



The Horse, The Bull, The Dogs and The Suspicious Mind

BOB COMAN AND TROUBLE

The Horse,

The Bull,

The Dogs

and

The Suspicious Mind

Why?

First of all because the material was still laying around; unfinished business, in the can, gathered at excessively high cost-- it needed to see the light of day. Who said; a film that has no audience, is not a film? He or she is right!

Why did it take so long?

The film almost crushed me. I am not a quitter by nature, so it took a ridiculous long time to solve it.

Solve what?

Find the structure of the story and an effective way to present it.

What did you eventually come up with?

You know what? It solved itself.

How?

By opening my eyes, allowing to see what was there.

~~then~~ then

Than what?

The story unfolded itself in the most natural pace imaginable: as it was shot.

How did you arrive at that approach?

I was re-watching a first draft; a VHS off-line rough cut of a film, a co-production for KRO and IKON (Dutch station-wide broadcasters, ed.). This film was about my own grandmother who moved into an elderly home. The film documented the process of transition. The process of the making was embedded in a 'Young Talent' program, allowing 5 'promising' directors to portray family matters. Of which my film was one. And it was, ~~to my amazement~~, strictly guided by a team of broadcast people and producers and editors. It literally went like this. After showing a rough-cut of the

film they said: "Please Bart, leave the room, so we can discuss about it without you present, form our opinion and we have some one sent to you when we are finished. Go down the ~~can line~~ ^{TO CANTINE} and wait there for further instructions". ~~That~~ ^{of course}, my cut was butchered. The eventual broadcasted version, some 5 or 7 or maybe more cuts later was their cut. And you forget about all that afterwards, thinking this is normal. You learn your lesson, thinking: it is my own fault, maybe I was to vain to get involved in this project anyway. You heal your wounds and move on. But what struck me when watching ~~the~~ ^{that} first cut again was how remarkably close it was to communicating a real, honest, authentic experience - a film about a grandmother made by her grandson. And for a moment I realised how incapable I was then to defend that cut during all those meetings. Now that I have learnt that to offend is the best way to defend, I saw the need to respect the initial authentic intuitive motivation that is in the material.

Years later I interviewed the famous Dutch film-editor Ot Louw, in who's company I had fulfilled my Filmschool internship, and he

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choice

said it like this: The first ~~choice~~ usually is the best.

I thought it was time to open my eyes to accepting and appreciating the truth. ~~How ugly that may be sometimes. TV people tend to think in formats; it needs to be pressed into preconceived structures. All fine with me. With the but: do not expect me to watch that shit and don't expect me to deliver that shit. I refuse to watch TV and work for these guys and babes anymore!~~

This film was shot on film. Tell us a bit of how it came about.

In 2007 I returned from a film-shoot in India. It was a great adventure. Exporting unexposed and imported exposed filmstock after '9/11' is quite a challenge. Every-time you have your stock go through the airport x-ray machines it adds a bit to the exposure, eventually leading to a thin layer of unwanted exposure. Your ~~material~~ material degenerates. You want it to look good. You work hard to make decent exposure and all that and ~~what~~ WANTS it to appear as such on the screen. Truth of the matter is that you

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have to do a lot of talking with airport security, but that these professionals are very willing to support you and that is great. It requires an effort, but it is worth it. After the shoot I wrote this article for the Netherlands Society of Cinematographers website and it was in praise of Kodak stock, telling a bit of the adventures along the way. A Kodak representative got word of it and I was approached with a request.

Which was?

They were about to launch a brand new stock

The kodak Vision 3?

INVESTED

THAT

Yes, that's right. They just ~~invest~~ 1 Billion dollar in new stock and were about to introduce it world wide. And they asked me to test it and write about it.

To which you replied?

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SAID

No, no I can not do that I side...

You are kidding!

Yes. ~~I respond as I always did:~~ I was flattered and saw an opportunity.

Which was?

Film is expensive ~~right~~. The raw stock, development, camera-equipment, all that, it is very expensive. So when ever there is an opportunity you start focussing, after the initial flattering has been dealt with, how to deal with it professionally.

What did you do?

~~Quite rebellious I took it a different direction. I proposed for it to go out of the box. Here's what I did.~~ Normally a test involves that you go into a studio with a model and you make all these different exposures, under- over, and all these different

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NORMAL

THEN

developments, pull, push, normal development. That you have it developed and printed and look at the results.

shoot

Let me guess: you proposed to go to India and shoot another film there?

No no, close (laughs): I proposed to shoot a film though, do also a test in the studio to get things over with, but to shoot a real film. To battle test the stock.

In India?

Well I didn't have a real idea by then. But then the people at Kodak said OK, we go with that. We supply 35 mm and 16 mm stock for you to shoot with, we supply camera-equipment and development and printing and scanning to video.

Yes?

THE

So my question became: But what had it to be about? And here is

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where the seed of the project started to become real, get to the surface, become conscious.

What did it become about?

If I look back, and this is what I keep telling my son who is a second year in high-school, every choice is a choice for excellence to begin with. Whether you go skateboarding or do your homework, every choice is a choice for excellence. You form a picture what you want to achieve, develop a plan of how to achieve that and then you get to work doing it. There is no cheating. ~~I can go past his room, and he can stick a book under his nose;~~ eventually the real work needs to be done. And this is great about professionalism: you have certain parameters to operate within. In the field of film you have a certain amount of stock, which can only be exposed once, you have a certain amount of shooting time, after which the equipment needs to be returned, you have a certain amount of latitude within which you need to expose your material.

And you need a subject?

Yes.

How did you find the subject?

I had a neighbour by that time, by the name of Peter de Bie. We lived in this apartment building by the sea in IJmuiden. And he ran and is still running a beach restaurant. He also was a former convicted supplier of substances for the production of chemical drugs, XTC. He had done his time and learnt a lesson. A former millionaire now running the beach ^{restaurant} of his uncle. A big man with quite a story. After I got the Kodak go-ahead I approached him asking: would you be willing to ^{collaborate} ~~cooperage~~ on a film with me?

To which ^{he} said?

He said yes.