

Produced, written and directed by Kent MacKenzie
Cinematography by Erik Daarstad, Robert Kaufman and John Arthur Morrill
Film Editing by Warner Brown and Sven Walnum
Mary Donahue...Mary
Homer Nish...Homer
Clydean Parker...Claudine
Tom Reynolds...Tommy
Rico Rodriguez...Rico
Clifford Ray Sam...Cliff
Eddie Sunrise...Singer on Hill X
Yvonne Williams...Yvonne

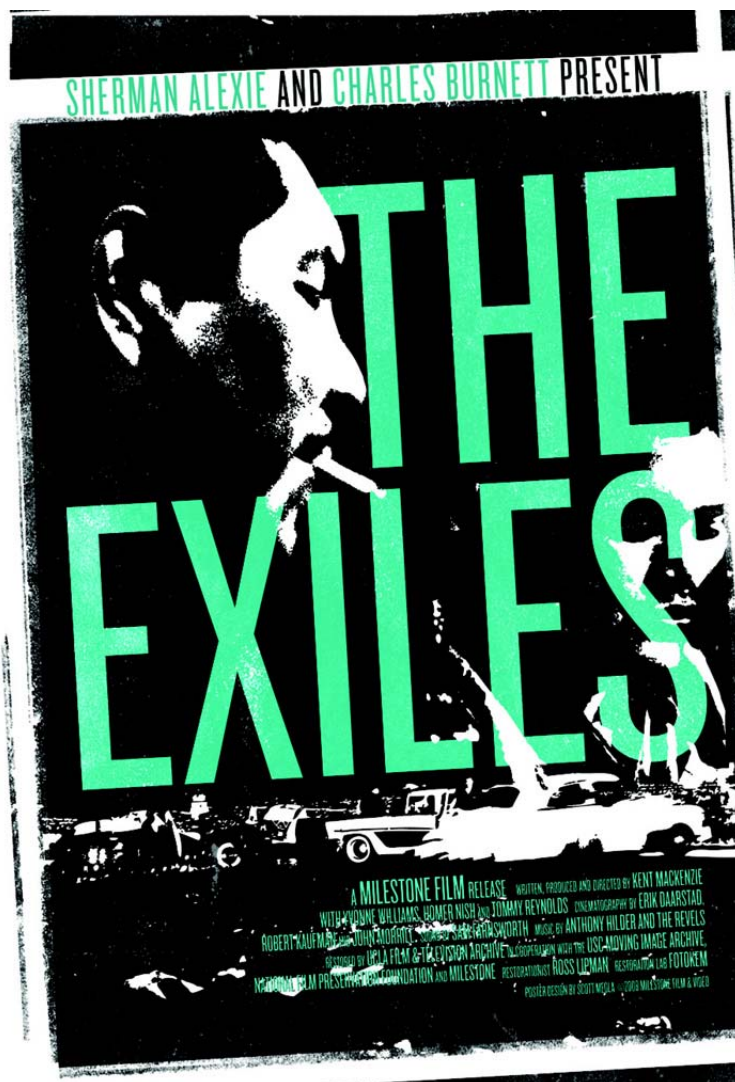
Selected for the National Film Registry, 2009

KENT MACKENZIE (6 April 1930, Hampstead, London, England, UK – May 1980, Marin County, California, USA) directed and produced only three feature films: *Saturday Morning* (1971), “The Teenage Revolution” (1965), and *The Exiles* (1961).

ERIK DAARSTAD shot 33 films, among them *Lt. Watada* (2010), *Fighting for Life* (2008), *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japanese Art* (1997), *The Hero's Journey: The World of Joseph Campbell* (1987), “The West of the Imagination” (1986), “Roots: One Year Later” (1978), *The Mysterious Monsters* (1976), “National Geographic Specials” (1971-1975), *Saturday Morning* (1971), *Kifaru... The Black Rhino* (1970), *Helen Keller and Her Teacher* (1970), *The Exiles* (1961), “The Rafer Johnson Story” (1961), and *Hell Squad* (1958).

ROBERT KAUFMAN (b. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA) was cinematographer on two films: *Girl to Woman* (1965) and *The Exiles* (1961).

JOHN ARTHUR MORRILL (1935—) was cinematographer on 20 films, among them *Odd Birds* (1985), *The Day Time Ended* (1980), *The Dark* (1979), *Kingdom of the Spiders* (1977), *A Boy and His Dog* (1975), *The Incredible Machine* (1975), *Truck Stop Women* (1974), *The Brotherhood of Satan* (1971), *The Witchmaker* (1969), *How to Succeed with Girls* (1964), *The*



Quick and the Dead (1963), *The Exiles* (1961), *The Hideous Sun Demon* (1959), and *Hell Squad* (1958)

Other than **TOM REYNOLDS**, who appeared in four other films (*Fright* 1956, “Mr. Citizen” 1955, *Niagara* 1953 and *Dark Passage* 1947), none of the actors in *The Exiles* ever appeared in any other films.

(The text that follows is all courtesy of Milestone Films, distributor of *The Exiles*)

Kent MacKenzie

Born to an American father and an English mother in Hampstead, London, England on April 4, 1930, Kent first attended an English public school, The Hall, where the smartly-cut jacket with embroidered crest initiated him into the realm associated with “the-old-school-tie” upbringing. His father, Dewitt Mackenzie, was the head of the London Bureau of the Associated Press during the 1930’s. At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Dewitt Mackenzie settled in New York as a Foreign News Analyst for AP. After being shuttled back and forth across the Atlantic five times before he was nine years old, Kent Mackenzie settled into grammar school in Bronxville, NY.

He completed his high school education at Bronxville High, and matriculated to Dartmouth College in the fall of 1947.

There, Kent majored in English Literature and found his interest in motion pictures stimulated by a professor of English Drama, Benfield Pressey, who had recently spent a summer in Hollywood watching films in production. At Dartmouth, Pressey initiated a course in film writing, which Kent attended. “The surge of interest in movies, not the course, nearly cost me my B.A. degree,” Kent once said. “A bunch of fellows I ran around with kept records and tallied up the fact that we averaged seeing nine pictures a week during one semester alone.” The germ of *The Exiles* may very well have struck root in Mackenzie’s mind during that time. During one summer vacation, Kent, a long, lean type, was a tennis counselor at a summer camp in Maine where the craft counselor was an Onondaga Indian named Tom Two Arrows. The friendship that developed between Mackenzie and Two Arrows (who became a successful Indian artist and professional dancer) certainly influenced Kent’s later interest in the problems of American Indians.

After graduating from Dartmouth in June 1951, Kent made plans to go to Hollywood, but was interrupted by “Greetings from the President,” who, it seemed had plans for him in the Army. In October 1951, Kent enlisted in the Air Force, and later entered Officer Candidates’ School at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He emerged in December 1952 as a 2nd Lieutenant and was sent to Germany the following April. Mackenzie completed his duty as an aircraft control officer there, and was discharged in September 1953.

In October of that year he counted his slim savings, bought a used car and set out for Hollywood. He arrived in the motion picture capitol with \$40, the clothes he was wearing, and the beat-up car. Investing a dime in the LA Times, Kent located and took a job with a greeting-card factory. In January 1954 he enrolled in the University of Southern California Cinema Department, attending night classes. Shortly afterward he earned a scholarship that (along with his GI Bill allotment) permitted him to quit his job and attend regular daytime classes. His graduate film project *Bunker Hill—1956*, described the plight of elderly pensioners living in a rundown tenement section near the Los Angeles City Hall who were faced with eviction to make way for proposed Civic Center improvements. The film earned a screening at the Edinburgh Film Festival that year and won the Silver Award accorded to University productions by the Screen Producers’ Guild and *Look* magazine. Kent attributed the greatest single influence in his attitude and thinking about films to his USC professor, Andries Deinum who taught courses in the history, theory and writing of motion pictures. Kent credited Deinum with having solidified his concept of the motion picture media. Instead of channeling his talent toward a single skill in the field — such as writing, directing, editing, or production — Deinum inspired Kent to master the whole art. As a result, Kent

determined to become, as he phrases it, “a film author.” His first job in the film field, with an industrial film company Parthenon Pictures in Hollywood, gave him valuable and widespread experience. He spliced, edited, wrote, directed, (and acted in) a number of 16mm films. It was as a “film author” that he tackled *The Exiles*.

Kent edited, produced and directed one other feature film, *Saturday Morning*, in 1971 before he passed away in Marin County, California in May 1980. *The Exiles* is proof of the “rare combination of quiet confidence, grim determination and...mature outlook” (from *Profile of a Filmmaker*) that characterized the filmmaker Kent Mackenzie.

Mackenzie can be seen several times in *The Exiles*. In the first scene where Yvonne goes to the cinema, just to fill the seats, he is sitting right behind her. (Sam Farnsworth, the production head is sitting in the back row wearing a hat and in the next scene in the theatre scene, this time Kent’s then-wife Paulie is sitting behind Yvonne.) During the Hill X scene (approximately 63:20 into the film), you can also briefly see Mackenzie leaning into the shot in front of the camera. Erik Darstaad said this was a fairly frequent problem during the shoot — the director would get so excited about a scene that he forgot where he was sitting.

Kent Mackenzie first conceived of *The Exiles* during the making of his short student film *Bunker Hill—1956* while a student at the University of Southern California. In March 1956 he read an article by Dorothy Van de Mark in *Harper’s Magazine* entitled “The Raid on the Reservations” about government attempts to obtain Indian land. Mackenzie traveled to Arizona, visited some of the reservations there, and decided to document an Apache’s relocation to Los Angeles.

Mackenzie and his filmmaker friends had grown weary of glossy Hollywood escapist films with pat stories and clear-cut endings. Instead, they were excited by the documentaries of Robert Flaherty, Joris Ivens, Basil Wright, Humphrey Jennings, Georges Rouquier, Sidney Meyers and George Stoney and by the realist fiction films of Jean Renoir, Jean Vigo, Vittorio de Sica, and John Huston. Mackenzie thought that all these great filmmakers shared a common thread — their “concern with physical reality was not for its own sake but to create living and vital images and symbols from recognizable elements of everyday life.”

At this time there were many young directors around the world feeling the same way. These “realist” directors like John Cassavetes, Lionel Rogosin and the French New Wave filmmakers took advantage of the new technological innovations — including lightweight cameras, zoom lenses, highly directional microphones, small battery lights and portable sound equipment — and started a revolution in cinema. Their films challenged established standards of casting, storytelling, cinematography and editing.



In July 1957, Mackenzie began to hang around with some of the young Indians in downtown Los Angeles, starting in the bars close to Third and Main Streets. After a couple of months, he broached the subject of making a film that would present a realistic portrayal of Indian life in the community. After hearing his companions concerns about false stereotypes of Indians in films, Mackenzie said he wanted them to help write the script, do their own narration, and be partners in the production.

In November 1957, Mackenzie first wrote down his idea of a documentary on the Indians to be titled *The Trail of the Thunderbird*. Later shortened to just *Thunderbird*, it was partly a tribute to the Indians' heritage and partly to the inexpensive fortified wine that they favored. Other titles later included *The Night is a Friend*, *A Long Way Home* and *Go Ahead On, Man* before the team settled on *The Exiles* in 1960. Rather than telling the story of the relocation of Indians from the reservation, Mackenzie decided that the film would focus on the people already living in Los Angeles's Bunker Hill area. He chose this neighborhood because he was already familiar with it and because the city was threatening to take it over for commercial development.

From the Bunker Hill residents he had befriended, Mackenzie chose Yvonne Williams, Homer Nish and Tommy Reynolds as his main characters. With their help, Mackenzie worked and reworked a script based on their own experiences. The cast was interviewed and these recordings were later used on the soundtrack to convey the characters' inner

thoughts as voice-over monologues. As participants in the production, the cast and crew were promised back-end money after the film was released. Personal letters from his files indicate that Mackenzie was almost obsessive about fulfilling his promises to them. In later years he hired a private detective to find some of the investors and cast in order to pay them their share of the royalties.

In making *The Exiles*, Mackenzie wrote, "I tried very hard not to be attracted by the strangeness of the environment as opposed to my own, and to avoid the 'romance of poverty.' I had seen many of the so-called 'ash-can' documentaries in which the squalor and horror of poverty were emphasized to the exclusion of all else, and I hoped that I wouldn't superimpose any such illusions on these people. I wanted to show their own point of view in the film if I could."

Mackenzie and cinematographers Erik Darstaad and John Morrill considered *The Exiles* to be a documentary because it was based on scenes that had happened in the Indians' own lives. Seen today, the film needs to be evaluated in the context of late 1950s filmmaking. The standards for what constitutes a documentary have changed over time. Robert Flaherty's *Moana* (1926), the first film ever labeled a "documentary," featured staged and re-shot scenes. Later on,

during the 1960s, the cinema verité movement emphasized capturing the actual moment without editorializing or editing. In more recent years, techniques of re-enactment and dramatization have become popular again. For Mackenzie it was important that the scenes in *The Exiles* were scripted and rehearsed in a free and collaborative manner. He also always pointed out that *all* film is subjective by nature. And watching the reactions of the cast when they first saw the film, Mackenzie reported, was exactly like paging through a family album: Here was an old acquaintance! Didn't her hair look great? Do you remember that friend's old apartment?

The shooting of *The Exiles* began in January 1958 and the first trial composite print was privately screened in April 1961. Premiering in the Venice and San Francisco Film Festivals that year, the film received acclaim from many critics. In May 1961, responding to audience reactions, the filmmakers added a short historical prologue featuring Edward S. Curtis's early photographs of American Indians. However, distributors labeled the film as "too difficult." *The Exiles* remained on the festival circuit for several years including the 1964 inaugural New York

Film Festival. That same year distributor Pathé Contemporary acquired the film, but rather than bear the expense of a theatrical run, Pathé created a 16mm negative and offered the film only on the nontheatrical market. By the late 1970s, *The Exiles* was shown mostly on poor quality video for occasional classroom screenings. Sadly, Kent Mackenzie died in 1980, largely forgotten by the film world.



It was Thom Andersen's compilation documentary *Los Angeles Plays Itself* which kicked off the rediscovery of this lost masterwork. Andersen contacted the daughters of Mackenzie to receive permission to use footage to illustrate the lost neighborhood of Bunker Hill. When Cindi Rowell, then director of acquisitions at Milestone saw the documentary, the company began to inquire about acquiring the film. However, it appeared that the only existing print of *The Exiles* was a 35mm print that the director had donated to USC's Cinema Archive. Also on a closer inspection, there seemed to be dozens of "interior" songs played throughout the film would require expensive music clearances. So the idea of distributing this wonderful film was reluctantly shelved. Two years later, Milestone received a phone call saying that when cinematographer John Morrill inspected the materials at USC he had discovered both the original negative *and* the fine grain interpositive for the film. Co-DP Erik Daarstad then called to explain that music rights were not a problem because all the many songs were created by the same composer, Norman Knowles, and performed by his group The Revels. As "works for hire" they were written and performed expressly for the film. The Revels' other famous appearance in cinema occurs in *Pulp Fiction*. Their song *Comanche* plays over the Bruce Willis's samurai scene. Norman Knowles writes "I remember recording

It's Party Time for the movie. Kent screened the scene with a projector, showing the clip on the wall. The piano playing [by Tommy] on the table at the bar was made up on the spot. I think we also did *Revellion* for the movie. *Comanche* was written for the movie and cut out.”

Although the original negative and fine-grain (interpositive) existed for the film, it was decided that a theatrical distribution of the film could put the materials at risk. So Milestone, in cooperation with USC’s film archivist Valarie Schwan, brought the film to the UCLA Film & Television Archive. There, preservationist Ross Lipman (responsible for the restoration of *Killer of Sheep* as well as films by John Sayles, Kenneth Anger and John Cassavetes) spent many months creating preservation materials and making sure that the new prints would sparkle. John Morrill assisted on the approval of the new prints.

On The Exiles

The Exiles is the story of one wild but typical night in the lives of three young American Indians who have left their reservations to live in downtown Los Angeles. It presents the lifestyles and actions of these people that are “not true of all Indians of the time ... but typical of many.”

Starting at four o’clock on a Friday afternoon, Yvonne, a young, pregnant Apache, wanders around the shops of Grand Central Food market in downtown Bunker Hill, LA, as she gazes through glass windows that provide the barrier between her mundane existence and the unattainable. The film follows Yvonne, her husband Homer (Hualapi), and Tommy, a Mexican who lives with them, through fourteen hours of their everyday life. With the fall of night comes the drinking, card-playing, picking up girls, fighting and dancing of the boys, that is juxtaposed against Yvonne’s lonely, uneventful existence. These two scenarios sum up the confused lives of a group that is part of a new generation caught between opposing forces — the past versus modern day living.

Yvonne trudges up the hill from the market to a two-room tenement apartment where she lives with Homer, Tommy and four of their Indian friends. After she cooks supper for them, the boys drop her off at a double-feature movie, and then go to The Ritz, a large bar on Main Street frequented by Indians from all over the area.

There they meet friends from many different Indian nations, drink, laugh, and play the jukebox. Homer leaves to go to a poker game with an Apache named Rico. The two journey off together, buy a big jug from Royal Liquor, stop by Rico’s house to get some “bread,” and then stumble through the streets to the poker game. Meanwhile, Tommy and a Choctaw friend pick up two Indian girls and take off for a spree of wild drinking and driving through the downtown streets and tunnels of Bunker Hill.

Bored, Homer soon leaves the poker game and returns to the bars on Main Street. Restless and fed-up with everything he sees around him, he picks a fight, which erupts into a bar-wide brawl.

Yvonne, meanwhile, leaves the movie theater and wanders slowly through the streets, window-shopping and musing about her life in Los Angeles, which she sees as better than life on the reservation. But her reflection in the glass evokes the hopelessness and despair she expresses: “I wanted to get married in a church and be blessed to have a nice house and I wanted two little girls and two boys... I used to pray everynight before I went to bed and ask for something that I wanted, and I never got it... so I just gave up.” She roams through the streets accompanied by these thoughts until finally she arrives at the apartment of a girlfriend.

At 2 am the bars close; hundreds of Indians pour out onto Main Street, and many of them take off for a windswept hill overlooking the city center. The loud engines and loud horns that barrel up the hill are soon drowned out by the drumming, singing and dancing to old Indian chants that is reminiscent of the group’s life on the reservation. Instead of the stars above them, the night is lit by the lights of Los Angeles spread for miles beneath them. Homer explains,

“Indians like to get together where they’re not gonna be bothered or watched or nothing like that. Want to get out there and just be free...nobody watchin’ every move you make.”

The night goes on into the early hours of morning — singing, dancing, and fighting. At dawn, the Indians return to the city below. It is 6 am; the bars re-open to soon be filled again.

Homer, Tommy and some girls careen into the alley and noisily stagger toward their apartment. Yvonne, sleeping at her girlfriend’s, is awakened and looks out of the window silently watching them weave into the distance.

This is the story of *The Exiles*. There has been no change. There will be no change. Today will soon become another night.

Kent Mackenzie on *The Exiles*:

“The Exiles is an “anti-theatrical” and “anti-social-documentary” film. It was conceived, not necessarily in protest against those two forms of film usage, but rather in search for a true and different format which would reveal the complex problems of the Indians in the city. Instead of leading an audience through an orderly sequence of problems-decisions-action and solution on the part of the characters, we sought to photograph the infinite details surrounding these people, to let them speak for themselves, and to let the fragments mount up. Then, instead of



supplying a resolution, we hoped that somewhere in the showing, the picture would become, to the viewer, a revelation of a condition about which he will either do something, or not — whichever his own reaction dictates.”

Pre Production: Getting to Know his Subject

In July 1957, with encouragement from Charles A. Palmer, president of Parthenon Pictures and his employer at the time, Kent Mackenzie took an extended leave to visit the San Carlos Indian Reservation near Gobe, Arizona. The object: to research a film on the state of the American Indian today — his rights, problems, etc. There he learned that the problems confronting the Reservations (feeding, housing and educating a growing Indian population on ever-depleting resources) were, in themselves, creating and even more urgent and spectacular problem; namely, what is happening to the younger generation of Indians who were gravitating to the big cities?

Since the end of World War II, Kent found that more and more of the young people had moved to the cities, looking for job opportunities, better housing conditions, and a new way of life. How were they making out in that new environment so alien to their historic, desert culture? The city, not the Reservation, then became the place to probe for the story of *The Exiles*. The variety and complexities of their problems seemed to grow with each interview. By then Mackenzie was launched on an extensive research job which was to take months, and which ultimately brought him in

touch, either by personal interview, correspondence, or published material, with all of the following: The United States Bureau of Indian Affairs; The Friends Service Committee (a Quaker organization which is active in Indian problems); The Los Angeles Indian Center (operated by Indians for the betterment of their relocated tribes people); various ministers who either were working, or had worked in parishes and

congregations in Indian country; a number of Social Groups who expressed concern over the treatment of Indians; and with professors of Anthropology at both the University of Arizona and the University of California at Los Angeles. Finally, Kent found his story (at least one story) in the downtown bars near Third and Main Streets, Los Angeles. “*The Exiles*,” he hastily admits, “does not propose to reveal the total problem. There are many young Indians who, through their own efforts or the help of the Indian Bureau Relocation Office, have done quite well in the city. There are others who have done worse, getting involved with dope, prostitution, and crimes of violence. My picture does not touch on either of these extremes, but focuses on just one segment of the Indian population which *does* exist and *is* a part of the total problem.”



Playing Themselves

On Main Street, Kent met Homer, Cliff and Tommy (Hualapi, Choctaw, and Mexican), all leading a rather loose, dissolute life in an environment that seemed to exist only for the moment. Sometimes they worked — in machine shops, printing plants, or tending bar — most of the time they “just knocked around.” Whoever could come up with the money paid the rent, and they all ate and slept at the same place. If the money ran out, they moved some place else; and the move included, of course, the young Apache girl, Yvonne, who was pregnant at the time.

Among the hangers-on is Tommy, a Mexican-Indian, Valentino-type who sometimes tends bar, most of the time just “makes out” with various girls, or anybody who “has the loot, or bread”. Other featured members of the cast are Marilyn, a Pima, who offers her bed to Yvonne to give her some escape from the riotous Friday night party which portends to end in Yvonne’s apartment; Claudine, of Irish/Pueblo stock, whom Tommy picks up at the Ritz Bar for a wild ride through a downtown tunnel which culminates at the all-night soiree on top of Hill X; and Mary, a Pima/Maricopa, the stolid one, who starts out with the merry-makers, pays for the gas for their wide ride and winds up stranded in the rest-room of a filling station. Then there is Homer’s friend Rico, a Jicarilla Apache, who stakes Homer in a losing poker game.

All of these people, some of whom were recruited on

the spur of the moment during the shooting (but who, like the others, gave long hours over a period of months to the post-shooting recording sessions for *The Exiles*) play themselves in the picture. Just as there was no intent on the part of Mackenzie or his cameramen to exploit these young Indians, neither was there a sense of exploitation among the cast. Mackenzie spent long hours making friends and earning the confidence of these Indians who finally agreed to re-enact a segment of their lives for this

picture. Their trust did not come easily. As Kent stated in an interview with *Film Quarterly* in the spring of 1962, “They accepted me. I wasn’t an outsider. After I wrote the script, I came down and told them what I wanted to do. I introduced the crew to them every time we came down here. We had to work it so it wasn’t like working, or they wouldn’t have done it. They’re really not interested in money. It was more important that we’d promised them a party”.

Each of the members of the crew — the cameramen, the production men, and the sound men had to be introduced separately to the prospective cast. To prepare the cast for the time when the lights and the camera would be bearing down on them, Kent took a sound-recorder and a microphone into the bars and into their apartments, pre-enacted scenes and played back their recorded voices and statements for their approval. At

no time, Kent assured his Indian friends, were they to voice anything or do anything that was not natural to their actual living situation. The shooting script was written with the cooperation of the cast, and the Indians themselves improvised their own dialogue. *The Exiles* would then, when it reached the screen, accurately reflect the 14-hour period in the lives of these young people, from a Friday afternoon until dawn Saturday morning.

The Production: Low-Budget Charm

The Exiles is no “candid-camera” peek or sneak look at a sordid or pathetic situation. The film was lighted, directed and photographed by a group of young Hollywood filmmakers — Mackenzie’s college mates from the Cinema Department of the University of Southern California, fellow employees, and friends holding down a variety of day-today jobs in the motion picture industry. Shooting was launched on January 4, 1958 on a budget of \$539 — Mackenzie’s total savings. Cameras, sound recording equipment, and film was either borrowed or purchased at an absolute minimum cash outlay. Much of the picture was shot on “short ends,” the leftovers of 1,000-foot rolls (varying from 100 to 300 feet of stock) discarded by major film producers. In the end, nearly 55,000 feet of stock was exposed, to be edited into approximately 7,000 feet of finished negative.

Until the picture entered its final phase of editing, sound mixing, and printing, no single investment exceeded \$2,000. Some contributions were as little as \$300. Early the first year, when shooting had been halted for lack of funds, a young man named Warren Brown, then on furlough from the Army, happened to watch some of the un-cut silent footage of the picture. Warren (who became Mackenzie’s brother-in-law) offered Kent \$2,000, his total life savings, as production money to keep the picture going. This money was gratefully accepted, and the Main Street bar sequences were shot.

In order to assure full attendance of the cast and the extras at the long nights of shooting, unit-manager-sound-man Sam Farnsworth instituted a system whereby marked poker chips were doled out to the habitués of the bar, each chip redeemable for a bottle of beer. With this incentive, the background extras who stayed until the legal closing time of 2:00 am remained within camera range for all the bar sequences at a cost which ran from \$40 to \$60 a night

Sequence by sequence, the production ran out of money. In 1959, Mackenzie received a \$1,200 scholarship from the Screen Directors’ Guild of America, given through the University of Southern California, towards the completion of the film and the writing of an academic thesis about its production. Other sources ranged from Kent’s barber who advanced \$1,250, to crewmembers, to society matrons in Pasadena and Brentwood, one of whom put off the purchase of a new car, and instead invested \$2,000 to see the picture get ahead.

Equipment

The principal camera used on the production was a 35mm Arriflex adapted for sound use by the rental of a synchronized motor and a “blimp.” After the first weekend of shooting with the blimp, it was decided that its rental cost was too much of a drain on the fast-dwindling budget. As a result, almost all the

subsequent shooting was done with a “wild” camera, and sound taken, on appropriate occasions, for use as a cue track. A Magnecorder, using ½-inch tape, and a Magnasync recorder, using 16mm sprocketed magnetic sound film, were borrowed for nearly all of the sound work. These two machines were heavily relied on for the post-shooting recording and transferring of the dialogue and narration. Nearly all the sound was re-recorded and dubbed for the picture. This includes the improvised dialogue excerpted from many night-long sessions with the Indian cast, plus the narration, which was done as a “stream of conscious” commentary by the three principal characters. All the voices that are heard in *The Exiles* are those of the Indians themselves, either in looped-dialogue or voice-over-picture narration ... General Film Laboratories in Hollywood agreed to a deferred payment plan for the processing and reduction workprint necessary for the job.

Crew

Shooting was done nights and weekends when the crewmembers could contribute their time and talent. Strict records were kept of the time spent by both cast and crew so that each one will share proportionately if the picture ever makes a profit. These records show that over forty film craftsmen eventually worked on the picture. Included are cameramen, sound men, lighting men, editors, cutters, and numerous young men and women who simply “pitched in to help.” Time spent by these people range from nearly a thousand hours for a few to others who spent only “one night on the hill,” where the all-night, after-hours tribal dance sequence was shot. “Hill X,” as it was known to the Indians, and “Round Hill,” as it appears on the police blotters, was at that time a favorite gathering place where these young Indians liked to meet, drink, dance, and chant tribal songs reminiscent of their Southwestern ancestry. Fights were frequent, and one of these serves as a climax to that sequence ... Shortly after the filming, which required three nights, Hill X became a part of the Los Angeles Dodgers’ program for the construction of a ball park in Chavez Ravine.

Music

Kent Mackenzie decided that all the music in the picture would be “motivated” — coming from juke-boxes, car radios, apartment radios, and TV sets. Over twenty rock-n-roll numbers were written and arranged by Anthony Hilder and The Revels, his 5-piece rock-n-roll band. One of the songs, “Rampage,” was already a hit in the teenage market.

The Native American music heard in the title background and for the dances on the hill are authentic Indian chants. These were led by Mescalero Apaches, Eddie Sunrise Gallerito and his twin cousins Frankie Red Elk and Chris Surefoot. Eddie’s group were professional Indian entertainers, and at that time employed by Disneyland. Eddie had frequently participated informally at dances on Hill X similar to the one photographed and recorded for *The Exiles*. The chant in the Indian Reservation sequence was done by Jacinto Valenzuela who is well known in Southern California Indian circles as a ceremonial leader. The entire sound track, including a meticulous detail of sound effects edited by Thomas Conrad, is alive throughout the 72 minutes of the film.

Some Problems

During the course of the shooting, two of the cameramen, Erik Daarstad and John Morrill, were drafted by the army, fortunately at different times. Both served their enlistments and returned to Hollywood in time to view the first release print on April 28, 1961 — three years and four months after the start of shooting. Robert Kaufman, the cameraman who shot the first scenes in the picture, kept busy over the years in Air Force and industrial picture production for various studios around Hollywood. From the very start several of the cast wound up in and out of jail. Many times, with the crew assembled and waiting, shooting was held up while Mackenzie raised bail money and visited Lincoln Heights Jail to get a cast member out from behind bars and in front of the camera. On one occasion a character had to be “written out” of the script because the charge against the man, who had been prominently photographed the day before, was “un-bailable.” This man, by the way, has served his sentence in San Quentin and been paroled between the date *The Exiles* was started and finished. He still appears in a bit part in the opening sequence. With the windfall of the first substantial amount of money to be contributed to the production by Benjamin Berg and Haskell Wexler, *The Exiles* was edited, the sound effects and music were added, and the picture was dubbed at Ryder Film Services in Hollywood.

Erik Daarstad on the Making of *The Exiles*

Most of us who worked on the production of *The Exiles* met as students in the Cinema Department of University of Southern California in the mid 1950s and it's there that I first met Kent. It was at that time a small, somewhat intimate film school and all of us got to know each other — both through school activities as well as socially.

As we were finishing up our studies around 1957, Kent was already working on launching the production of *The Exiles* and he asked many of his USC friends to assist in whatever capacity they could. He introduced us one by one to his major cast members, mostly all members of various Indian tribes, so that they could come to accept and be comfortable with us and we would get to know them. And for the next two years or so that we were in production we maintained a good relationship with the various people. We spent much time just hanging out at places like the Ritz Bar — one of the major locations in the film. To me — having grown up in Norway it was a very foreign, but fascinating scene. I had to return to Norway in the fall of 1957 and when I returned in March 1958 to become a permanent resident of the US, the first two sequences of the film had been shot with Robert Kaufman as cameraman. I then started to help on additional sequences as money was raised to continue. Robert Kaufman had a regular day job and had less and less time to



devote to the production so I ended up taking over as cameraman. John Morrill was a good friend and roommate, so he also got involved, although he was drafted into the US Army during the production — he first in 1958 and then myself in June of 1959. Fortunately most of the film had been shot by then and we worked on the production when we came back on leave.

The original title of the film was *Thunderbird*. I cannot remember how it got that title — probably because it had something to do with an Indian icon. Ironically, *Thunderbird* was also the name of a very cheap, sweet Gallo wine (at that time 89¢ a bottle) that the Indians used to drink. It was not until late 1959 or 1960 that the film title was changed to *The Exiles*.

Yvonne (Apache) became the leading female character. Clifford (Choctaw) was actually Yvonne's husband or boyfriend, but as time went on and the editing started, it was decided to make Homer (Hualapi) Yvonne's husband, because he was a much stronger character in the film — all this was done with the approval of the cast. Tommy (Mexican-Indian) was the most outgoing character in the cast and Rico (Jicarillo Apache) became another character. In addition there were Claudine (Irish/Pueblo) and Mary (Pima/Maricopa).

Every sequence was carefully planned out. Since the cost of film, processing and print was one of the greatest expenses, Kent did not want to shoot a lot of film. We tried to be very economical. Kent drew up a shot list for the evening's filming and we pretty much stuck to it — although that is not

to say we did not take advantage of opportunities as they came along. It was all a learning experience for us — after all we had just left school and were entering the real world of film production. When the editing started I spent many hours with Kent at the Moviola putting together the various sequences and see how everything worked — or didn't. That process led to thinking of shots and sequences that would help the overall film and consequently we did a lot of pick up shooting to make

sequences much better.

The “cast” was very faithful to the production and to us. It was always a fear that something would happen to them, like ending up in jail for an extended period or other possible scenarios. But it never became a real problem, although one of the people introduced in the apartment sequence in the beginning is never seen again because he had to serve time in jail. There are admittedly certain aspects of these people's lives that the film does not directly touch on.

The film raw stock for the first couple of sequences was bought new. Then Kent found out about a whole batch of film that had been in a train or plane wreck and purchased it from the insurance company. When we ran out of that I used to go up to the camera dept. at Desilu Studios and purchase short-ends (unused portion of larger rolls that they could not use) from *The Lucy Show*.

The only camera we had available to us free of charge came from Parthenon Pictures, the company that Kent worked for. It was a 35mm Arriflex but there was no blimp for it, so for all the dialogue scenes it was noisy and we could only record a cue track. This was later used as a guide in having all the cast members re-record their dialogue in a studio situation. It is hard now to imagine all the work that went into doing this. Later on two occasions, on Hill X and on the reservation sequence, we were able to shoot sync sound, either with a blimp or a Mitchell NC.

The whole process was a very cooperative effort. Kent had his vision of what he wanted to do, but we all contributed to the final product. He had a strong visual sense and I think we were all on the same wavelength as far as camera placement or camera movement was concerned. He pretty much left it up to us as cameramen to design the lighting for the various scenes. There are not many scenes in the film that were not lit or made use of only natural lighting. The purpose was to obtain as natural a look as possible and I think by and large we succeeded in doing this. We had very limited resources. We used a few so-called Masterlites units supplied by Parthenon Pictures and some regular Photofloods and that was it for the most part. There were very limited funds to spend on equipment rentals.

Funding was a continuous problem. Several of us who worked on the film contributed what we could to see the production continue. Toward the end Kent needed about \$8,000 to finish the film, which was a lot of money at this point. He had a screening for Benjamin Berg and the cinematographer Haskell Wexler. They liked what they saw and contributed the necessary funds to finish the film.

I know that for Kent it was a long and frustrating battle to make the film — mainly because of the lack of finances and the continuous struggle to raise money for the film as well as trying to pay rent and put food on the table for himself, his wife and two daughters.

Just about everybody who worked on the film donated his or her time and effort — there was no money to pay anybody. And Kent told me that as time went on it became increasingly difficult to find people to donate their time.

The film originally did not have the current prologue of Edward S. Curtis still photographs, but Kent decided later that it needed something to set the stage, so we went to the UCLA Special Collections Dept. and looked through and selected the stills that were used.

Kent and I as well as John became good friends during the production of *The Exiles* and subsequent years. He depended on us to help him and for us it was a rewarding experience — despite all the problems along the way. We also looked upon it as an important film dealing with an important issue.

I am sure Kent was frustrated that *The Exiles* did not get a wider distribution at the time than it did and consequently leading to other film projects. Kent discussed several potential projects with both John and I, but none of them came to see the light of day. For one about the whole teenage/rock and roll/surfing scene in the early 1960s, we followed for research purposes a young band from Solvang around to various dances in small town Central California.

The next documentary I shot with Kent was a half hour TV show for Wolper Productions called *The Story of a Rodeo Cowboy* that we shot in and around Salinas, California in 1962. In 1964 John and I worked on a short film that Kent did for the USIA called *A Skill for Molina*. After that he edited a 20-minute short film for Saul Bass called *Why Man Creates* that I shot. It won the Academy Award in 1969 for best short documentary. In 1970 both John and I worked again with Kent shooting a film called *Saturday Morning* about a teenage group encounter session. It was released in theaters by Columbia Pictures but had a limited success.

It was the last time Kent and I worked together on a film and as I became busier as a cinematographer and also with my own family, we drifted apart and did not associate as much as we had in the past. It is indeed sad that he died relatively young in 1980 and that his talents as a filmmaker never were quite fully realized as much as I think he had hoped and his friends thought he would. It seems now that with its resurgence, *The Exiles* will be his legacy.



John A. Morrill
(Cinematographer, Co-Producer)

John Morrill was born on March 11, 1935 in a small country town called St. Albans, Vermont. Early in his life, John discovered his first passion — the building and flying of model airplanes. His summers were spent at his uncle's dairy farm in Stowe, Vermont where he worked hard tending to the animals while image after image of simple, rural life were engrained into his mind. As a child, John was taken

to a few films such as *Snow White* and *Bambi*.

In 1948, when his father decided to pursue a doctorate from Columbia University, John was moved to New York City — land of concrete and neon lights. John, bored by such artificial surroundings, found his escape in the world of motion picture. Hours were spent watching films of far off places and other times in the RKO Theater on 82nd Street. Soon after, a friend of John's father exposed John to the developing and printing of photographs. He worked at this for a while until his first year of high school in 1949 when he was given an opportunity to substitute a class in general science for a class in the making of movies. On the first day of class, the teacher turned off the lights and started the projector. Images progressed from a single drop of water to an entire city underwater and drowning. These images of *The River* flooded John's mind and

introduced to him the beginning of a world of film that was beyond what he had ever seen in theatres. Three weeks later, John was given the responsibility of being the cameraman for the class' film. John, excited by this responsibility, slept with that Kodak K-100 camera guarding it with his life.

In 1950, John's family moved to western North Carolina where John was able to acquire a job as a theatre projectionist at the local playhouse. John spent his Saturday mornings, when there wasn't anything playing, running a film two or three times in an attempt to capture the individual *style* of the film — which he read in a book that if successful, could be clearly apparent without knowing the maker of the film.

While attending college at West Carolina University John was approached by the school's football coach to film their games. "Don't follow the ball in the air, let us see the ground plays." After doing this for the next two years, John was also able to borrow the camera to shoot a couple of short films for himself. This inspired him to continue his last two years of college at USC Cinema in Los Angeles, which marked the beginning of his professional career.

For a brief period in the middle of shooting *The Exiles*, John served as an audio-visual technician in the US Army Language School in Monterey, California. John filmed various noteworthy documentaries and feature films throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In addition, from the early 1980s until the mid-1990s, John taught various courses at the USC school of Cinema and TV. John taught until 2002, when he retired, and now lives in El Segundo, California where he spends his days continuing to work on his model airplanes...

The Massacre at Bunker Hill

Bunker Hill is located in downtown Los Angeles. It was a short, steep hill with its peak located roughly around 3rd Street, east of the Harbor Freeway. Around 1867, a real estate developer by the name of Prudent Beaudry purchased a majority of the hill, and developed it into a wealthy section of town featuring beautiful Victorian architecture. Through the early part of the 20th century it remained a home to the wealthy and to help them get up and down the hill, a small funicular railroad was built, supposedly the world's shortest railroad line. The steep 33 degree ascent inspired the builders to name it Angels Flight, and the two



cars Sinai and Olivet.

But by 1955, Bunker Hill had lost its wealthy homeowners and the beautiful homes had become subdivided apartments and fallen upon hard times. It was here that residents John Fante and, after him, Charles Bukowski were inspired to write about the down and out of their neighborhood. Viewing *The Exiles* along with Robert Siodmark's *Cross Cross* and Robert Aldrich's classic *Kiss Me Deadly* show Bunker Hill and what it had become. It was a dark age for architectural preservation and Los Angeles city planners only saw decay and danger, rather than an opportunity to bring the neighborhood back to its previous glory and provide better housing for the community.

Shocked that the city would consider a plan to use the power of eminent domain to turn over land to private developers for personal gain (some believed it to be backed by Norman Chandler, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*), Kent Mackenzie and two of his USC friends — Robert Kaufman and Merl Edelman — decided to make a short student film about Bunker Hill and the Community Redevelopment Agency. However,

news of the film got to the CRA and the university administration forced the young filmmakers to remove any politics from the documentary. Fifty years later, Edelman wrote "We believed then that this outrageous censorship had stripped our movie of its real impact, but we'd salvage what we could. All we had were the pictures of the people and the places themselves, and some truly representative samples of the thinking of the residents... today I believe that what the film is about is much more important than a little more exposure of a little

more abuse of power or even a little more graft." From the making of this film, of course, quickly came Mackenzie's ideas for *The Exiles*.

Many films that are shot on location can be seen as ghostly images of neighborhoods that have changed, with flickering recognition for the odd building or two that still remain. *The Exiles* does that and sadly more, for shortly after,

Bunker Hill was not only cleared of all the beautiful old houses, but *flattened* as the first stage of the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Project. It was perhaps for this very area that the city council changed the height limit of buildings for Los Angeles, finally allowing new buildings to be taller than nearby City Hall. Where once grand mansions stood, faceless skyscrapers were built. Angels Flight was moved from its original location to a half block over and



though a national landmark, has been out of commission since 2001. Luckily, the business district at the bottom of the hill with many historic buildings remain. In the past decade the area has had another growth spurt as the new home to the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels and the Museum of Contemporary Art. But nothing of the past really remains. In fact, for the film version of John Fante's novel *Ask the Dusk* (2006), Bunker Hill had to be completely recreated on a movie set in South Africa.

Bunker Hill in Cinema , by Brent Walker

One of the first films known to be shot in Bunker Hill was Charlie Chaplin's *Work*, made for Essanay in 1915. The key film shot there during that era is a 1919 Al Christie comedy called *All Jazzed Up*, starring Bobby Vernon. It's a one-reeler that takes place up and down Angels Flight — one of the very few early films of the funicular railroad. Disneyland later used to show it in their Main Street Cinema.

Many of Harold Lloyd's films were shot in the Bunker Hill area. [Lloyd was a resident of the neighborhood at the time. – Ed.] The street scenes in *Never Weaken*, where the streets get soaped, were shot outside the Angels Flight Pharmacy

atop the hill from *Angels Flight* (though you don't see it). *Girl Shy* and some of Lloyds's other films also featured chase scenes shot in Bunker Hill. The tunnel at Hill and First was used to simulate being on a building in *Never Weaken*, *Look Out Below*, Henry Lehrman's *Wet and Warmer* and many other silent comedies with Lloyd Hamilton and Monty Banks.

In the sound era, films shot in the area include *The Incredibly Strange Creatures that Stopped Living and Became Mixed Up Zombies*, which includes a ride on Angels Flight. *The Boy Who Caught a Crook*, a 1962 low-budget crime drama, was entirely filmed on Bunker Hill during its downturn period. Douglas Sirk's 1949 film noir *Shockproof* was filmed in the neighborhood as was another noir from 1952, *The Turning Point*.

According to the excellent website *Los Angeles's Angels Flight* (<http://www.electricearl.com/af/>) some other films shot on-location at Bunker Hill include James Whale's *The Impatient Maiden* (1932), *The Unfaithful* (1947), *Criss Cross* (1947), *Hollow Triumph* (1948), *Night Has A Thousand Eyes* (1948), Joseph Losey's *M* (1951), *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955) and *Angel's Flight* (1965).

COMING UP IN THE FALL 2010 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS XXI:

- October 5 Federico Fellini *8½* 1963
- October 12 Mike Nichols *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* 1966
- October 19 Francis Ford Coppola *The Godfather* 1972
- October 26 Hal Ashby *The Last Detail* 1973
- November 2 Bruce Beresford *Tender Mercies* 1983
- November 9 Wim Wenders *Wings of Desire* 1987
- November 16 Charles Crichton *A Fish Called Wanda* 1988
- November 23 Joel & Ethan Coen *The Big Lebowski* 1998
- November 30 Chan-wook Park *Oldboy* 2003
- December 7 Deepa Mehta *Water* 2005

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