In which we "cover" a WTBS live taping...

We've been amused of late to see unsigned film clips in Tech Talk, written in the narrative style and utilizing the editorial "we" of the New Yorker. These efforts we understand to be the work of Peter Spackman, a technical writer whose usual literary output consists of the excellently composed, magnificently printed "Reports on Research" which the Institute sends to the MIT Associates and to participants in the Industrial Lines Program. The New Yorker initiatives are meeting with much enthusiasm among MIT's hired writers, we're told, and even Director of New Services Robert Byers is thinking of trying his hand at one—annonymously, of course.

Looking at the latest New Yorker initiatives in last week's Tech Talk, it seemed to us that it would be so much fun to write that way, and so easy, too, that we were looking around for some event to "cover," as journalists say. At first, thought of running into Mr. Spackman in an aesthetically pleasing way, and asking him a few questions, but while we were pacing up and down Massachusetts Ave.-at last Saturday, detaching with ourselves the feasibility of asking the question, we noticed that the door to Building Nine, which would normally be locked at this hour, was open by a brown naugahyde half of what might be a container for a reel of recording tape. Picking up the doorstop, we discovered the letters "WTBS" stenciled in white paint on its side, and we decided to investigate within.

Our search for a New Yorker initiation was not, of course, a leisurely one. We also discovered the "failing," a large, well-equipped lecture hall, with plush blue seats in sharply rising rows. On the stage area, a number of young men were setting up two boom microphones, while another played fluidly upon an electric organ. At a table off to the side, an audio engineer was constantly experimenting with what we guessed were volume levels.

We introduced ourselves to a stout, literate gentleman wearing a black shirt, black necks and shoes, and a white ascot tie and white suit with bulb-bottomed trousers, who was to be the star of the show, "Eugene Oregon," although his real name isn't Schindler. We began by asking him, while the engineer was the center of the stage area, what was the back-feed, with another boy or another, what "live taping" meant. "Live taping," Paul said, "means that whatever happens, the tape will roll."

Paul supplied us with the names of the other participants in the taping. Alan Baumbach was to be organist and would supply a number of folklore voices as needed. (Harry Klein, who was passing behind a podium, would be the announcer.) The engineer's name was Jeff Rubin. At the other side of the stage from the engineer's table sat a young woman in jeans and a sweatshirt with "MIT Stud House" lettered upon it in orange. Paul's finale, Sherri Grotstein. She held a number of papers in her hand, noted the words, the "Laugh," "Clap," "Hush," and one of which she would hold up on occasion during the upcoming taping.

It was by now 2:30. Some five or six persons had appeared, and would complete the group soon. While the engineer opened his "program openings" ("Hello, hello friends, and welcome to the Eugene Oregon Show -- key, that's what it is"), Paul briefed the audience. "Clapping for radio is a fine art," Paul said. "There's a way to clap that makes it sound as if there are twice as many people in the audience. You just bang your hands together fast." He suggested that the audience practice clapping, and Sherri held up the sign that said "Clap a Lot."

Then Paul said that the audience should please turn to page 8.

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Dealing, from pg. 5

needed to live on. It turned out to be $40 or $50 at first. Thanks to Paul and Williams, there are a number of Harvard graduates in the industry now, including several from his class, the class of '65. Dealing, in spite of the pretensions which it, seems, are ineradicable in any advertisement, is little more than a fine entertainment vehicle. The drama that is the backdrop to the laughs and the stress and the strain is the deal itself: is the world a better place or a worse place for the picture to have been made? The message could just as well be that people who sell pot are better than politicians, or that you indeed are not the only people who know a great smog-on-a-bitch like John. (According to the actor who played the role, John Lichaw, the hangman and style were borrowed, at least in part, from people he knew who were so careless with their health that the clothes were burnt out from the same cloth. "I never was anything myself." )

Williams then pressed us to find Dr. Strangelove his favorite film, while not being too sure about his own efforts. "I don't really like all my films. They are very nice films; they're honest, and the level of craft is fairly high." This is true, at least, of Dealing, in which both camera and sound are used to give advantage on several occasions to maintain, create and then suspend moods of agitation and excitement

Part of the high craft level is evident in the careful cutting of this film, which took, according to Williams, only five years, unlike one of his other films which took nine months. He was allowed usually to make the film before he was able to raise the funds, and "the young man who No one who is in the world. The message could just as well be that people who sell pot are better than politicians, or that you indeed are not the only people who know a great smog-on-a-bitch like John. (According to the actor who played the role, John Lichaw, the hangman and style were borrowed, at least in part, from people he knew who were so careless with their health that the clothes were burnt out from the same cloth. "I never was anything myself." )

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