

# The Ford Script

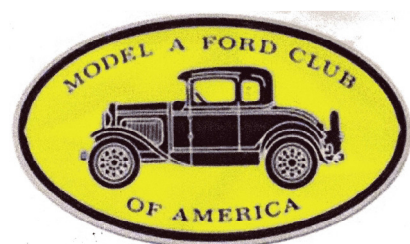
Vol. XXXI I

April 2011

No. 4



FBI agent by Hoover's car parked in front of the Lindbergh mansion c. 1932



Dedicated to the restoration and preservation of Model A Fords

# The Ford Script

Official publication of:  
George Washington Chapter, Inc.  
of the Model A Ford Club of America  
and the Mount Vernon Region  
of the Model A Restorers Club  
3903 Old Lee Highway  
Fairfax, VA 22030

Chapter meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month at the American Legion Hall, 1355 Balls Hill Road, McLean, Virginia. Social meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. and the business meeting starts at 7:45. Members and guests are invited and encouraged to drive their antique cars to the meetings.

Chapter members are encouraged to belong to both MAFCA and MARC national clubs. The chapter Web page on the Internet may be accessed by:

[www.gwcmodela.org](http://www.gwcmodela.org)

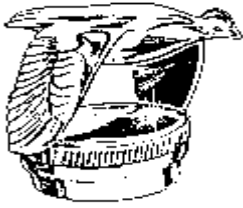
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Copy for THE FORD SCRIPT should be e-mailed to the Editor to arrive by the Sunday prior to the first Wednesday of the month to: [billhsims@gmail.com](mailto:billhsims@gmail.com)

Next Script deadline: Sunday, May 1st

## **FROM THE QUAIL'S PERSPECTIVE**



The calendar tells us it is spring; however, the temperatures remain lower than normal. Hopefully, warmer spring weather will soon arrive and we will be able to resume actively driving our cars. In preparation for safe driving, everyone should first check the physical condition of the car's tires and make sure tire pressures are proper and equal for all tires. A popular insurer of antique cars says that 7 years is the maximum life of a new tire, regardless of mileage. Factors such as how they are stored, how often they are treated, and the amount of UV they are subjected to can make a difference, but everyone agrees that 10-year-old tires should be viewed as unsafe. Also, make sure all cotter pins are in place and that brakes have been properly adjusted. Don't forget to check the condition/charge of your battery and make sure the terminals are clean. Turn your lights on and walk around the car to make sure all are working properly and headlights are properly aligned.

We have several Club members participating in the MAFCA Natchez Trace Trail tour April 9-15 and several other members will be riding down Constitution Avenue in the National Cherry Blossom Parade on April 9. Woody is beginning to plan a 3-day weekend tour to Orange, VA, in July – watch for further information and plan to join Club members for a fun-filled weekend. We are inviting area clubs to participate as they have in previous tours.

Small Parts Day at the Merkels' was well attended by about 40 people. We sincerely appreciate George and Janet hosting this event again.

Wishing you safe driving and a Happy Easter,

Charlene Beckner  
President

## **FROM THE EDITOR**

Yes, that handsome, debonair fellow on the cover is none other than your editor in front of his modified Model A (ie—blackwall tires). The Lindbergh Mansion in the background is really the Belvoir Estate near The Plains, VA, nowhere near the New Jersey site it's supposed to represent. The dated fuzziness of the photo was achieved by using a Blackberry to take the shot.

This issue is dedicated to club members' participation in the 3 days of local filming of scenes for the motion picture "J. Edgar," starring Leonardo DiCaprio and directed by Clint Eastwood. Almost all of us involved got to either speak to Clint or at least eat near him during "lunch" (invariably served around 5pm). DiCaprio speaks to no one so none of us got to speak with him. Besides, he was never around except for the shooting; he always vanished afterwards. The articles will hopefully provide insight into the daily grind of filming a major motion picture.

The film schedule called for shooting Sunday in the Dept. of Justice parking garage downtown, in downtown Warrenton Monday most of the day, at the Masonic Temple in Alexandria late Monday afternoon, and at the Belvoir Estate in The Plains, VA, Tuesday. George Merkel, Jim Gray and I seem to be the 3 that got the most screen time. There are 3 articles in this issue detailing the events of those days. My article deals with the nuts and bolts of what it was like to act (yes, act) in a scene.

George and Jim will be available for autographs at the next meeting. As for me, I'll be in Puerto Rico celebrating number 42 with my wife, Alice.

Bill Sims

## **FROM THE SMOKE-FREE ROOM**



President Charlene Beckner opened the meeting at the Fairfax Main Library in Fairfax, Virginia at 6:40 PM. Other board members present at the meeting were: Paul Gauthier, Bill Worsham, Woody Williams, Gil Beckner, Jack Melnick, Doug Tomb, Tom Frazier, Chuck Kunstbeck, Edna Cross and Bill Sims.

The February 23, 2011 meeting minutes, previously published in *The Script*, were approved as published.

President Charlene Beckner reviewed an e-mail from Clem Clement regarding some web sites that may be of interest to the club. It was discussed and decided that the club does not see a need at this time to provide any additional web site info to the members.

Vice President & Program Chair Jack Melnick requested ideas for monthly programs of a technical nature. Jack suggested that for the June meeting the club present a 3-station repair seminar. Jack also reminded board members about a May 7<sup>th</sup> event in Arlington, Virginia. It is the First Annual Arlington Kiwanis Club Pancake Breakfast and Antique Auto Show. He would like to see club members bring their T's & A's. Any questions please contact Jack at his office.

Activities Chair Edna Cross indicated that 12 members have signed up for the April 9<sup>th</sup> Cherry Blossom Parade. She has also sent in a request for members to be included in the Memorial Day Parade. Edna also mentioned that she is going to be working on finalizing dates for the Jaeger and Warhurst picnics.

Annual Meet Chairman Bill Worsham reported that a Sully Car Show is right on track. Bill will contact the food vendor this week. The plaque this year will feature a 1907 Model T. A trophy chairman is still needed. Bill has sent out the necessary press releases to all old car magazines.

Treasurer Gil Beckner presented copies of the treasurer's report as of March 17, 2011.

Youth Development Chair Paul Gauthier will be leading the way to the Cherry Blossom Parade. He plans to leave from the Pan Am shopping center in Fairfax at 7:45 am.

Membership Chair Woody Williams requested that memorial fund donations should be recognized with a "thank you" in the *Script*. Woody said that a new member has joined, Michael Pangra of WDC, who has a 1926 Model T. Woody is planning an Orange, Virginia get together and a Grays Mountain drive with ice cream and dinner. He has Sully pins for sale.

Assistant Treasurer & Webmaster Tom Frazier told the board that the club's tax form had been filed. Nothing new to report on the web site.

Editor Bill Sims reminded the board that the deadline for *Script* publishing is April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM. April board meeting will be held at Woody Williams home.

Respectfully submitted Chuck Kunstbeck, Secretary

## **ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS**

GWC scholarship information, application forms and requirements can now be found on our web site. If you need a hard copy and can not print it from your computer, contact Paul Gauthier at [gokie@cox.net](mailto:gokie@cox.net) or phone (703) 323-0009.

## GWC 25 YEARS AGO

Here, in the words of Bill Worsham, from the April 1986 Ford Script, continuation of a heart warming tale:

### Dingle's Deluxe – The Rest of the Story

As we left off last month, John Dingle's coupe was partly disassembled and stored behind his house. It was years since work had been done on it, and now John was deeply involved as Chairman of the 1978 National Meet. In the final months, John was working 12-14 hours a day...he truly had no time for his coupe. But member Bob Railey had a great idea. In appreciation for all John's work, why not restore his car for him?

Bob got volunteers to help restore various parts. A roster was kept of who was going to do what. Out from behind John's garage came the frame to be sandblasted, the engine to be rebuilt, the body to dry storage, etc. It seemed like every member had a part of John's car. Slowly, the restored parts returned. Just when John was ready for bodywork, tragedy reared its ugly head. John's beloved wife Ginny was diagnosed as having Alzheimer's disease.


John had faced many challenges in life. He once played semi-pro baseball for Casey Stengel. A wartime Naval Aviator, he survived a disabling injury that hospitalized him for over a year. But none of this compared with his greatest challenge: helping Ginny fight an unknown, incurable disease. Needless to say, car work would have to wait...

Starting again in 1983, with help from Carl Patrick, Dick Lebkicker and others, the coupe was taken to Carl's garage for bodywork and painting. Club members would stop by to help sand the many coats of primer and paint. When Carl was stricken with cancer, John's car was moved to Dick Lebkicker's for final touches. Ultimately in June 1985, the '31 deluxe coupe emerged ready for its maiden voyage: all the way out to the MARC meet in Chicago. A flat tire was the only mishap. The next trip for Dingle's Deluxe would be to the 1986 MARC/MAFCA World Meet in Wisconsin. Who was one of the caravan wagon masters? You guessed it...John Dingle!

Members helping members, that's what it's all about.

Dave Henderson

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## SULLY 2011

Plans are in full swing for our 38<sup>th</sup> Car Show on Father's Day June 19, 2011. Once again we will need the help of all members to make this show a success. If you have not done so, please sign up at the March meeting. Those who donate at least two hours of their time will receive one of the following. Four gate passes for their family or friends, A free car registration or a \$10. dollar credit for a flea market space.

Due to the untimely deaths of Bob Wild and John Kandl the Sully Committee needs a Publicity Chairman and a Trophy Chairman. Most of the preliminary work has been done. Anyone interested please contact Bill Worsham at [703-250-5474](tel:703-250-5474) or [billworsham@aol.com](mailto:billworsham@aol.com)

Your help will be greatly appreciated. Let's all make sure Sully 2011 the most successful yet.

### THE STEERING COMMITTEE - 2011 SULLY MEET

ANNUAL MEET CHAIRMAN	Bill Worsham	<a href="mailto:billworsham@aol.com">billworsham@aol.com</a>	(703) 250-5474
SHOW CAR REGISTRATION	Bill Benedict	<a href="mailto:carolabenedict@aol.com">carolabenedict@aol.com</a>	(703) 430-2441
FLEA MARKET (Vender liaison) (Field set up)	Karen Bush	<a href="mailto:klfbush@hotmail.com">klfbush@hotmail.com</a>	(703) 757-1884
CAR CORRAL	Paul Gauthier	<a href="mailto:gokie@aol.com">gokie@aol.com</a>	(703) 323-0009
CONCESSIONS/SNO CONES	Andy Jaeger	<a href="mailto:elanjaeger@aol.com">elanjaeger@aol.com</a>	(703) 490-4846
OLD CAR PARKING	Hunter Fanney	<a href="mailto:hunterf@verizon.net">hunterf@verizon.net</a>	(301) 253-0057
JUDGING CHAIRMAN	Tom Terko	<a href="mailto:tterko@verizon.net">tterko@verizon.net</a>	(301) 949-7329
TROPHIES	George Smolenyak	<a href="mailto:gsmolenyak@aol.com">gsmolenyak@aol.com</a>	(703) 969-1715
PUBLICITY	<b>Chairman Needed</b>		
SPECIAL DISPLAYS	<b>Chairman Needed</b>		
INFORMATION BOOTH	Benny Leonard	<a href="mailto:ben5@cox.net">ben5@cox.net</a>	(703) 278-2994
FRONT GATE	Dan & Donna Lyon	<a href="mailto:maneline@comcast.net">maneline@comcast.net</a>	(301) 330-5564
HELP WHERE NEEDED	Fred Klein		(703) 593-1600
	Woody Williams	<a href="mailto:vamodela@verizon.net">vamodela@verizon.net</a>	(703) 858-1192

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Please join me in welcoming Michel Pangia to the club. Mike joined at our March meeting where he announced that he is looking for a Model A to go along with his 1926 Model T Truck Roadster and a 1974 MGB. Please add Mike's contact information to your rosters:

Michael Pangia	202-547-8988 (Home)
239 107 <sup>th</sup> St, SE	202-955-6450 (Office)
Washington, DC 20003	202-360-0380 (Cell)

[mikelaw83@msn.com](mailto:mikelaw83@msn.com)

### ROSTER CHANGES

The email address for Edna Cross on the Board of Directors page was incorrect; it should be [edna.cross@prudentialcarruthers.com](mailto:edna.cross@prudentialcarruthers.com)

Wayne and Sharon parker have a new email address: [shipleyparker1@aol.com](mailto:shipleyparker1@aol.com)

Doug Cox has retired so he won't be answering his work number.

### APRIL'S PROGRAM

Doug Tomb will talk about the restoration of his steam car.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Year-to-date for the month ending March 31, 2011: Money In was \$4,395.00 and Money Out was \$2,457.83. Checkbook balance was \$8,343.74.

**Tax Reminder:** Our club is registered with the IRS as a not-for-profit 501(c)(7) "Social and Recreational Club." As such, members' club dues and contributions are **NOT** tax deductible as they would be normally for not-for-profit "Religious, Educational, Charitable, etc." (501(c)(3) organizations.

Gil Beckner  
Treasurer

## 2011 MEMORIAL FUND DONATIONS

The Board of Directors would like to thank the following members who have made 2011 Memorial Fund donations:

Jim and Carol Cartmill	\$30	In Memory of Glenn Cartmill
Stephan Forester	\$25	In Memory of Bob Wild
Paul Honke	\$20	
John Leyland	\$30	
Bud Pratsch	\$10	
Sam Rentsch	\$10	
Linda and Woody Williams	\$20	In Memory of Pop

## CLUB MOURNS DEATH OF A FOUNDING MEMBER

Doug and Susan Handy reported the passing of Robert Van Handy March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Van was 85 and had never been sick. After a brief illness, he lasted until his daughters arrived and shortly thereafter his heart stopped. Van was a very active member of the GWC until he moved to Rockingham, NC several years ago. He was possibly the oldest member in longevity, having been a member of the old Potomac Chapter and the GWC from the start.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Pee Dee Baptist Church, 100 Hamer Road, Rockingham, NC 28379-291 Rockingham, NC

Clem Clement  
Sunshine Chairman

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## **FIRST ANNUAL ARLINGTON KIWANIS CLUB PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

The Pancake Breakfast and antique auto show will be May 7th, 8:30am—1:00pm at the Knights of Columbus house, Little Falls Road, Arlington, VA. The nation's Capital Model T Club at 11:00am will reassemble and drive off the lot a Model T that they earlier will have taken completely apart. Tickets for adults--\$9, children 5 to 12--\$5. children under 5--free.

Breakfast will consist of pancakes, sausage, orange juice and coffee. There will be a moon bounce, face painting, a magic show, children singing and much more. For the adults, there will be a raffle, with prizes such as a ride for 2 in a Model A Ford rumble seat to Red, Hot & Blue for a barbeque lunch, a golf bag, a bike, and gift certificates for nice restaurants.

The proceeds from this event will go to the pediatric center to help needy children.

## **MODEL A'S WANTED**

**90<sup>th</sup> anniversary house tour.** Ashton Heights is an old neighborhood, just south of Clarendon, in Arlington. During the tour, there will be about 10 open houses, dating back through the last 90+ years. It would be special to have an automobile or two parked just outside our early 20th century houses. If any Club member might be interested in bringing their Model A on May 15 to display it from 1-4, and answer questions from viewers, please contact the committee chair (contact information below).

The event is a fund-raiser, with all proceeds going to renovate a 1920's community center in neighboring Lyon Park. You may have read a story about the center in the *Washington Post* on 1/13/2011. We could also have a couple of people and their cars parking around the center.

Anne V Hamilton, Tour Committee Chairman  
703-243-7570

**Cars needed to publicize play.** There will be a performance of a play—a recreation of a 1930's radio studio—at George Mason University on April 17 at 4pm. The producers need some 1930's cars to park outside as eye candy for the people going into the play. Anyone who brings a car will get tickets to the show. The free tickets will be at "Will Call"—however, they will need to have names and numbers so they can put them there for Car Club members. It won't be sold out—there is a block of tickets already set aside for Car Club folks. Contact [joannaormesher@mac.com](mailto:joannaormesher@mac.com) if you want to come.

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## COMING EVENTS

April 9 Cherry Blossom Parade in downtown DC. Meet at Pan Am Shopping Center 7:30am. Paul Gauthier is the coordinator. [gokie@cox.net](mailto:gokie@cox.net)

April 9-15 2011 MAFCA National Tour, Natchez Trace Trail

April 17 Last day to sign up for Memorial Day Parade. Need a coordinator for this event. Email Edna for Registration Form. [edna.cross@prudentialcarruthers.com](mailto:edna.cross@prudentialcarruthers.com)

April 27-May 1 The Spring Carlisle Collector Car Swap Meet and Corral. More than 82 acres filled with anything and everything automotive related; more than 2,000 vehicles of all makes, models and prices for sale in the car corral. For information <http://www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/spring-carlisle/>

April 28 Occidental Grill's "Night Before Prohibition". Lawrence J. von Weigel at 202.783.1475

April 29-30 Fiddlers and Fiddlehead Hill Climb and Festival hosted by the East Tennessee Region of MARC. See website for info: <http://memberstripod.com/vickyman/fiddlers.htm1>

May 1 Display at Fairfax Nursing Home, 12:30 – 2:30. Contact Paul Gauthier for details [gokie@cox.net](mailto:gokie@cox.net)

May 7 First annual Kiwanis Club pancake breakfast at K of C in Fairfax (see p. 8 for details)

May 15 Clarendon house tour (see p. 8 for details)

May 30 Memorial Day Parade. Will be discussed at April meeting.

September 16-18 Mark your calendars now for the Apple Butter Festival at Skyline Drive

## CLASSIFIED ADS

### For Sale

1931 Four door sedan, Needs someone with TLC to bring it back to life. \$6,000 takes it. Call Nat Choate 703-819-3131

All metal paint booth, Slightly used. Not sure of the brand. Filters need replacing and buyer assumes all responsibility for removal. Upper ducting and fan assembly can be included or excluded dependent on the deal. All lights and fan motor operate as they should. Asking \$3,000 obo and need it removed asap. Please call George at [703-969-1715](tel:703-969-1715) with any questions.

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## **THE MOVIE STAR CAR**

I drove by Arlington National Cemetery Saturday and Sunday afternoons, March 27 and March 28, and thought about my both my parents who are buried there as I passed – they had lived the 1930s, and now I was channeling myself back to their era. I had been downtown at the Department of Justice (DOJ) building for the shooting of a Clint Eastwood movie called “J. Edgar,” starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Armie Hammer (at least those are the two actors I dealt with – other stars include Josh Lucas, Naomi Watts and Judi Dench). The movie will be released in 2012.

The shooting at the DOJ took all day on Sunday, March 27, but Kathie had followed me down to the DOJ garage in our Camry on Saturday afternoon because of a forecast of snow Sunday.

After arriving at the garage Sunday at 11:00, I saw George Smolenyak, Jr. He told me that the rest of the drivers were at the Folger Theater Library being treated to breakfast. Since we had some time to kill, we decided to check out the cars. In addition to my '31 Deluxe Coupe and George's '29 Business Coupe, we recognized Chuck and Karilyn Kunstbeck's un-restored '31 Deluxe Coupe; Dan and Donna Lyon's white '31 S/W Town Sedan; George and Janet Merkel's '31 Tudor Sedan and '29 Open Cab Pickup; and Bill and Alice Sims' '31 S/W Town Sedan. Neither of us recognized a brown '29 Standard Fordor, which we found out later belongs to Rick Maurer. I never found out for sure who owns the “Hoover car” (a 1931 Model A Fordor S/W); it came and went each day on a tilt-back. The car cast was rounded out with a beautiful 1928 Buick Phaeton and a Model T Coupe.



**Hammer and DiCaprio practice blocking the scene; Dustin Black, the writer, is in the center of the group of people on the right facing the camera**

As the cast and crew filtered in about 1:00, Larry Stelling (the transportation coordinator who arranged to have us all there) started positioning and “dressing” our cars for the upcoming scene. “Dressing” involved removing miscellaneous non-period items and adding fake DC plates; these were then “aged” by a makeup guy with black hair spray and water. My car wound up being the third one parked nose first to the wall of the garage, which should mean it will actually be in the shot of Hoover’s car departing the garage.

Meanwhile, a select few were sent to wardrobe to serve as “Driving Extras.” This term is Hoover’s car departing the garage. Once in place and dressed for the shot, we mobile prop movers became non-essential and were shooed away from the sunlight-bright spotlights to resume our standing-by positions out of sight.

Meanwhile, a select few were sent to wardrobe to serve as “Driving Extras.” This term is important, I discovered later at dinner with the acting extras, because it meant we didn’t have to be members of either of the two professional acting unions (the Screen Actors Guild [SAG] or the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists [AFTRA]). This turned out to be a good thing, or Clint would never had gotten our own experienced movie car driver, George Merkel (previous movie credits include being a “driving around guy” in My One and Only, with Renée Zellweger in 2009), to play his “driving around guy” in the DOJ garage scene.

The initial scene was of Hoover getting into his chauffeured Fordor and being driven out of the garage. They must have shot this a dozen times. We kept hearing “places!”, “action!”, “rolling!”, “cut!” and “reset”

## THE MOVIE STAR CAR (Cont.)

for over an hour. After the first two or three shots, they stopped starting and driving the Hoover car, and resorted to pulling it with a rope to save the battery.



### **Parked in front of the Department of Justice**

Library. I don't know who Tony is other than he cooks really good prime rib in his mobile kitchen. For the record, Clint ate veggies and sushi, accompanied by two chocolate chip cookies and a brownie. I only know this because we nearly collided as he was coming in and I was going out of the library. He excused himself, and I asked if he would like some coffee – he declined but thanked me and then asked me if the food was good; I told him it was great. On the recommendation of what he had on his tray, I got a brownie and a couple of cookies to go with my coffee.

Later that evening, I was called back for a 1:00 Monday shoot at the George Washington Masonic Temple in Alexandria. Once again my car was going to get to play the oft-underrated role of “parked car in front of a photogenic building.”

Since Clint had crammed two days of shooting into one, the majority of the cast and crew was in Warrenton in the morning, and didn't get to our location until 4:00. As soon as Clint stepped out of his black Suburban at 4:10, he came over to where we old cars were parked and struck up a conversation with us, the hoi polloi drivers.

He was particularly taken with a blue 1936 Ford Phaeton parked right next to my A; he told us he had one just like it (“only junkier – you know, chopped and lowered”) in 1946 when he was 16. Then he was kind enough to compliment my car, and suddenly he was back to work.

A few minutes later, we drivers were asked to move our cars to the front of the Temple, and I overheard Clint tell his assistant director that he wanted “...the red Model A” to drive by as they shot the upcoming scene (of DiCaprio and Hammer leaving in their chauffeured Fordor).



## THE MOVIE STAR CAR (Cont.)



**Looking very much the over-stuffed “Don”, I wait for my shot at pseudo stardom.**

After a quick trip to the wardrobe trailer, I found myself outfitted in an ugly tie, a blue pin-striped double breasted jacket (which was too small), a fedora and a very warm (and somewhat too large) overcoat. I became very fond of this last bit of costume as the day wore on with dropping temperatures and increasing winds.

After several lighting adjustments, I got the call “action!” and drove slowly by the front of the Temple as the actors came down the stairs and got in their car. After they called “cut,” I was told to “reset,” which I took (correctly, as it turned out) to mean to turn around, drive back to where I had started, and get ready for another take. Three times I was traffic; then I was nobody.

I got back to the wardrobe trailer, turned in my costume and got a voucher for the additional money I will get paid for “acting.” Then it was time for some more “Tony” magic— this time, pork tenderloin.

On Wednesday, I sat by the phone and waited for another call back; a call that never came. I guess that’s showbiz – a star today, a has-been tomorrow. But it sure was fun while it lasted.

Jim Gray

## CINEMATIC ACTION IN WARRENTON

Monday morning at 8:00, I drove the 50 miles to Warrenton without incident. It was sunny, but really cold. Ice that they spread in the corners of the steps of the old Warrenton courthouse to reflect the remnants of a days-old snow never melted all day. I was one of the last to arrive and parked in the first block west of the courthouse.



First I went to the mess tent, where I ran into the Merkels and Kunstbecks (in ‘30s regalia). After breakfast, I was directed to wardrobe because I might be needed in a drive-by scene. I emerged dressed from the waist up in ‘30s garb (including a bow tie) and waist down in my jeans and Timberland boots. A warm overcoat, black fedora and tight leather gloves completed the ensemble. I looked like an undertaker. But now I was a cast member and attracted much attention from passersby as I stood by my car. I was told 3 drivers dressed, but in the end we were never used. However, Richard Largent’s 1929 closed cab pickup (pictured to the left) got prime use as a radio truck in front of the courthouse.

Around the time Clint was expected, the street was cordoned off. The townspeople and we drivers had to view everything from 50 feet away. Then they brought in a truck crane with a mounted camera for an aerial shot. Clint finally arrived at 12:30, walked around the truck and then went up to George Merkel’s Model A pickup and had his picture taken. Poor George was in the crowd behind the barriers, so he couldn’t run over and jump into the shot.

## WARRENTON (Cont.)

Before shooting began, I noticed Chuck Kunstbeck wiping off his car, so I went over to warn him that Clint doesn't like shiny cars that look like they just came off the showroom floor. But I was too late. Later, his car was picked to be parked in front of the courthouse. When he went to retrieve it after the scene was shot, he found that they'd poured dirt all over it!

There was only one shot in Warrenton—someone running out of the courthouse and announcing to the crowd that Hauptman was guilty. The crowd would then cheer and hold up signs demanding his guilt.

Clint walked all around and inside the courthouse before they finally got down to action. After half a dozen takes, somebody realized that beyond the crowd was an empty street. So our guy Ron, the assistant transportation coordinator, found me and told me to move my car downhill behind the shot.

I strode across the street before the envious crowd, hopped in my car, put the key in the ignition, and tried to turn on the key. It wouldn't. I took it out and re-inserted it. Still no luck. I jiggled it and fiddled with it and at last it turned. Thank God. Now to get down to business. Only now the car wouldn't start. Eventually I flooded it. Ron was giving me this look of "get it done or I'll get someone else." I was dying in front of hundreds of people. I waited 30 seconds and gave it another try. And another. Finally, it caught and I feathered it to life.

I turned the corner and parked it 20 feet down the hill where directed. Then a guy came over and shoveled ice against the curb to make it look like snow. The did 2 or 3 more shots of the crowd cheering, with me in the background, and then the day's shoot here was done. Like an army on the march, the film crew packed up everything and were out of town in 30 minutes. I turned in my garb, found Larry to give him the number where I'd be staying near Warrenton that night, and ended another day on the set.

Bill Sims



Clint with the Warrenton onlookers



Warrenton Courthouse scene

## **HANGIN' WITH CLINT, LEO AND ARMIE**

The call came Tuesday morning from Alice. Larry had called her because he couldn't reach me the night before. I had elected to stay near Warrenton Monday night and HAD given Larry the phone number during the mad takedown rush Monday afternoon. Guess he lost it. He always seemed a little wafty.

I arrived at the Belvoir Mansion near The Plains, around 9:45. It was appropriately huge, with a large lawn surrounded by a 5-foot high stone wall. I drove past the main gate and took the side road back to the food tent and parked.

Ron Dinson, the guy who had been directing the antique car drivers all week, came over as I got out and told me to grab some breakfast and then go to wardrobe. I was going to be Hoover's driver; Hoover, of course, being Leo DiCaprio. I was going to be IN the movie. After breakfast I went in the backside of the food tent, which they'd sectioned off for wardrobe. It was full of guys putting on their New Jersey State Trooper uniforms for the day's work. I was the only non-actor who would dress in FBI garb. Oddly, they had everything but the socks. And I was wearing white sweat socks. So I was the redneck FBI man for an hour until they found a pair of black socks for me.

Then I drove up to the front of the house, turned around, and parked among the other antique cars—2 Buicks, 2 other Model A sedans, and a Model T. A guy came over and sprayed my whitewalls with black hairspray. A group of us, including Ron, stood around for an hour talking cars. Ron regaled us with stories of how he'd jack up a Model A driver by telling him they'd have to repaint his bumpers or fenders some odd color, just to see his reaction. He has a weird sense of humor. After an hour, a Chevy Suburban cruised by with Clint Eastwood in his FBI ballcap. Time to go to work.

First we had to rehearse Hoover's arrival. Two stand-ins got in and I backed down the driveway to the gate. They gave me a walkie-talkie so they could tell me when to start, but without giving me any kind of instruction on how to use it. One of the stand-ins had to show me how it worked. They also cleared a larger area between the cars for me to pull in to when I delivered Hoover. After 2 practice runs, we were ready. The subs got out and a minute later, here came DiCaprio and Hammer. Armie (all 6'5" of him) got in first and Leo got in after him and sat directly behind me. We all introduced ourselves (so I'm now on a first-name basis with Leo, and Armie). I am suppressing all thoughts of what an incredible moment this is for me. Just be calm and cool.

We backed down the driveway and awaited the signal. Armie asked some questions about the car. Leo never spoke again after telling me who he was. Finally, they started rolling and I drove back up the driveway and swung into my space. Leo bounded from the car and with great flair flipped his overcoat out like a huge cape (Hoover—larger than life) and barged up the hill toward the house with Armie scooting behind him. Cut!

I remained in the car, with the engine running, while they did half a dozen more takes from halfway up the hill. At one point, Leo started horsing around and mincing his walk up the hill, which cracked up Armie. Armie would give me a nod or wiggle a finger each time they returned for another take. Armie also cut up a lot with folks between shots, juggling things and flipping things hand to hand. Armie's 25. Finally, they were done and Ron gave me the word to cut the engine. My day was done.

Or so I thought. I walked around to the back of the house and the snack table for muffins and coffee. I had just finished my second muffin and was halfway through my coffee when my walkie crackled to life. "Where's the driver? Bill, the driver, we need you at the car." I replied I was on my way. I pitched the muffin wrappers but kept the coffee since I was sure they just wanted me to move the car.

I came around the house to see several cameras, boom mikes and a crowd of people around the car. As I approached, the assistant director came up and told me they needed me to be standing outside the car as Hoover comes back and to open the door for him. After he and Tolson get in, I'm to slam the door, open my door, get in, start the car and drive out of the scene.

## HANGIN' WITH CLINT, LEO AND ARMIE (Cont.)

At that point some guy came out and trimmed up my sideburns so I don't look like such a hippie. Then Clint came over to make sure I knew what to do and when. I am being mister serious cool, stifling all thoughts that I am being given directions by Clint Eastwood in a scene I'm about to have with Leonardo DiCaprio in a major motion picture (because if that thought rises to the surface, I'll probably lose it).

Clint resumed his place behind the camera on the other side of the car. My back was to the camera. We did a practice run. For my big scene, I was to reach to my left and simply open the door as they got close. I noticed a dead magnolia leaf on the ground about 10 feet from the car and used that as my guide. When they got to the leaf, I turned and opened the door. It turned out to be the perfect distance. All went well except that my waiting until DiCaprio got into the car and then closing his door took up too much time. I also had a hard time climbing into the driver's seat because I led with my right foot straight into the cab. Mental note—next time step on the running board with your left foot and THEN put your right foot into the cab, which I normally do anyway. I just wasn't thinking.

We do a second rehearsal. They approach the car. I lean left and open the door with my right hand. Armie (6-foot 5 Armie) takes off his hat and climbs in. Leo follows and at that point I climb in and slam the door.

One more rehearsal. But first the sound man comes over to me and asks that I not slam the door with so much "vigor" (is there any other way to close a Model A door?) because it was drowning out the dialog. Armie immediately announces there will be no more vigor on the set. Everyone laughs.

Now we're doing it for real. They approach; I open; they duck in; I follow suit, turn the key, and the engine goes rrrr, rrrr, rrrr, but doesn't start. Cut! Okay, Clint is having none of this. Rather than get the car started and leaving it idle, which may drown out some dialog, he orders the rope (see previous story). They tie the rope to the front bumper and put 8 or 9 guys on it.

Rolling. Action! Once again we go through the motions. I hop in and close the door with minimal vigor, pretend to start the car and put it in gear, and the men haul the car out of the scene. Cut! The guys then push the car back to its marks and do at least 2 more takes before Clint likes what he sees and announces a wrap. And just like that, my career in movies is done.

Bill Sims



Clint discusses the fine points of filmmaking with Bill (in his dreams)