

***How I Escaped From Gilligan's Island and Other Misadventures of a Hollywood Writer-Producer.* By William Froug. (Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Popular Press, 2005. Pp. 345, ISBN 0-87972-873-6)**

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also provides an introduction to this volume, illustrates the impact of *Old-Time Songs* (which at one time was ubiquitous across Newfoundland) on the province's song tradition, and contextualizes it within the Canadian folksong revival which took place in the decade following its initial publication. Aside from Guigné's insightful introduction, this release is a facsimile reprint of the 1940 edition and includes Doyle's original introduction, all forty songs, as well as all of the advertisements for the pharmaceuticals offered by Doyle's distributing company. While these publications could benefit from accompanying audio recordings (via an attached CD or related website), both *Folksongs and Folk Revival* and the reprint of *Old-Time Songs* are welcome contributions to the study of Newfoundland song.

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How I Escaped From Gilligan's Island and Other Misadventures of a Hollywood Writer-Producer. By William Froug. (Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Popular Press, 2005. Pp. 345, ISBN 0-87972-873-6)

William Froug writes about his experiences in the entertainment industry, as he moves from radio to television and finally to teaching, always keeping an eye on the film world but never quite managing to break in. This is not a memoir, though. Froug writes strictly about his career, mentioning his two failed marriages and four children only in passing. He focuses on his rise from a free-lance writer for radio to a full professor in UCLA's department of Film, Theatre Studies, and Television, setting his own career ascent against the decline of radio and the rise and fall of the so-called "golden age of television". Loaded with backstage tales, gossip and rumours, Froug is not only willing to spill the beans on famous co-workers but also on himself, even when it paints him in an unflattering light. He speaks candidly both about having to fire people as well as his own, numerous experiences of being fired.

Froug begins his narrative reminiscing on his time as a naval officer at the end of World War II. His bored shipmates seek his permission to shoot sharks in the water, and Froug likens this to the sharks in

Hollywood. The first three chapters highlight Froug's career in radio, as he works his way up from writer to producer in a medium that is clearly his first love.

Television and even the movies have rarely come close to achieving what we could with merely the human voice, sound effects, music cues, and our imaginations. Listeners provided their own casts and locales and they were better than anything Hollywood could equal (66).

He also speaks out against using profanity, writing that "we had no desire to debase our medium" (56). Unfortunately, it is not a love that he is able to indulge in for long. The rise of television and the advent of McCarthyism combined to drive Froug out of radio and into television production, a career change he was never fully satisfied with. For the next ten chapters, Froug explores the ups and downs of his life as an unwitting, if successful, television producer, called in to rescue classic shows such as *Gilligan's Island* and *Bewitched*. Although the book takes its title from the television series, in reality Froug was the producer for only the first thirteen episodes, and his experiences working for that series comprise only one chapter in the book.

Unsatisfied with producing for television, Froug continually tries to get a foot in the film production door. He comes close several times as his film scripts are purchased but fail to make it to production. Working with friends to produce a film, his dream falls flat when the financing falls through. Froug finally finds his niche when he begins teaching, first a few nights a week at University of Southern California, and later as a tenured full professor at UCLA.

Froug recognizes his good fortune at earning a sizable income in Hollywood and seems to harbour little bitterness that he accomplishes this by doing something he loathes. He did not set out to become a television producer and it is not a career he is able to abandon as easily as he hopes. Froug relies a bit too heavily, and repeatedly, on the bucking bronco as metaphor for his career in Hollywood. Apt though it may be, he uses almost identical wording every time, rendering what could have been an effective metaphor as merely repetitive.

Froug's voice seems to leap off the page, making his story an easy, enjoyable read. However, there are several glaring editorial errors from incorrect punctuation to redundant wording (such as writing "I me" instead of one or the other). Luckily these editorial oversights are few

and seem to be clustered in the middle of the book. The book is filled to overflowing with occupational lore that will be of interest to both the casual reader and the avid celebrity watcher. It is not only his own story he is telling, but that of other luminaries such as Jack Benny, Aaron Spelling and Rod Serling, to name but a few. At times, he delves a bit too deeply into these other peoples' stories, losing track of his own. Four pages are spent detailing a Jack Benny routine, which adds nothing to his own tale. However he does a wonderful job of filling in the reader on the fate of several of the stars and stars-to-be that he worked with, including Blythe Danner and her daughter Gwyneth Paltrow. He had the honour of holding the infant Gwyneth but says that although she has the charisma her mother lacks, she does not possess the same level of talent. His writing style, while approachable, will also appeal to the serious academic. A fascinating, highly readable peek inside both a bygone era and a world most of us will only read about.

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