

STUDIOS



SERVICES

# White: all the bells and whistles

BY DUSTIN DINOFF

**W**illiam F. White president Bill White and chairman Paul Bronfman are well aware of the competitive nature of the production equipment supply industry. Staying on top of the latest in film gear is a daunting task, even for veterans of the service game such as they, and one of the keys, from the White/Bronfman perspective, is to keep current on the unmerciful flow of new equipment that comes down the pike as filmmaking technologies continue to advance.

*Noon* (New Line), *Ghetto Superstar* (New Line), *The Skulls* (Universal), *Wind at My Back* (Sullivan), *Bless The Child* (Paramount), and the recently wrapped *The Ricky Nelson Story* (Pebblehut).

The company also accommodates smaller scale productions like the upcoming sequel to *Strange Brew*, *Home Brew* starring Dave Thomas and Rick Moranis (Home Brew Productions). Bronfman says from wfw's perspective, indications are that both production budgets and equipment budgets are growing.

"The shows are getting bigger," says Bronfman. "Productions are becoming more demanding and more technically challenging."

A new wfw location is set to open in Alberta at the Calgary Studio Centre, in August. The state-of-the-art facility, located on a renovated

air-force base, boasts 20,000 square feet of space. Also nearly ready to open is the new Moli-Flex/White studio complex in Montreal, known as Cine Cite Montreal. Compared with Moli-Flex/White's other Montreal locations, in Ville La Salle and Cote St. Paul, Cine-Cite will be the largest and has an on-site airstrip.

William F. White, Bill White's father, founded the production service company that bears his name in 1963. It was established as a full-service lighting and grip company, and today under the direction of Bill White and Bronfman, wfw has become the largest camera, lighting, grip and theatrical supply company north of the 49th.

With offices in Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa and Halifax, and affiliates in Wilmington, N.C., Budapest and London, Eng., wfw supplies equipment to all parts of the world. The company's success, according to White and Bronfman, comes from a trust built over time with nearly every major production company on the continent.

"We are partners in production,"

says Bronfman. "It's not like other businesses where it is a pure customer-supplier relationship. We really are on their side and we will work within their budgets, large and small."

wfw has also entered into a joint venture with Ryerson Polytechnic

University and created the Professional Cinematography Course.

The program offers classroom lectures as well as practical hands-on training at wfw's Toronto location.

"We stay competitive by bringing the kids in here early on and

getting them exposed to the people we have here and just trying to make a good impression," says White. "We will stay competitive by embracing the talent coming up and exposing them to what we have available."

"Everything goes into new gear so we can stay one step ahead of the competition," says Bronfman.

wfw is constantly upgrading its equipment, having made recent investments in new generation Arriflex and MovieCam cameras, Zeiss Ultra Prime and Cooke S4 lenses, Arri Ruby Sevens, Chapman PeeWee rvs and much more. According to Bronfman and White, the company invests a large portion of its revenue back into new equipment to keep up to date.

"Basically after we pay salaries and rent, we pump every dollar the company has back into new equipment," says Bronfman. "Everything goes into new gear so that we can stay one step ahead of the competition."

White says American companies take advantage of wfw's catalogue regularly, knowing the company will be able to fully service even the most complex shoots.

"One of the reasons White does as well as we do with respect to American shows that need more bells and whistles than Canadian ones is because we have all of the bells and whistles," says White.

wfw is currently supplying equipment for such projects as the Jackie Chan feature *Shanghai*