

NAKED CAME POLONSKY: *She was wearing a Woolworth's dress*

By JOE POLONSKY

I was on television last week and nobody bothered to inform me of my pending appearance. Mind you, I should not really blame the network for an improper system of communications, as the show was over four years old.

It was in the fall of '67 when a team from the provincial educational television network came to our school and brought along with them the well known author, wearer of kilts, lover of the north, hater of Toronto and party shocker (he used to pull down his pants in front of women at cocktail gatherings), Canada's own Farley Mowat. A group of students from Grade 13 and even a few from Grade 12 (although heaven only knows how they could have possibly known as much as we did when we had already studied Hamlet in Grade 12 even though it was a Grade 13 play) were invited to ask Farley questions under the lights and cameras of big time television.

And not only that, four of us also got to appear in another gig where the star read out two lines of poetry, which was followed by our answering questions on the selection. I recall that a few months later the whole school got out to watch the shows on television. There was one point where the star had asked us to summarize our impressions of the poem in one word. Now, for the three other students, the camera had taken back shots so that their whole bodies filled the screen. But when my turn came up to respond, the camera zoomed in on my face, just as I responded in the sullenest of faces... "Bleak!" The whole school burst into wild laughter. It was only my English teachers who had enough sensitivity to tell me after the

showing that the poem was bleak indeed.

So it was last week that a number of my York friends came running up to me to inform me of how they had seen me on television with Farley Mowat just the other morning. They all told me how cool I looked in my heavy black rimmed glasses with my short hair impeccably combed and with my neat green sweater nicely complimented by my straight beige pants. I believe my question was: "What do you think of Marshall McLuhan?" Now that I think of it, I really wish that I had thought of something a little more colorful to ask.

But, it was with thoughts of my newly-won recognition here at York, along with sweet memories of the old days when I was at the apex of both my television and my high school careers, that I found myself immersed last Thursday evening, in my one vivid recurring dream.

The dream unfolds on a muggy evening in April. The location is Los Angeles. I am about to be introduced as the master of ceremonies at the annual presentation of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Science's Academy awards. Yes, once again the spirit and excitement of Oscar night is in the air. But it is not Robert Young is about to introduce me; except instead he is making an inane speech of how, when he first came to Hollywood, everyone mistook him for Loretta Young's brother. Meanwhile, I am standing at the back of the hall, when I notice that the auditorium is half full. And not only that, I recognize half of them. But they are not stars. They are all these dull girls from my past whom I never wanted to take out on a date. And not only that, they are all wearing jeans.

They are all wearing bloody blue jeans on the most important night of my career. The only recognizable movie personality in the whole audience is Rosalind Russell. And the only other stars who had consented to show up were those who were supposed to give out the Oscars. All of whom were intending to leave immediately following their own particular presentation. And they did not dress up either. I was the only one who showed up in a tuxedo.

Meanwhile, Robert Young finally gets to introducing me. He says that I am one of the brightest young stars in the business.

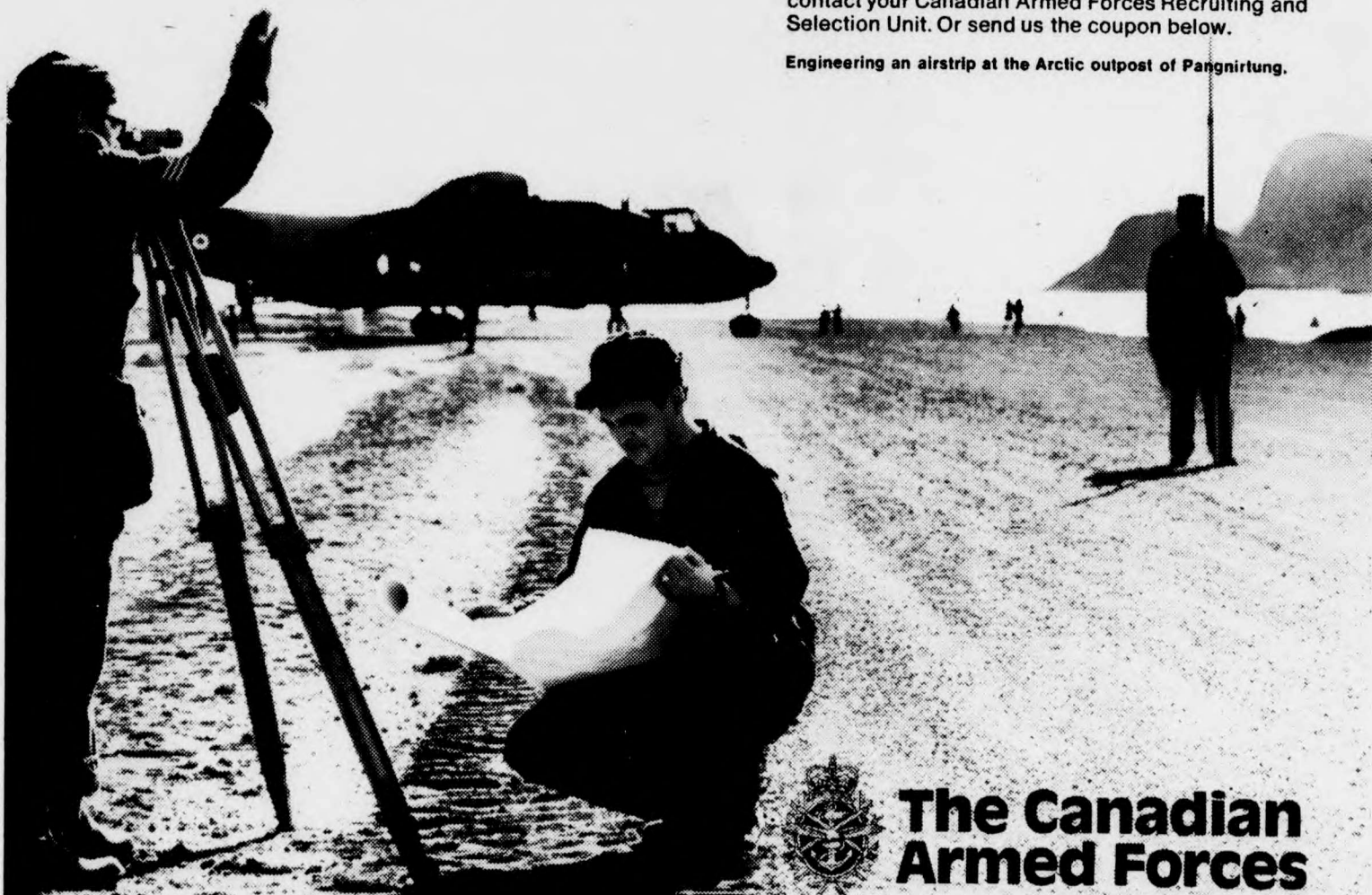
Meanwhile, the girls I knew are sitting there munching on popcorn and bananas. He says that with practice I could be as funny as Bob Hope some day. One of the girls comments rather loudly to one of her dull friends on how lovely Rosalind Russell looks in pink. He is about to bring me on stage when one of the self-righteous, dull bitches in the audience stands up and says that the whole Oscar thing is a farce and America now knows the truth about Hollywood. Robert Young, in a fatherly fashion, smiles and says, "Yes, you're right, smart little girl, the true body of Hollywood has been bared."

And all of a sudden, the tinsel and glamor are gone. That famous artificiality vanishes into thin air. Hollywood is no longer unreal. I take off my tuxedo and board a bus out to the arts library at U.C.L.A. "Well, I was a star in high school, wasn't I?" I think to myself. "Hollywood" I shout, "Don't fear! Someday, I shall return."

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