

# **THEY SHOOT EXTRAS, DON'T THEY? NIGHTMARE ON THE FILM SHOOT**

**By Edith Weiss**

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**THEY SHOOT EXTRAS, DON'T THEY?**  
**Nightmare on the Film Shoot**

by  
Edith Weiss

***A Hollywood DIRECTOR, William Barlow, and a student CAMERAMAN, Bob, are onstage. The AUDIENCE plays the extras in a shoot. Bob is bright, but shy and socially inept; wanting to please the director but really having no idea how. The DIRECTOR is Hollywood: glib, demanding, and excitable.***

WILLIAM: (*shouting to crowd*) Okay, first we want to thank you, students of Wheat Ridge High School, for being our extras today. I'm William Barlow, the director. From Hollywood. We're thrilled you're here, and I'm thrilled to be in Indiana, working on this shot with Bob, a film student from this very high school. That's never been done before in all the years of movie making! We're making history here!

BOB: Thank you again for this opportunity, Mr. Barlow.

WILLIAM: (*snide*) Well, it is unorthodox, but when one of the producers *insists* that his nephew, a high school student who wants to make movies, be the cameraman for a shot at his high school, well, I'm only the director, what could I do but oblige?

BOB: Cool. This is really going to help me get chicks.

WILLIAM: And isn't that why we all make movies? Ha, ha, ha. (*shouting to crowd*) We realize you've been here since 5:00 o'clock this morning. There was no way to know it would rain for four solid hours. Nobody drowned, did they? Ha, ha....(*reacting to the crowd's hostility. To BOB*) What'd I say?

BOB: There was an accident here last year. You don't want to mention drowning.

WILLIAM: Just a joke! So the downpour finally stopped, and we're ready to start shooting! People, you're a crowd at a football game, okay? Show me excitement! And----Action!

(*As WILLIAM checks his messages on his phone, BOB films for a few seconds, panning stage left to center, then puts down camera.*)

BOB: Uh- William?

DIRECTOR: Cut! Yes, Bob?

BOB: They're not doing enough. In fact, they're doing almost nothing.

They're barely moving. Maybe it's because they haven't eaten.

WILLIAM: Okay. People – we need a bit more enthusiasm in the stands out there. Sorry about the mix-up with Kraft Food Services – we asked for food for 200 people, and they only sent enough food for

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20. Well, the crew got to the head of the line. You snooze, you lose! So, hang in there, you will all be fed eventually. Focus on the field - The score is tied – it's the championship game -so give me some action. Action! (*pause*) Bob, why aren't you filming?

BOB: I thought you were just reiterating to them that we need action. I didn't realize you were calling "action" for me to start the camera.

WILLIAM: (*condescending*) Okay Bob. I'm going to say "action" now and you start filming. Okay? (*to the stands*) Watch me, people, I'll show you what you should be doing.... Action!

(*BOB films. WILLIAM mimes the action the crowd should be taking, exciting football stand action. BOB stops.*)

BOB: They're all looking right at the camera.

DIRECTOR: Cut! Okay, people? You can't look at the camera! Don't you people know anything? The action is on the field-

(*On the word 'action', BOB crouches, films.*)

What are you doing, Bob? Cut!

BOB: What?

WILLIAM: I was still talking.

BOB: You said 'action'. You said when you said "action" I should start filming.

WILLIAM: I wasn't saying it to you. I was talking to them. Okay, let's do this. When I want you to start filming, I'll yell 'action' and point right at you.

BOB: That'll work. I just needed some clarification.

WILLIAM: Okay. I'm going to yell "action" and you, the actors, will cheer or boo or do something in reaction to what's happening on the field. Let's say it's a game changing interception that happens right here – to the left and behind Bob! Come on, people, this is the big time. You're going to be in a movie! You might even get a close-up! So, let's start acting! Ready? And....(*pointing at BOB*) Action!

(*BOB starts filming. Stops*)

Cut! WHAT NOW, Bob?

BOB: The people over there look too intelligent.

WILLIAM: What's that supposed to mean?

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