

Rob Wagner's
Script

February 2, 1946

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SEVENTEEN YEARS FEB. 1929—FEB. 1946

This seems a suitable time to reprint what Rob had to say about Script on the tenth birthday. It expresses the spirit which we hope to keep alive.

— Florence Wagner

SCRIPT GROWS UP

COME next May it will be seventeen years since SCRIPT moved. At birth it had been hand-fed amid a turmoil of noisy printing, amateur typesetting, visits from new subscribers and general but happy confusion at the Wagner-Lynds printing shop on Brighton Way.

After three months of this, the printing shop was sold to Jack Chancey and the infant SCRIPT moved to what was then the Brennan Building on the corner of Rodeo Drive and Dayton Way. This has been SCRIPT's home up to last Wednesday.

SCRIPT is the last of the original occupants to move out. The other "early settlers" were E. A. Lewis, Mortgage Guarantee Co.; C. Ralph Sentney, real estate; S. T. Rogers, architect; Keith M. Carver, real estate; Blinn Lumber Co.; Bedell Shelburne, general contractors; W. A. Irwin, investments; M. C. Moore, newspaper properties.

When we moved in, the Brennan Building was in the outskirts of Beverly Hills. In those days the Post Office, Homer's Drug Store, the Community Store and the few business offices in town were all huddled on, or near, Burton Way. Rob and Florence wondered if they dared venture way down next to uninhabited Wilshire Blvd. The only building of any size down there was the new Beverly Wilshire Hotel, set back from the street, waiting for the boulevard to be widened and the sidewalk to reach its front door.

Well! You can see for yourself what SCRIPT does for a neighborhood! Soon we found that our location had become the teeming center of the fast-growing, modern Beverly Hills, so teeming, in fact, that at last we were taking deep breaths and longing for fresh air.

But, behold! Since we have bought our new house, the entire stretch, from Bob Murphy's at one end, to Wilshire Blvd., at the other, seems to be sprouting into another center of fast development. Buildings have been popping up to the north of us and to the south of us and surveyors' stakes are appearing on most of the still vacant lots. Another publisher has bought the lot next to us—so maybe we'll become Publishers' Row.

Anyway, we intend to create a bright new world in our new home, now that we have dug ourselves out of the accumulation of seventeen years. Does any other business accumulate

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dusty papers to the extent of a publishing office? Yes, I remember a junk yard, once, but that's another story.



IT H A P -
pened like
this: We
had been cele-
brating the
movies for ten
years in *Col-
liers's* and the
Post, and in
all that time
we hadn't been

presented with a single fox fur, or even an inlaid radio, by the celebrated stars. Of course, we were making tons of money from the big magazines, but what is money to an artist? We wanted to go off to some little desert town like Indio, buy or start a newspaper, and live the simple—maybe silly—life. Perhaps we could invent some village characters to play with and, who knows, the paper might quietly spread to the Outlands.

Green Pastures Close at Home

WE TALKED it over with our intimates, and one evening somebody suggested doing the same thing right here. After all, Beverly Hills was a small town, we knew the mayor, the police fellows, the fire lads and the village drunkards. Furthermore, with a town full of 'celebrities' we wouldn't have to invent our characters. It was a perfect set-up for our editorial dreams.

We bought a two-thirds interest in a small print shop, and assumed debts and 'accounts receivable.' The latter, however, turned out to be mostly figures of speech. So the transaction proved to be not so hot. Furthermore, we soon learned that our equipment was far from adequate; we had to have our linotyping done in Hollywood and our printing way down on Central Avenue. All we could do in Beverly Hills was to set the ads and make up the paper.

God-Parents

THE 'VOLUNTEER help' idea that has made SCRIPT unique among successful magazines began with the first issue. Florence Hayden, an old-time reportorial sidekick of Ye Real Ed back in Kansas, filled up our columns with her wit and keen observations. Then there was tall Jack ("Man of Two Worlds") (Ainsworth) Morgan, who not only wrote his page of "J.A.M. Berries," but worked on the make-up at the print shop and then chauffeured heavy metal page-forms to the printery, twelve miles away. On Tuesday night we'd sometimes get to bed as early as 2:00 A.M. Finally we sold the darned old print shop to Jack Chancer, who by the way, is prepared to print

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your invitations, letter-heads, book plates and what-not (adv.) and do'em darned well ('nother adv.).

Turning Back the Pages

WHATEVER SUCCESS SCRIPT has had certainly is not due to the lofty standards proclaimed by most magazines and newspapers. The fact is, from the beginning SCRIPT has never been high-falutinly purposeful. You may see how importantly we regarded our mission by the editorial in our first number. Here it is:

Our Low Aims

LET US BE truthful. Our first purpose is not 'service," nor "boosting for Beverly" nor even "Holding Aloft the Flag of America and Standing Squarely upon the Constitution!" We will endeavor to do all these things in our own quaint way, but our *first* purpose is—CIRCULATION! For circulation means advertising, and advertising means money. And we need money. Not only to keep the paper going, but to pay our domestic accounts. We have risked a lot in starting SCRIPT, and we simply must eat, if only to keep up appearances. Furthermore, our old Rickenbacker literally guzzles gas, and our tall wife requires yards and yards of brocade to make her the simplest frock.

Therefore, we need subscribers. But subscribers subscribe only when their interests are aroused or their fancies are tickled. We hope to both arouse and tickle. Newspapers are edited from two points of view, to entertain and to inform. We shall endeavor to combine the two. First, we hope to entertain by review, comment and story, and by observing and recording the capers of our citizenry in a light and happy manner. Should Tom Mix, for instance, attend church in white riding panties, it would probably stir us to comment on the double phenomenon. Or should Irving Hellman fall off his horse during one of our street parades, the collapse of such handsome dignity might lead to a sprightly cartoon.

Next, we shall inform you of the liveliest doings in Beverly Hills, where the most extraordinary things happen daily. We shall note the rise (but never the fall!) in real estate values. We shall record the activities of our un-Common Council, as well as the yachting antics of our perennial Mayor. Our dramatic criticisms will be free and unbiased, unless Harry Beaumont should threaten to raise our rent, in which case we would be compelled to say pleasant things regarding his productions.



We shall knock our ridiculous neighbors and jealous rivals, showing them up as simply sub-normal communities with the mark of rural loway stamped all over their funny maps. We may even bean-shoot at the P.E. tracks that run so painfully through our equator. And should occasion arise, we shall hiss and boo any improvement association formed to boost a section of the town that is antagonistic to our personal real

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estate investments . . . Furthermore, we cannot be bought—unless the terms are particularly satisfactory.

Thus we have told you our aims and purposes. If you care for them, subscribe to SCRIPT. If you don't—well, we shall hope you choke, and in hoping you choke, we shall hope we get our hope. But don't choke; cough up a dollar and let's go.



Now on with the Story

WHAT'S HAPPENED since is history, the meticulous would call it 'profane history.' SCRIPT has grown in circulation and spirit, both largely due to the friendliest lot of contributors in the world.

Our writers all tell us it is worth *something* to be able to say any god-darned thing they wish, and not have to write 'down to the gang,' or *at* the peculiar tastes and idiosyncrasies of an editor. That is the only compensation the big fellows enjoy. To the less known writers and illustrators all SCRIPT can offer is a swell show-case, for curiously enough the Sunshine Paper is read in almost every big editorial office in the country, with the result that young SCRIPT contributors have gained their attention and have clicked in many of the Outland magazines and papers. Indeed, it is their Outlandish successes that constitute our greatest excitement and compensation.

The Men Behind the Editorial Guns

THE FELLOWS who pay the printer, however, are the advertisers. During the first year or so, local merchants believed in us, but the big fellows, knowing the dreadful mortality among infant publications (95 per cent!) held pretty well aloof. But after SCRIPT survived the worst depression the country has ever experienced, they began to realize that it has become a darned healthy sheet, read by exactly the bunch, particularly the notables of the movies, they wanted to reach. True, some of 'em can't quite understand *why* it pulls; but one and all, they insist that it does. The reason, of course, is obvious. When the biggest headliners in pictures help *write* our ads, it's a cinch that they must read them. We recently had a phone call

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from one of the biggest studios. "Bob, you are a darned heavy cross for us to carry. Every day we get letters and telegrams from Soanso Cigarettes, Whachamacallum Soap and the tooth-paste fellows asking why *they* can't get the big stars in on their advertising. I have to reply that it's a personal thing between you and them, and that they'll do it *only* for SCRIPT."



Our Test of Vulgarity

ONE REASON SCRIPT can never become a big, national success is that it is not edited for the gang. Indeed it is peculiarly a class magazine, addressed to people with definite Script-shaped heads. We had often noted the peculiar difference between the spoken and the printed word. Nice people, socially agreeable, will relax, tell amusing stories, and discuss this and that. The same fun spirit, however, is never found in a newspaper or magazine. We decided to be natural, and if we heard a story at a mixed social gathering of our own kind of folk, to tell it. Surely if we could, or would, recount the charwoman story to Father Mullins, Dean Fleetwood or Father Neal Dodd, why should we smugly hide it from our readers? We didn't.

