

Philip Preville

The strange appeal of Eugene, Oregon

Ah, the small sacrifices we make, foregoing our identity, in order to make a film in our city.

I am, of course, referring to the latest Farrah Fawcett flick, *Small Sacrifices*. She has certainly come a long way since that forever memorable poster, the ultimate cheesecake photo of a bikinied, well-curved Farrah sitting at such an angle so as to show as much teeth as possible. Who can forget that smile?

Many of you will of course know that Farrah and company ventured north to Edmonton this past summer to film *Small Sacrifices*. Our city welcomed the crew with open arms, and offered them access to many Edmonton sites. After spending that

time watching the results, we must ask ourselves — was it worth it? Personally, I found myself distracted from the actual storyline of the film, because I was constantly noticing all the familiar local scenes in the background.

We gave them our stunning North Saskatchewan river, well-treaded and worn by so many canoes, an historic site of great importance in North America, and the adjoining river valley, well-preserved by our farsighted governments, home to many ducks and magpies, a summertime treasure with a beautiful view of our cityscape.

They turned it into Eugene, Oregon. We gave them access to the legal

education facilities at the University of Alberta, an institution which was built and has prospered based on a doctrine of universal accessibility, where the cost of such a high standard of education is a mere \$1300 per year and the Students' Union subsidizes photocopying. They, by the magic of a whole bunch of little dots on a screen, transformed it into a place where the guy in the robe with the groovy little hammer has to seek re-election every few years, and where a man may be sentenced to death by due process of law and order.

Actually, I'm not sure if Oregon has the death penalty. I suppose that makes them a bit more Canadian.

We gave them our beautiful Northern Alberta landscape, some of the most beautiful forested area in the world, a last chance to film and record for all future generations this monument to nature that will soon be sacrificed to the god of economic growth so that we all can continue to read newspapers full of fluff such as this article, home to many rare wildlife species such as wood buffalo, grizzly bears and giant moose, an absolute treasure that Albertans will soon share with the rest of the world via Post-it notes, message pads and other world-class stationery.

They chose to give us glimpses of roadside ditches while driving a stunning, sexy, well-dressed Farrah to a life sentence in prison.

Actually, I suppose that the plot of the film didn't call for any forest scenes. But if those talented Hollywood dramatists can fabricate a scene where Farrah offers some lawyer some fast and easy fun in the back of the paddywagon, then they can darn well write in a scene

showing off our treasured forests.

The worst sacrifice that was made, however, was the time slot in which it appeared on the CBC. The greatest marker of the Canadian identity is not linguistic duality or socialized medicine. It is that we watch our evening news during prime time hours. Canadians, the sober-minded lot that we are, selflessly forego a whole kingsize, prime-rate advertising hour of potential entertainment to watch Barbara Frum in an ugly dress. *Small Sacrifices* ran from 9 to 11, pushing *The National* beyond our country's collective bedtime.

Why is it that all American shows are set in American cities? Granted, the Farrah film was a true story. Nevertheless, Hollywood will go to great lengths to Americanize a Canadian story.

Apparently there is something in the American psyche that, even if you live in Detroit, somehow Eugene, Oregon is closer to home than Windsor, Ontario.



Randal Smathers

Sexist allegations going out of control

Allow me to introduce myself: I'm an Arts student. An English major, to be precise. That's ENGLISH, not ENGINEERING. However, I'd like to provide a little moral support for the 'Geers, in this, their latest moment of crisis.

The Bridge, the 'Geer paper, wrote a rude joke about Jan Reimer in their last issue. A hue arose, and a cry. The 'Geers apologized, and well they should: the joke was offensive. Now, however, the situation is threatening to expand beyond the bounds of reason.

There is a segment of the University community who are agitating to force the abandonment of *The Bridge*, or at least its complete transformation. The complaints are aimed at the generally sexist nature of paper, and are not new.

Every time a predominantly-male group on campus—such as the 'Geers—does something "sexist", we hear the same rhetoric about promoting sexist thinking, stereotyping, and so on. I have two problems with this.

First, I don't see how you can legislate the thought patterns of

twenty-year olds, male or female, and I don't see why you'd want to. It might seem like a great idea to have a campus full of Sensitive New Age Guys, but frankly it'd bore me stupid. 'Geer and Ag Weeks are fun to grumble at, but they are the only two exceptions to apathetic faculties.

Perhaps it's coincidence, but they're both run by predominantly male faculties. I don't see Nursing Week, or Fine Arts Week, or Home Ec. Week. I think that the kind of energy that produces *The Bridge* is the same kind that produces faculty weeks, and gets cheering sections out to Cheers for Beer.

A far more useful endeavor than trying to change the way 'Geers think is to try to change the makeup of the faculty. Fine, you say, but how can we induce women into engineering while it's full of stereotypical macho thinkers? That's a question I can't answer, but it also ignores the fact that such stereotyping works both ways.

That's the second problem. There is a group on campus—Women In Science and Engineering Studies (WISEST)—devoted to half of the question, but I

don't know of one called Men in Education and Nursing (MEN), devoted to the other half.

It would be preferable to have a group called Unlimited Study (US). That's unlikely to happen as long as the attention of many of the activists on campus is focused on prescribing behavior for others, while not attending to their own biases.

If you want sexual stereotyping, check out the November "UAYS News," WISEST's newsletter. Interspersed with articles like "The Barriers to Entry," and notes on the October meeting, is a recipe for "the delicious Spinach Dip" which was served at the meeting. It seems more than a little ironic to complain about men stereotyping women after writing stuff that would not have looked out of place in my grandmother's Ladies' Auxiliary newsletter. When's the quilting bee?

I've got no argument against controlling the worst of *The Bridge's* excesses, but don't use that as an excuse for trying to stifle one of the few active groups on campus. At least, not until you've got an alternative way to channel that energy.


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