voices. There was considerable changing of the opening and closing scenes at each draft. The first writing had Narrator I open and close the movie. The final draft had the boy open and close. The many changes at each writing were in great part due to the helpful and constructive criticism of Mr. McCoy, who patiently read and made suggestions at each drafting. The result of the several weeks of writing is given below in the final draft.

### Boys' State Final Draft

#### Picture

#### Sound

Fade in:  
American Legion Emblem.  
Fade out.

BOYS' STATEPictureSound

Fade in:  
LS Brody Hall.

(Music up)

Fade SUPER in:  
American Legion  
WOLVERINE BOYS' STATE  
Dept. of Michigan

MLS motor train arriving.

Fade super out.

BOY:

Boys getting off train.

Ever since they selected me  
Six months ago,  
I've waited for just this day.

NARRATOR I:

Unloading baggage.

Twenty-seven times I have  
Watched these boys gather  
For one short week. . . . .  
I should, by now be used to it.

Pan to boy walking away

NARRATOR II:

Dr. Rich and boy.

Young boys and dedicated older  
Citizens  
Gather for the 27th American  
Legion Wolvering Boys State  
Convention

BOYS' STATENARRATOR I:

. . . I remember back in 1935,  
 A fellow by the name of Hays  
 Kennedy--over in Illinois--  
 Got the idea that  
 They should have a  
 Government program for youth.  
 They worked with it,  
 And we  
 Went over there  
 to study their idea.  
 By 1939 we had a program  
 going here in Michigan,  
 And it has  
 Been going ever since.

High angle buses.

CU bus charter sign.

Boys getting off bus.

CU boys walking away

From bus

Boy walking with suitcase.

NARRATOR II:

Unloading car truck.

Boy kissing mother goodbye.

They come from cities. . .  
 Farms. . .  
 And the  
 Suburbias inbetween. . .  
 To become citizens of a  
 Model state.

BOYS' STATE

Boys carrying luggage  
To Brody.

MCU boys walking to  
cameras.

Registration.

MCU of registrar.

Pinning badge on boy.

CU of registrar.

Hand shaking.

NARRATOR II:

A mythical 51st State of the  
Union. But these boys are  
Still youthful, high school  
Juniors at most.

Before they stake out  
A claim on the Governorship,  
They stake out a claim on a  
Room, a bunk, and some chow.  
To start,  
They sign in.

BOY:

You want something so much  
And wait so long  
You start worrying  
That your name might not  
Be on the roster. . . . .  
But it is.

A badge  
And you have a bunk.  
Wing B, Third Floor, Bailey  
Hall.

BOYS' STATENARRATOR II:

Registrar's pointing.  
 Dissolve.  
 Commissioner giving directions, outside.

Out the door. . . .  
 Turn right.  
 Across the lawn to Armstrong. .  
 Emmons. . . .  
 Or Bailey.

BOY:

Boy shaking hands -  
 boy's room.  
  
 Boys entering building.  
 High angle--boys walking  
 with bags.  
 Boys room.  
 Parents talking to boys.  
 Boys room

Then you meet the guys  
 Down the hall,  
 Across the way  
 And in the next room.  
 A thousand guys  
  
 One clothes locker  
 Two beds  
 And a roommate. . .

NARRATOR II:

Commissioner and boys  
 outside of dorm.

Boys room.

The boys are  
 A little confused at first. . .  
 But the American Legion  
 Commissioners  
 And adult advisors  
 Soon put them on the track.



BOYS' STATEBOY:

Boys room.

Bailey Hall, Wing B, Third  
Floor. . . .

Dissolve

Fifty of us assigned to the  
Same cityNARRATOR II:

Boys marching with guitars.

Every city starts with a

Pan--city flag to boys  
standing.

Name. . .

High angle shot boys  
marching left.

A flag. . .

And a best foot forward.

Dissolve.

(Marching sound up)

BOY:Somehow our fifty seemed  
different.Marched faster. . . .  
. . . Shouted louder. . . .

LS group cheer.

And we were the first

To give a group cheer

At the general assembly.

(Cheer sounds up)

SPEAKERS VOICE  
(Lip-sync)

Legionnaires sitting down.

"Welcome to Wolverine Boys  
State. . . .

Pan commissioners at table.

". . . it will be an active  
week . . . .

BOYS' STATESPEAKERS VOICE  
(Lip-sync)

". . .we will do many things. .

LS audience.

(Cheer sound up)

Dissolve.

NARRATOR II:

Travel shot of city meeting.

On this first day at Boys'

State, the machinery of

Government begins to roll.

Twenty-two cities make up

The model state. . . .

Each populated by fifty boys.

They meet in city groups. . .

In the shade of a tree. . . .

Boys, Red Cedar background.

On the banks of the Red Cedar

Reaction shot of boys.

Or out under the good

Hot summer sun.

Every city needs officers. . .

Boy giving a speech.

Nominations begin with a speech.

And after the speech,

Hand raising.

It takes a majority vote to

Get on the ballot.

BOYS' STATE

Pan  
2nd boy giving speech.

Hand raising.

High angle shot of boys  
addressing crowd.

Boys applauding.

LS city leaders.

Reaction shot.  
Dissolve.  
Boys marching

Dissolve.

High angle shot of boys  
marching across field.  
Dissolve.

High angle shot of boys  
and city flag.

Flag lowering.  
Dissolve.

BOY:

You get the idea right away.

If you know someone

That can handle the job. . . .

You nominate him.

Then all fifty of you vote.

That's courage. . . .

Making a speech

Nominating a roommate. . . .

But you try it, too.

You talk. . . .

Then you listen.

You get together. . . .

On candidates. . . .

On ideas. . . .

You pick up the beat.

NARRATOR II:

Hut, two, three, four. . . .

To chow. . . .

To meetings. . . .

To retreat. . . .

(Trumpet)

BOYS' STATE

Boys pledging to flag.  
 Dissolve.  
 LS of flag coming down.

End of pledge.

Boy folding flag.

Boy marching away from  
 retreat.

NARRATOR I:

In our Boys' State  
 As in any free state,  
 We expect our responsible  
 Citizens to join in  
 Expressing a common will.  
 Respect for authority  
 And love of order  
 Are strong forces in human  
 Nature.  
 "Consensus" may be too big a  
 Word, and "common will" much  
 Too abstract.  
 But they do stand together. . .  
 And this is the basis  
 For all political action.

## BOY:

When you march away with  
 All the others  
 You feel that you belong.  
 You really want to do something  
 For your city.  
 I guess we were just  
 A proud bunch of guys.

(Marching sound up.)

BOYS' STATE

Dissolve

Boy sleeping.

Bugle call.

Pillow hits boy.

Boys making bunk.

Flag raising formation.

High angle flag raising.

Dissolve.

Chow line.

Boy sitting down at table.

CU of boy putting jam on  
toast.

Boy drinking milk.

Boy eating toast

CU of boy eating.

Dissolve.

Room being inspected.

Dissolve.

Pan of boys in voting line  
to voting machine

CU voting machine, interior.

NARRATOR II:

The boys are up early

At Boys' State. . . .

(Trumpet)

One way or another

Flag raising at seven-fifteen.

(New trumpet call.)

Breakfast at seven-thirty.

Inspection of quarters at

Eight. . .and by nine-forty-

Five political activity involves

The citizens of Boys State.

BOY:

Friday, July nineteenth.

I voted. . . .

BOYS' STATE

LS of boys

And so did eleven hundred

And fifty others.

Interior of voting machine.

We had listened to speeches,

Talked to candidates,

And now we had to decide.

Boy leaving voting machine.

You make your selection

Dissolve.

Boy at Canteen.

And then you wait.

Ping Pong room

Vote by vote, someone gets

The majority.

Dissolve.

NARRATOR I:

It seemed to us

Back in '39

State Party meeting

That the best way

For the boys

To learn something

Was by doing it. . .

And this was our aim in the

Boys State program. . .

Meeting Chairman.

Education in the practice

Of government

That can't be learned

From a book.

BOYS' STATEBOY:

	Our party did well
	In the city election.
Boys applauding.	My roommate made treasurer
	And the boy across the hall
	Was elected Mayor.
CU boys reaction	Next came the state campaign.
	I had talked about it so much,
	My friends got the idea and
	Nominated me to office.
Boy giving nomination	My roommate gave
	An impressive speech
Boy seconding speech	And with a seconding
	From the Mayor,
After Convention	I was off and running
	In the state campaign.

NARRATOR II:

LS of audience with poster	If you want to get other people
	To vote for your candidate. . .
CU of poster	You've got to tell them
	About him,
Boy sitting with poster	Make them know who he is.
Boys making poster	
Poster	

BOYS' STATENARRATOR I:

Boy putting up poster

Poster

Poster

LS Boy making poster

Poster

Entrance with poster

High angle LS making poster.

Jenison Rally crowd

High angle Jenison crowd

High angle Jenison crowd

Marching in aisles

Boys carrying candidate

Brown making speech

Pan applauding of boys

Dissolve

The idea we developed

Was to set up a model

Government. . .a mythical

Fifty-first state

Of the Union,

Patterned after the government

Of Michigan,

Brining together leader youth.

And giving them

An opportunity to put

Into actual effect

The studies they pursued

In school.

It became a laboratory

In government and politics.

Learning by doing.

NARRATOR II:

The effective citizen

Will not stop at having an

Opinion.

He acts to implement it. . .

By himself,

And with the group.

(Rally sounds up)



BOYS' STATE

NARRATOR II:

High angle shot voting  
machine

The boys participate  
In the voting process  
Once again. . .

Inside voting booth

This time for state offices  
And the important post of  
Governor.

BOY:

CU voting machine.

I wasn't too worried  
About the results.  
We had explained our platform,  
Debated the ideas. . .  
Campaigned. . .  
In four hours the returns  
Would be in. . .  
They would be anxious hours,  
But I didn't mind.

Dissolve.

Parents outside

Like 1000 others, I had two  
Distinguished visitors.  
A Mom and a Dad.

BOYS' STATE

MCU parents and boys

CU two shot parents

Dissolve

Boys praying

LS Church Service

Dissolve

Boy and Mother sitting  
with paper

Family with small girl

Dissolve.

Glee Club

Audience applauding

Tuba

Conductor

Trombones

Trumpets

LS Band

Dissolve

Parents walking outside

NARRATOR II:

Sunday was visitors day. . .

There were many things

To show off

And places to go.

First. . . .

Church service.

Each religion holding its

Own services.

A few moments to relax

After dinner,

And then the Band

And Glee Club Concert

(Glee Club singing)

(Band Concert)

BOY:

I put my instrument in the case,

And joined my parents

For a tour of the city.

BOYS' STATE

Boys carrying sign

Introduction girls and boys

Introduction girl to boy.

Parent with camera

Parents standing

Parents walking away

Dissolve

Opponent receiving oath of  
office

CU crowd cheering

We met some interesting friends

And took a few snapshots too.

I hated to see Mom and Dad go

Before the election results

Were in.

They will find out

Soon enough

That I hadn't been elected.

You know,

I felt lost and lonely during

That Inauguration program.

And when my opponent received

His oath of office,

I got up with the rest

And cheered. . .

(Cheers)

And applauded

(Applause)

. . .What was I cheering for?

I really had no reason

To be happy

I had lost. . .

BOYS' STATE

LS boys receiving oath  
of office

But I was happy

And I cheered.

Believe it or not,

LS Pan audience applauding

You accept the choice

Of the group

And you support him.

You're even happy that he won.

NARRATOR I:

When the citizen accepts

The expressed will

Of the majority,

He has developed a mature,

Democratic viewpoint.

Dissolve.

Zouaves performing

. . .Call it a good loser,

A good sport,

Or whatever you like. . .

But without it

A democratic society would not

Be possible.

NARRATOR I:

The fast stepping Zouaves

Entertain the boys with an

Example of professional team-

Work.

BOYS' STATE

Dissolve	(Drill sound up)
Wrestling	In addition to politics,
Football clinic	A variety of clinics
	And activities
	Provide the boys
	With a well rounded
	Week of experiences.
MCU Boys	Wrestling and football
	Clinics conducted by
LS coach with boys	Michigan State coaches.
CU coach	
Law clinic speaker	. . .Law classes.
	Under supervision of
	Prominent State lawyers.
Government clinic outside	Government discussion groups,
Boy typing	A daily newspaper,
Newspaper editors	
Boy typing	
Radio studio	Speech and radio competition
Hand in mail box	
Office girl taking mail	
CU of office girl	A Post Office, combined
CU of boy	
Office girl banking	With a bank. . .

BOYS' STATE

Boy leaving Post Office

And a chance to test the  
Judicial system  
With a mock trial.

Dissolve

JUDGE: (Lip sync)

Judge at mock trial

"Hear Ye, Hear Ye. . .

Pan of boys audience

COURT CLERK

"Do you swear to. . .

OFFICER: (Lip sync)

"I do. . .

NARRATOR II:

Girl enters surprise witness

No trial is complete  
Without a star

CU crowd cheers

(Crowd cheers)

GIRL: (Lip sync)

Girl taking oath

"I do. . .

Boys cheering

Girl sits down

Dissolve

BOY:

Boys sun bathing

Once in a while,  
You take time out

Milk machine

To, just, lie around.

BOYS' STATE

Two boys talking

Talk to a friend. . .

About your home town,

CU of Year Book

And his home town.

Low angle shot of boys

looking at Year Book

May be plans to go to college.

Group around piano

When you look in the rec room

You see the piano getting

A good workout.

And on variety night

They really go.

Dissolve

163 through 211

Variety show--montage--

(Variety Show)

Parade drum pull out to  
parade

(Parade sounds)

Traveling shot

NARRATOR II:

Parade traveling shot

The last day, the day

Of the big march.

The entire Wolverine Boys

State marches from East

Lansing to the State

Capitol.

BOYS' STATEBOY:

	We marched
	. . .and marched
	It was a hard march,
Boys parade right	And it was long.
	I am sure none of us would
	Have hiked it alone.
Children watching parade	But we weren't just
	A bunch of boys
	Nor only 22 cities
MCU boys in parade	We were one Boys State. . .
	A model organization
	With elected leaders.
	A program and a purpose.
Capitol building over	We had someplace to go.
shoulder of flag bearers	
Children waving	
Pan down from Capitol Dome	
Parade group	
Nurses waving	
Boys parade left	
Boys entering Capitol Lawn	
Girls watching	
Statue	
MCU Crowd Clapping	



BOYS' STATE

LS crowd applauding

GOVERNOR ROMNEY:  
(Lip sync)

Dissolve

Governor speaking

"(freedom of this, freedom  
of that)

Pan to crowd

MCU Crowd listening

Applause

Governor finishing speech

BOY:

Boys following into Capitol

We were invited into the house  
Of government

Dissolve

Governor's office boy  
sitting down

and, for this day,  
Sat in the seats of authority.

Dissolve

Secretary of State's Office  
Pan

We had traveled a long road

Dissolve

In a week.

The tired feet are easy to  
forget,

Pan General Assembly

But the pride of unity

And the honor

Of acceptance. . .

Experienced here this day

Will be with us for a long,

Long time.

Dissolve

BOYS' STATENARRATOR II:

Speaker

A week is a short time.

It ends with a commencement

Speech

Boys listening

Speaker

(Speech)

LS boys cheering

(Cheers)

Dissolve

Boys with certificates

A certificate,

And a pledge.

Dissolve

Pan building exterior

(boys giving pledge)

Dissolve

Boy shaking hands

A round of goodbyes to friends

Buddies and old pals. . .

And one realizes

That this week has been

More than Just Seven Days

NARRATOR I:

Pan down on baggage

Twenty seven times I have

Watched the boys arrive. . .

And I have watched them go.

BOYS' STATE

Boy closing suitcase

Boy at trunk of car

CU of boy picking bag up

CU boy picking up bag

Two boys picking up bags

Three boys walking away  
with bags

Boy looking at map

Boy getting into station  
wagon

CU map

Cars backing out

Parents and boys loading  
cars

NARRATOR II:

They pick up their bags. . .

A tennis racket. . .

A coat.

NARRATOR I:

Twenty

Seven

Times,

And as they walk away,

I measure the week

Not by the seven days

But by the years that lie ahead,

A sort of investment

And hope for the future

NARRATOR II:

Luggage,

Experiences,

Memories,

And they return home

To the real world. . . .

To soon put into

Actual practice. . . .

The roles played here

BOYS' STATE

BOY:

Boy shaking hands goodbye

Some weeks are just seven  
days. . . .

CU boy waving goodbye

Some last a Lifetime.

Dissolve

Drawing of boys leaving

(Music up)

SUPER CREDITS

Film sponsored by

Consumers Power Company

Detroit Edison Company

Michigan Bell Telephone Company

Michigan State University

Narrators

Dr. Dwight Rich

Dick Estell

Jerry Bock

Script & Film Editor

Richard Gerrero

Sound

Ron LaMothe

Harry Howard

Art

Mike Gilmore

FADE CREDITS

FADE PICTURE

## CHAPTER IV

### EDITING

As the script developed through the several drafts, attention was directed to the task of editing the footage. The idea was to bring the editing to a rough cut stage prior to a final scripting. Changes in the script could then be made to fit the available footage and also allow the film, as it took shape, to stimulate new ideas for the script. In this way a creative cycle was set up, or at least was permitted to exist, in which the script could provide a framework for the film-cutting and the rough cut film would provide suggestions and ideas for script improvement. Actually, this relationship between film and script existed from the first viewing of the work print. The original viewing provided ideas for the film outline; the script outline suggested a system of film breakdown; and the breakdown allowed development of the various sequences. In this way, it could also be said that editing started with the first script outline. Cuts were not actually made with scissors, but mentally, scenes were selected or eliminated from the first viewing of the workprint. This editing-scripting freedom is a luxury not often enjoyed

in film production. In most cases the scripting and editing are handled by different people, and the script must be well firmed up before editing commences. However, in this production, I was fortunate in that I had not only been involved in the shooting but was also assigned the scripting and editing of the film.

The formal editing was started at about the sixth script draft. A more or less conventional editing procedure was employed. First a string out was undertaken. After picking a scene for each point in the script, the full camera run of each scene selected was put together in the order called for by the script. The script may require only one foot of the scene; however, if the camera run is ten feet in length, the entire ten feet are put in. Cutting into the scene is avoided until it is fairly certain that the scene will work. Too often, after cutting a scene, one finds that it may work better in another place. But he may also find that the previous cutting has now made it unusable in the new position. Of course, he could go through his trims and find the cut off ends. By slugging the frames missing because of splicing he can restore the workprint to its original length. No doubt every editor has at some time done this. But it takes so much time to locate the trims, especially when working with 10,000 feet of film, that precautions are taken to minimize the possibility of cutting errors. The string-out serves this

purpose. It allows you to project and view the full-length scene many times and to rearrange the various scenes as often as needed prior to cutting into the scene itself. Once the editor is fairly certain that the scenes will work in the order laid out, he can do a rough cut. In the rough cut, the scenes are cut down to approximate length to get some feeling of timing, pacing and matched action. Here again, the cautious editor will, when in doubt, cut long. It is always possible to take out a few frames but very difficult to put them back in.

At the rough-cut stage of editing, a final script was prepared incorporating changes suggested by the evolving film. A scratch track was recorded and played back several times with the picture. On the basis of narration timing and visual pacing, decisions for a fine cut were made. The fine cut workprint was then turned over to the sound engineer, Ron LaMothe, for narration recording and sound effect work.

### Music Montage

There was a musical montage section that required special editing attention and thus may warrant discussion. The variety show was a general assembly held the sixth evening of Boys' State. Several of the boys put on a variety type of show to entertain the general assembly. The show lasted about two hours and consisted mostly of musical performances. There were solo features as well as

small combos with an abundance of rock-'n'-roll music. The performance was covered with two cameras, a Mitchell set on a platform at the rear of the hall and a Kodak Cine Special in close for cut-aways. The entire performance was recorded on magnetic tape and magnetic film. The recordings, however, were not slated or cued to the camera runs. The cameramen rolled camera when they felt the scene to be interesting. Bill Hughes operated the Mitchell and I worked with the Cine.

The editing problem was to give an impression of an evening of entertainment in about a minute's worth of screen time. There were several possible ways of approaching the problem. One would be to use only one representative scene but with a sort of musical medley accompaniment. The music in this case would not match the picture. The reverse would also be possible--that is, to use a section of representative music and to cut several scenes or a pictorial montage to the music. Here again the music would not match the picture. A third possibility would be to put together several scenes with matching music, a picture-sound montage. The problem in this case is to keep the music from sounding like someone playing with the push buttons on a car radio. The end result could be very disturbing if one were to simply cut pieces and bits of various songs together. I decided to use a pictorial montage with matching sound for the first 45 seconds and then an organ solo sound track



for the last 10 seconds with rhythmic cutting of various scenes to the beat of the organ solo. This one minute proved to be the most time consuming minute of screen time in the entire movie. More than forty hours were spent in the editing on this sequence. The main problem was to get the sound track to make some musical sense rather than an effect of random musical bits cut together. This required the scenes to be edited to an arranged musical sequence. First, several scenes were selected of the various acts and the music was post-synchronized. This was done with the aid of a Moviola. Since the entire sound for the program had been recorded, there should be music available for any camera run selected. The only problem was to find the correct sound for that particular scene. It amounted to a sort of musical lip reading. It was possible to determine the music by noticing the type of instruments in the scene, tempo of body movement and various cues to melody line. Once the picture and sound had been synchronized, the magnetic film track and picture were marked with grease pencil so that the sound track could be later matched to picture by simply lining up the cue marks.

Once the sound had been limited to the available pictures and matched with them, the track was transferred from the magnetic film to tape so that it could be worked with on a conventional tape recorder. The tape thus had bits and phrases from the various musical selections for

which pictures were available. The task now was to pick phrases from the various selections which could be put together in somewhat of a musical montage in such a way that it would not be too jarring to the audience. With the musical samples on magnetic tape, it was possible to cut up the tape and experiment in editing the musical selections. It was found that if the cuts were made on the first beat of a phrase, the changes in tempo and key would not be too disturbing. Thus the musical montage ended up being a series of four-bar phrases arranged to give variety and interest in the changes of style and tempo.

With the edited tape as a guide, I then went back and laid out the magnetic film in A and B rolls--that is, the four bars of the first selection in reel A, the four bars of the second selection in reel B, the four bars of the third selection back on reel A, etc. This made it possible to roll both reels in the sound studio and then to cross dissolve between the selections and thus soften the effect of cutting from one selection to the next. This produced an A-B mix for the one minute of music. Pictures were then edited to the A-B mix, this not being too difficult for they had previously been cued to the individual musical selections.

For the final ten seconds of the variety show sequence, I cut many scenes, almost at random, to the beat of the

rhythmic organ solo. A new picture was cut on each beat with two pictures on the third beat of each bar giving a "one, two, three and four" rhythm--five pictures to a four beat bar. The full beat required eleven frames of picture, the half beat required five or six frames, the extra frame being made up every second bar. There were over forty cuts within the ten seconds. The effect hoped for was a rhythmic visual impression on the audience. The actual scenes were not important, they would be occurring on the screen so fast that it is doubtful that the viewer would be fully aware of any individual picture. In fact, a few scenes of boys typing, wrestling and raising a flag were thrown in with the musical scenes, more or less as though the events for the entire week got mixed up and were seen in memory flashes. Perhaps there will be some that object to this one minute abstract section on the grounds that, being the only free style in the film, it may be out of place. However, I felt that it would serve as a change of pace for the audience and thus justifiable in that it would increase the audience interest.

#### Adding Sound

Once the workprint had been completely edited, it was given to the sound department for sounding. The sounding required the recording of three narrations, matching of several lip-sync scenes, background sound

effects and the addition of music. The recording of the narration track was more complicated than usual due to the fact that three separate narrations had to be recorded. Each narrator was recorded independently of the others. Dick Estell's narration was recorded to picture. That is, the picture was shown in the studio and Mr. Estell was seated such that he could see the picture as he read. In this way he was able to pace his narration to the action on screen. The script had been previously timed and it was possible for a script girl to watch the film footage counter and give Mr. Estell a light cue at the start of each phrase. Mr. Estell is a professional announcer and was capable of reading script, watching picture and observing light cues. This system was not used for the other two narrators for it was felt that it would be too demanding of the non-professional narrator. The other narrations were recorded line by line, without picture or timing cues; and then, later, each line was cut into the narration track at its appropriate place.

The final sound mix involved the three narration tracks, an effects track, a synchronized sound track including the music montage, general background sounds and a music track. These were mixed by Mr. LaMothe to produce a final sound mix. The key problem in a mix is to keep the proper relationship between narration and background sounds. Several mixes had to be made before obtaining one acceptable to Mr. LaMothe.

The Interlock Showing

An interlock showing was then scheduled for representatives of the American Legion. The interlock allows viewing with sound even though the sound is still separate from picture. The final mix is played back on the magnetic film recorder and the edited work print projected on a projector equipped with synchronous motor; the two are started and held together by the interlock system. The representatives gave their final approval on the film and placed an order for sixteen prints. The original material was then taken out of storage, matched to the edited work-print and sent to the laboratory along with the sound mix for printing. The delivery of the prints completed the American Legion Contract.

## CHAPTER V

### EVALUATION

In the evaluation of this project, two separate factors should be examined. The first is the effectiveness of the learning experience in the development of the Boys' State Movie. The preceding chapters constitute a detailed report of this experience. The amount of learning is, of course, the difference in knowledge and ability between the start of the project and the completion of the film. All gains in knowledge and improvements in technical abilities realized in the Boys' State project could be considered as learning derived directly from the working experience. Although the writer had substantial still photography experience and many hours of television production classwork, motion picture production was a new experience. But a camera is a camera. The method of calculating exposure is basically the same for the motion picture camera as it is for the still camera. The rules of composition and following action hold equally for the film camera and the television camera. And so, there were many things that could be generalized from previous experience to the new situation. The project gave ample opportunity to apply

classroom theories to actual situations as well as generalizing old experience to a new situation. In the filming of Boys' State, the ability to operate various motion picture cameras was a necessity. In most cases, there was little or no time to become familiar with a camera prior to the actual filming of a scene. Within ten minutes of starting on the job, I found myself on top of a camera truck with a Kodak Cine Special, a camera which I had never seen before. To increase the pressure, an American Legion auto-train was pulling into the area and thus, if I were to get the shot, I could not leisurely study the camera features. The big problem was finding the shutter release button. The button is located on the front of the camera under the lens turret, a convenient place, once you know where it is. As it turned out, this first shot came out very well. Exposure correct, focus sharp, pan smooth, and the auto-train was held nicely in frame as it approached. The shot was used as the opening scene for the movie. Certainly a considerable amount of learning took place during the first ten minutes. Needless to say, the learning experience was not confined to that first ten minutes. Location lighting was a new experience for me. That first day, lighting was set up in the Brody hallway, in one of the dormitory rooms and in the convention hall. Not only did I learn how to balance lighting but also, by working closely with Bill Hughes, how to determine a

safe load for the fused circuits and how to tap directly into the junction box for a 220 volt feed line. By the time the week had come to an end, I had accumulated over 60 hours of camera work as well as exposure to a multitude of problems and situations. I may have started not knowing how to turn on the Cine camera, but one week later I was comfortable with several cameras in many situations and under a variety of conditions.

During the scripting phase, under the excellent tutorage of Mr. McCoy, I began to explore the relationships between narrator, audience and picture. The situation in scripting was quite different from the situation in cinematography. I was proficient in the use of a still camera and had some experience with television cameras; therefore I only needed to learn the mechanical operation of the movie camera before applying my previously acquired knowledge of photography. In the attempt to write a script, I was pretty much starting from scratch. The relationships between audience, picture and narrator were new to me. However, with eight rewrites, and with corrections and suggestions at each draft by Mr. McCoy, the final draft was much improved and respectable. I do not wish to suggest that one might consider oneself a scriptwriter after only one script. However I have written other scripts since the Boys' State film and I can suggest that subsequent scripts are considerably easier. Nevertheless, I will need



to write many more scripts before I feel confident at scripting. But it must be remembered that I would not have been able to find additional scripting assignments had it not been for the Boys' State experience.

Although I had no editing experience before working with the MSU film unit, I was able to gain some experience prior to the editing phase of the Boys' State film. I edited several sequences for A Century and Nine under the supervision of Mr. Mabrey and also did string outs and rough cutting on other jobs. In the Boys' State Film editing was not a new experience for me, but the cutting of a film to fit the proposed narration was indeed a challenge. The procedure I used was to read aloud, with stopwatch in hand, the lines for each scene. The time needed was calculated in film feet and each picture was then cut to take up the calculated time. Later a scratch track was made while reading to the projected film and fine adjustments were made in the places needed. The final edit was quite smooth and well paced.

In all, with filming, scripting, and editing, it is safe to suggest that a considerable learning experience has been derived from the project.

The second evaluative factor that needs to be examined is whether or not a student, while learning, can be justified by a department committed to serving a client expecting a professional product. In this case we can ask, is the

client satisfied with the product? The client is the American Legion and the product is the Boys' State Film. In an attempt to answer this question, I arranged an interview with Dr. Dwight Rich. Dr. Rich can be considered a representative voice of the American Legion in matters pertaining to Boys' State. Not only had Dr. Rich helped organize Boys' State in Michigan, but has worked with the program ever since. He also was the leading voice in the committee supervising the production of the movie. In a taped interview on September 3, 1965, several questions were asked of Dr. Rich.

QUESTION: To what type of audience will the Boys' State Film be shown?

DR. RICH: Well, this is what you might say "a general film." It is hoped that it will be shown to our sponsoring groups, and this includes not only our own American Legion, but it includes labor groups, any organization that wishes to sponsor a boy. And then we hope to have it shown to high school groups or boys who are becoming interested in going to Boys' State.

QUESTION: Was there anything particular that you liked about the film?

DR. RICH: Well, yes, I like the film. I worked with them when they were making it. I liked the angle at which they were able to show part of nearly every activity [at Boys' State].

QUESTION: Was there anything in particular that you did not like in the film?

DR. RICH: Well, I thought they went a little bit too long on what we called our amateur night. I think that was played a little bit too long. . . I've seen the film several times, and whether or not I'd have that effect in seeing it once I couldn't tell you, but in seeing it several times I felt that.

QUESTION: Was the boy narrator a believable part in the film?

DR. RICH: Oh yes. Very good. That part was very good.

QUESTION: The film made some statements about the value of consensus, good loser, and democracy. Do you feel these statements have any value to the intended audience and will be effective as presented? Or do you feel they have any place at all in this type of film?

DR. RICH: I think they do. Of course, you had an awfully good group of boys here. They're top boys, but at the same time, somebody's got to lose when they come into the program. They know they've got to lose, and I think we are trying to develop a good background of attitude toward this matter of we can't always win. I think that's what we are coming out with.

QUESTION: In the creation of the boy's part, once he was involved in the political campaign, there were two alternatives--he could win or he could lose. In your opinion then, you agree with the writer in that the better alternative was to have the boy lose the election.

DR. RICH: That's right. That's what we're getting at in the study--that we can't always win in a democracy, and you've got to give and take, and you've got to be brought up in that.

QUESTION: Were you satisfied with the technical qualities of picture, sound and so on?

DR. RICH: Oh yes, I was.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the Boys' State Film will serve the sponsor's purpose?

DR. RICH: Oh yes.

QUESTION: How could the film have been made to better serve the sponsor's purpose? Is there anything that you would suggest?

DR. RICH: No, I don't think so. I think it did exactly what the sponsors thought it would do. . . The value the sponsors hope to get out of this film was the making it possible for boys to see what's

going to happen in Boys' State, and to want to go and want to be part of the program. They're interested in the furtherance of the program.

QUESTION: Actually then, we could say the evaluation of the film would be in terms of whether or not a prospective Boys' Stater would appreciate and have a positive opinion of Boys' State before attending.

DR. RICH: That's right. . . We get letters from the boys saying they wished they knew more about it before they went.

QUESTION: Would the boys see the film on the first day of Boys' State or would they see it in the high schools before they were selected?

DR. RICH: They show it in the high schools.

The film was not available in time to be used in recruiting for the 1965 Boys' State Convention. Thus it was impossible to get a true audience reaction to the film. However, the film has been passed out to all the American Legion commissioners in Michigan and there have been a few showings to other than prospective boy groups. From all indications, the film has been favorably received. And as indicated in the above interview, the film seems to completely satisfy the sponsors.

### Summary

The filming, scripting and editing of the Boys' State Film has provided the writer with an opportunity to apply classroom theories to actual situations as well as generalizing previous experience to a new situation. It has been an effective learning experience which at the

same time has produced as its end product a film of professional quality satisfying the sponsors. In addition to outlining a method of developing a script from existing footage and a technique for pursuing an abstract film style as used in the music montage, this study suggests that a creative thesis done while working in an actual production situation can provide the graduate student with a realistic and beneficial creative experience. It seems possible to justify student employment by a production unit provided that professional standards can be maintained. Should this study be judged successful, then perhaps future students will find the courage to undertake a similar course of action and perhaps television and film producers will encourage the graduate student and allow him to work with actual production assignments available in the academic environment.

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