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The Fight Master, April 1980, Vol. 3 Issue 2

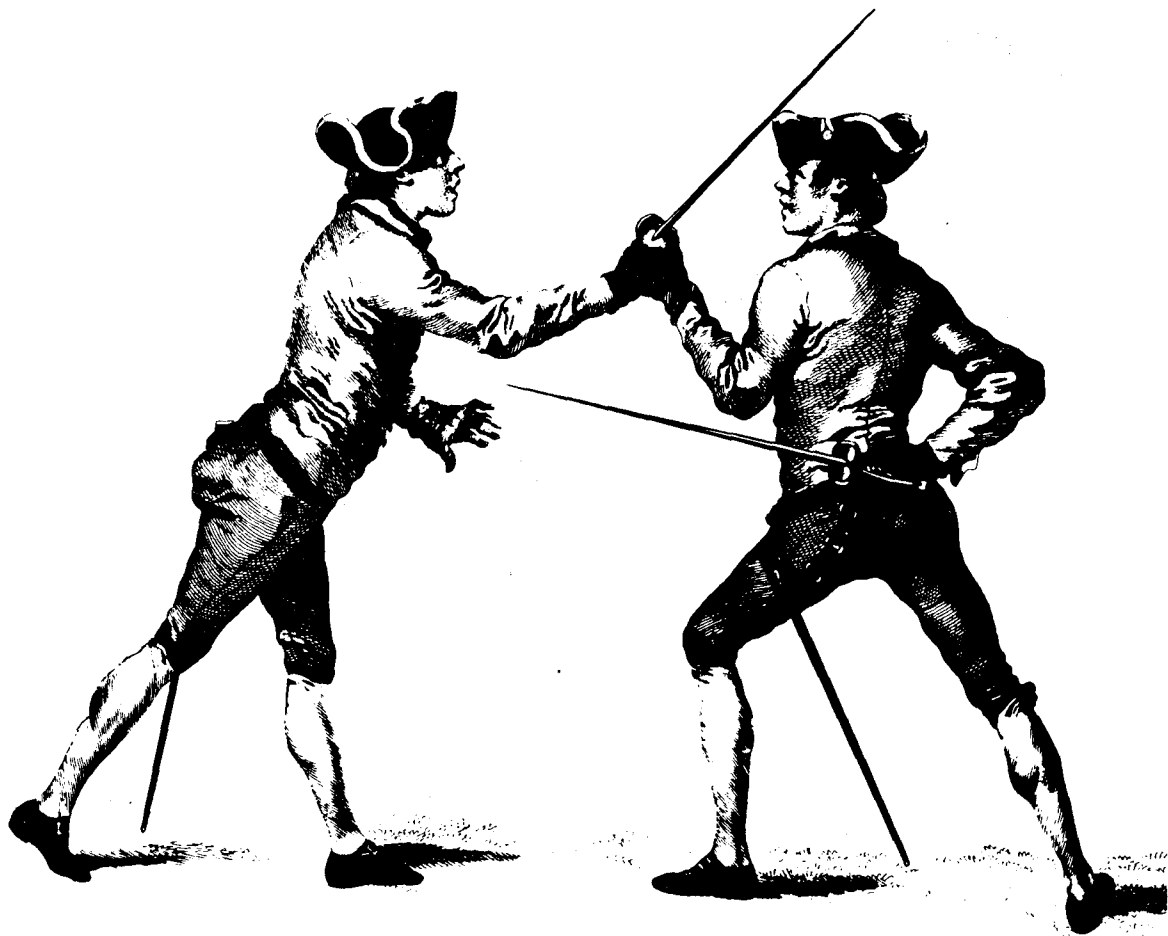
The Society of American Fight Directors

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THE FIGHT MASTER

The Magazine of the Society of American Fight Directors.

No. 9

APRIL, 1980

Editor - Ann C. Long

Lay-out - David L. Boushey

Typed and Duplicated by Ann C. Long

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS

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ERRANT SWORD WOUNDS THEATERGOERS

Washington Post, April 5, 1980

By Joseph D. Whitaker

Jennie Edwards was nine months pregnant and a week overdue when she and her husband, Michael Freedberg, decided to spend a relaxing evening at the Folger Theatre on Capitol Hill watching "Richard II" --Shakespeare's tragic tale of a poetic but foolish monarch who bungles away his crown.

The play was halfway through its first act when two actors, armed with heavy, sharp swords, burst on to the stage and began slashing away at each other. "The actors swung once and then twice," Edwards recalled. "Then I looked up and one of the swords was coming right at me."

The flying sword skimmed over the heads of two children sitting on the seats in front of her, and then whipped into Edwards' face, breaking her eyeglasses and smashing into her nose, she said. Her husband was cut in the face.

"Blood was pouring down my face and my stomach was covered (with blood)," Edwards said the other day. "I looked up and this guy-- a doctor--leaped over the seats, grabbed a woman's scarf and stuffed it into my face to stop the bleeding."

The couple was rushed to the Washington Hospital Center shortly after the incident to be treated for minor cuts and bruises. They filed a \$30,000 negligence suit Thursday in D.C. Superior Court against the trustees of Amherst College, which owns the Folger.

The suit contends that the theater operators "knew or should have known that conducting a sword-fight in a theater...constituted an unreasonable risk of harm to the audience."

In addition, the suit maintains that the operators of Folger should have been aware that the swords "were likely to break or come apart" if used regularly in the fight scene and that the actors "were negligently handling the swords."

Paula Bond, press director for the Folger, said that she was surprised that the couple had decided to sue the theater. "We put them in touch with our insurance company right after the incident and thought the situation had been taken care of," Bond said yesterday.

But Robert Case Liotta, attorney for Edwards and her husband, said he reached an impasse with the insurance company--The Insurance

Company of North America--when the firm attempted to shift liability for the accident to the manufacturer of the sword.

"The sword fight scene was supposed to take about a minute," Bond said. "The two actors were supposed to strike their swords together twice, then King Richard was supposed to come and break up the fight."

Instead, after Edwards was struck, Bond said, the actor playing Richard II came out and stopped the show. He then ordered the house lights turned up and asked if there was a doctor in the house.

Edwards, who lives in Northwest Washington, had two blackened eyes and a bruised nose. Her husband's wound required stitches to be closed. She said she will need plastic surgery to remove the final trace of the scar between her eyes.

"When the actors came on stage with the swords, I said to Michael, 'Somebody's going to get hurt.'" said Edwards, whose son, Graeme, is now 14 months old. "Michael just said, 'Sure, sure, sure,'" and he went on watching the play."

"We had season tickets at the time of the accident," Edwards said. "We still receive occasional calls from the theater requesting donations. When I tell them that we are the couple who got hit by the sword, they quickly wish us a pleasant evening and hang up."

* * *

President's Remarks:

I must say, I find the way in which the above article was written a rather marvelous prelude to a terrific melodrama, perhaps worthy of off-off-off Broadway!

The second paragraph states that "...halfway through its first act when two actors, armed with heavy, sharp swords, burst on to the stage and began slashing away at each other." Come on now folks, let's be reasonable. I must question whether the swords were really sharp for a start. As a choreographer, I have yet to use a legitimately sharp sword on stage, nor have I ever seen one used. Yes, they look sharp but that's part of the "magic."

And as for the two actors who burst on stage and began slashing at one another, this has to imply an out-of-control situation which smacks a little of "out-of-control" journalism! 'Tis true that actors sometimes get out of control, but with a fight sequence consisting of two moves, I really must question just how much out of control they were.

The third paragraph gets even better. You can't go wrong when you include the lives of innocent children and "smashed noses." Then to be followed hard upon by a terrific paragraph vividly describing the blood pouring down the face. This is really great stuff! Worthy of Readers Digest!

But the best is yet to come. Naturally, a lawyer was secured and in the suit he states the operators "knew or should have known that conducting a sword-fight in a theatre...constituted an unreasonable risk of harm to the audience." Well, we had better start looking for a new occupation ladies and gentlemen, because if this is to be the case we are going to have to re-write about twenty of Shakespeare's plays as well as a multitude of others. We simply must find more suitable ways to resolve the many conflicts. Perhaps Edgar and Edmond can just shake hands and let by-gones be by-gones.

The suit also maintains that the operators of the Folger should have been aware that the swords "were likely to break or come apart." Well, unless it is quite obvious that a sword is on the verge of breaking apart by visually examining the sword (especially the tang), it is impossible to tell when metal fatigue will cause a sword to break. One can assume if the sword is many years old or it is bent readily with little pressure it may be ready to go, but I must assume that these swords were fairly new and with the minimal amount of sword-play to be pursued in the production, one must assume the manufacturer is at fault and even he may not have been aware of a weak point in the blade itself.

How the actors were negligently handling the swords is another point of conjecture. Apparently, the lawyer knows all about such things or perhaps Ms. Edwards did. After all, she did state that "Somebody's going to get hurt." Wait a minute! Maybe this person is our own Katy Edwards! No, that can't be since she goes by the name of Katy Winters. Well, anyway, I find the whole situation a rather unfortunate affair with the injured couple being at the wrong place at the wrong time. But to sue a company for presenting a stage fight seems a bit much. I really don't think they will have a leg to stand on when it goes to court. The only person who is going to benefit from this suit will be--guess who? Right! Their lawyer. He will be able to make a tidy fee for presenting some innane, unsupportable accusations.

Of course, we don't like to hear of people being hurt (especially audience members) and this couple should have their medical expenses paid as well as a stipend for mental duress, etc., but \$30,000 is a little steep, wouldn't you say?

It does got to show you that as a fight director, you really must check out the equipment being utilized; and use your own judgment as to whether you feel the equipment is reliable. (This is one reason why the Society has its own officially recognized Master-of-Arms: Mark Haney.)

The fact that choreographing the fight itself is only part of your job, that equipment, costumes, footwear, the set itself are all factors that you must take into consideration when taking on the responsibilities of fight director.

I will be interested in the outcome of this whole unfortunate situation. I would hate to see anything that would in any way limit our presence and expertise in this every-growing area of the total production.

I would be interested in hearing your comments regarding the aforementioned situation and my comments regarding it.

D. L. Boushey



BOYCOTT

The Society of American Fight Directors has found it necessary to boycott Castello's Fencing Equipment due to their unwillingness to pay the ad fee for the full page ad found in the Society's magazine The Fight Master. This fee has been due for an entire year. All of our efforts to pursue this dilemma have been ignored by the Castello people. The fee has been due since April of 1979. It is most regrettable that the Society has to go to such extremes to secure what is rightfully theirs but Mr. Castello apparently does not feel that the loss of a significant amount of business is of much importance. Unfortunately for all concerned, Castello's will indeed feel the pinch as no members of the S.A.F.D. will be encouraged to order equipment or recommend Castello products to anyone.

Apparently Castello's has this same problem with other organizations and has reneged on those obligations as well. With this flaw being a part of the Castello character, we must accept the fact that not only are we denied our advertising fee but we, as a society, paid for the make-up and printing of the advertisement making our loss double-fold.

WE STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT NO MEMBER OF THE
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS EITHER PUR-
CHASE OR RECOMMEND THE PURCHASE OF CASTELLO
FENCING EQUIPMENT OR THEATRICAL SUPPLIES. THIS
BOYCOTT MUST BE ADHERED TO UNTIL SUCH TIME AS
CASTELLO'S FENCING CO. OPTS TO PAY THEIR DEBTS.
THIS BOYCOTT IS EFFECTIVE AS OF THIS DATE,

MAY 1, 1980.

David Boushey - President S.A.F.A
Byron Jennings - Vice President
Erik Fredricksen - Secretary-
Treasurer

CERTIFICATION CONTINUES IN NEW YORK AND MISSOURI

On November 24 at the Potter's Field Theatre in New York City twelve students of Mr. Suddeth's were examined by me and I am happy to report that all passed and one received a recommendation. The actors adapted very well to the totally new space, beautiful to look at but not without playing difficulties: pillars inconveniently placed and stone floors among them.

We saw a fight in a "prop shop," an "El Cid," a Jacobean "Maid's Tragedy" among the interesting presentations. In both the case of this test and the recent March 8th test we had some individuals taking it for the second or third time in the hopes of obtaining a "recommended" and of course, continuing to develop their skills. In addition to indicating whether they received a passed (P) or recommended (R), I am including the number on their certification, if they were taking the test on these dates for the first time.

Peter Kallish P	Nancy Sigworth (28) P
Steve Omerle P	Emily Conable (22) P
Jim Simpson (20) P	Steve Edwards (21) R
Kevin Sullivan (24) P	Ron Piretti (25) P
Mike Lyman (23) P	Katy Winters (27) P
Deborah Huston P	Robert Aberdeen (26) P

On March 8, 1980, at 412 W. 42nd Street, an interesting group of fights were presented and the combatants, students of Mr. Suddeth, tested for certification. We were pleased to have in a continually growing audience, Ms. Sharon Jensen of the League of Professional Theatre Training Programs. She was pleased with the work and I believe will be a good and valued friend of the Society.

As I mentioned above, some of these students had already received their certificates at earlier examinations and were presenting new selections as a result of their continuing interest and desire to keep their "hand in." Incidentally, I think it is wise for anyone in our Society who considers him- or herself a viable candidate for teaching or choreography work to have some sort of related activity or sport to keep his or her "hand in."

Naturally, participation in any of the obvious sports such as Kendo, Fencing, Judo, Aikido, (any of the martial arts), Gymnastics, etc. Enlisting in classes such as the above or organizing them if they don't exist is another way. I feel this is particularly necessary if it has been quite a while between jobs: timing, conditioning, and coordination go quickly (and obviously) in this field.

Excuse me for the digression, but the dedication of some of these

students who already have their certificates should serve as a guide to all of us in the business.

We saw quite a range of skills, some needing further study and others who demonstrated excellent talent and creativity. We saw, among the more interesting ones, a "What Can You Do" fight that was excellently scripted and well performed, and involved among other things a cape and very mobile office chair. We also saw a "Fantasy Island" fight involving three individuals who had received their certification in an earlier test.

Although I was a bit in doubt as to whether two individuals should be passed, I awarded the certification because I felt their cumulative scores and concern for safety were sufficient. I did however recommend further study for relaxation, balance and that almost indefinable quality that comes with experience if the talent is there--flair.

Below is the list of newly certified combatants, and three individuals who were already certified who received "recommended:"

Stephen S. Anthony (43) P	Nancy Sigworth R
Dameon Carot (44) P	Gary Phillips R
Rab Bell (45) P	Jim Manley R
Gary Morabito (46) P	
Gary Apple (47) P	
Steve Andresen (48) P	
Diana Stagner (49) P	

My congratulations to the students and to Mr. Suddeth. It is of course right that New York, being the theatrical center, should have most of the testing originating here. However, I really believe that we must see some beginning wisps of certification efforts West of the Hudson. I know some of our colleagues are active in schools and that of course is an obvious place to test students.

Slowly but surely we are building a travel fund out of the test fees we have received so far. I urge all of the members active in the training of students in stage combat to consider certification. It's time we took our lamps from under our cloaks...well, you know--light under a basket, etc. Let's get it rolling.

Erik Fredricksen
Secretary/Treasurer

* * *

On April 18 at Webster College ten combatants were examined by Joseph Martinez. These students were under the guidance of Erik

Fredricksen who was conducting a master class. The following people passed the proficiency test with one gaining a recommendation:

Randy Allen	Thomas Rosenberger
Carol Kiykendall	Gigi Skoubis
Carey Lawless	Kip Wahl (Recommended)
Craig McCallister	Mark Waterman
Thesa Rogers	Jamie Cass

Congratulations to those students of Webster. We hope to continue this new-found professional relationship with Webster in the years to come.

* * *

On Saturday, May 10, 1980, eight students of Mr. Alan Suddeth were tested for proficiency through our Society at the Black Theatre Alliance rehearsal hall on West 42nd Street in New York City. There was a very nice turnout of over twenty-five people to watch the prepared portion of the fight test.

Of the eight being tested, seven passed with two receiving a "recommended." Most of the combatants showed good control and an awareness of safety and a constantly improving realization of what constitutes good distance in terms of safety and dramatic effectiveness.

The outstanding presentation, a rapier-dagger and punch-up sequence entitled King Arthur and the Frog, was performed by Jay Fernandez and James W. Monitor, both of whom were worthy of a "recommended" in this adjudicator's opinion.

Following are the names of the individuals who passed the exam:

60. Jay Fernandez Recommended	64. Ann Citron
61. James W. Monitor REcommended	65. Paul Dion
62. Robert J. Campbell	66. Sherry Caldwell
63. Lois Tibbetts	

Congratulations again to Alan for his continuing work in the preparation of actors for stage work involving combat. It's a big country and there's plenty of room for more such work.

Erik Fredricksen
Secretary/Treasurer

A LETTER OF CONCERN!

I am submitting this "article" for the next issue of the "Fight Master." I trust it is appropriate and timely. I also hope that the article makes clear that what happened affected many people, not just me, but several men and women already members of S.A.F.D., as well as several people whom me met at the audition and with whom we simply exchanged thoughts. We felt it better not to mention the name of the show as we are not so much against any one of those involved with the show, as we are against what happened in principle.

The following incident occurred here in New York recently which affected many of our members as well as dozens of other "actor/combatants" who are not members of S.A.F.D. After revealing this situation to both Erik and Allen, they urged those of us involved to submit this for our next issue to serve as a "warning" to all about auditions which are not always handled in the best or safest ways, and to offer perhaps some clues as to what to watch out for so that, hopefully, fewer of us will be caught off guard in the future.

A recent casting notice in New York called for actor/fighters, with excellent "fencing" skills for a showcase of a swashbuckling nature. The director, casting director, and associates were all friendly enough, handling the reading auditions in a most typical manner. However, it was when the "movement" and "fencing" audition came that most of those with whom I spoke were taken somewhat off guard.

Not every audition situation was the same for all of us, but as a general rule, we all had to do some simple fencing steps--retreating, advancing, thrusting and lunging, which we did in small groups. Then came the "exciting" part.

Perhaps we should have been (more) curious when the fencing "coordinator" stepped up decked out in complete competition fencing gear. However, the general assumption was that we couldn't blame him for not trusting these dozens of "so-called" fencers he had never fought with, and so we were not too put off by his donning of the mask. Our second clue should have come here, when none of us was offered a mask. But in giving our auditioners the benefit of the doubt--that they must know what they're doing--that everything would surely be safe--we agreed to plunge right in.

The real fun came on the next direction--"Attack!" No particular moves! No warning! Just attack! A-l-l-l right. Here is a person opposite you, in full gear, en garde, palm up in classic competition

style. So, you follow directions--you attack. Not only does he miss a good 50% of his parries, he refuses to retreat and places the tip of his blade (no rubber tip!) right between his opponent's eyes in a less than eloquent manner, trying to recover from several "hits" the opponent was making, causing each of us (as we took our turns) to stop, back up, start over again only to receive the same threat at the eyes. (Of course he's safe--he has the mask!)

It should be obvious at this point that these auditions were very unsafe--a conclusion arrived at after many of us had gathered afterwards to compare notes--realizing that this ~~same~~ format was being followed in several different groups. Any one of us could have had our eyes injured by people who were not concerned with the safety of others. The audition situation for the "fighting" was poorly planned and poorly executed. It was senseless and accomplished very little other than verifying in many of our minds that we wanted nothing to do with this show. After viewing the showcase, we were satisfied with not having taken on this task.

The point being that we should have all refused to participate further in the audition, challenging the unsafe manner of auditioning, rather than wondering whether we were foolish for not jumping in, hell bent for leather, and perhaps coming away with a scar or two, or one less eye. We have learned to be assertive with the fine training we have received and will not hesitate to speak up in the future. We urge everyone to do the same, as we should never take for granted that auditioners know what they're doing, and to not hesitate to speak up against what we know are unsafe methods.

Steven E. Edwards
Actor/Combatant, S.A.F.D.
New York



COMBAT IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

(Excerpt from the Master's Thesis
of Michael Hood - Affiliate member
to the Society and professor
at the University of Alaska,
Anchorage.)

HENRY VI, PART I

Henry VI, Part I, contains many scenes of combat. In Act I, ii the French are apparently "beaten back by the English with great loss." The combat here is necessarily brief and it is feasible that few blows need to be struck before the French fall back.

Later in the same scene an interesting single combat is called for when La Pucelle and Charles, the Dauphin, "buckle" with one another. Jean wields a "keen-edged sword, deck'd with five flower-de-luces on each side" and overcomes Charles.

Act I, iii, the confrontation before the tower between the Duke of Gloucester and Cardinal Winchester, contains a pair of brief skirmishes in which the Cardinal's men are beaten out by those of Gloucester. The spirit of the contest is reflected in Gloucester's threat:

Priest, beware your beard;
I mean to tug it and to cuff you soundly:
Under my feet I stamp thy cardinal's hat:
In spite of Pope or dignities of church,
Here by the cheeks I'll drag you up and down.

Swords are probably the weapon used here; Gloucester tells his followers to draw their weapons; but daggers are a second possibility.

Act I, v, is full of combats. Talbot fights with the Dauphin and then with Joan (La Pucelle). Later there is a skirmish followed by the retreat that ends the scene.

The major engagement in Act II, wherein the English scale the walls of Orleans and force the French to flee does not require combat. Late in the scene an English soldier chuckles to himself,

I'll be so bold to take what they have left.
The cry of Talbot serves me for a sword;
For I have laden me with many spoils
Using no other weapon but his name.

In Act III, i, Beaufort's and Gloucester's followers are involved in another skirmish, a sequel to that in Act I, iii. Forbidden to carry weapons, they have resorted to stones. The character of this encounter is probably pretty rough-and-tumble; one of the men cries, "...Nay, if we be forbidden stones we'll fall to it with our teeth."

Act III, ii, which depicts the battle for Rouen, contains four separate excursions. They serve to illustrate the loss and retaking of the city by the English. No mention is made of specific weapons.

Act IV, vi and vii, also contain excursions. Those in scene vi are given some clarity by the stage directions: "John Talbot is hemmed about, and Talbot rescues him." In scene vii dialogue tells us that the situation is reversed, with John Talbot rescuing his father before being overcome by "dizzy-eyed fury", and charging to his death. Talbot himself has been mortally wounded in the fray and dies. Talbot and his son fit well into what Watkins calls "a sort of Homeric pattern in the incidents...in which a hero is singled out for his...brief hour of triumph--and his defeat and death follow hard upon it." This pattern is particularly noticeable in Henry VI, parts II and III.

Act V, iii, includes two sets of excursions. The first depicts the French in retreat, and the second includes "Burgundy and York fighting hand to hand."

HENRY VI, PART II

Act II, i, of Henry VI, part II, contains a reference to the two-handed sword. It is particularly interesting in this context because it is to be used in a duel. Beaufort and Gloucester confront each other once again and, though the duel does not take place, the use of the two-hand sword in single combat is established.

Act II, iii, includes a unique and intriguing use of arms. Peter Thump and Horner the armourer resort to trial by combat before the king. Their weapons are staffs to which have been attached sand-bags. The comical aspect of the weapons is abruptly broken when Horner is killed by Thump.

Act IV, i, opens with a fight at sea, posing perhaps a greater problem to the set designer than the director. No weapons are indicated specifically, and the choice would depend largely on the space available.

Scene iii of Act IV opens with a fight between the two Staffords, William and Humphrey, and Jack Cade and his men. Both Staffords are killed.

Cade's rebels may be armed with non-conventional weapons. Bevis tells Holland in the preceding scene to "get thee a sword, though it be made of lath (wood)." Later we are told that Dick, the butcher of Ashford, has killed the Staffords like "sheep and oxen", and that he has behaved as if he were in his own slaughter-house. It does not seem improbable that his weapon may also reflect his occupation. Some of the other rebels might be armed with hoes, scythes, or shovels.

In Act IV, vi, Cade's men kill a lone soldier, and in the following scene Matthew Goffe and others of the king's supporters are killed. In line 10 we are told that Cade has been wounded in the mouth with a spear. His wound would be given greater credence if Goffe and his supporters had been armed, at least in part, with pole-arms. Later in the same scene one of the rebel weapons is identified as a bill.

In Act IV, viii, the king's men are set upon by the rebels and fall back. Later in the scene Cade is betrayed and is forced to fight his way out of his own followers midst: "My sword make way for me, for here is no staying. In despite of the devils and hell, through the very midst of you."

Act IV, x, contains a single combat with swords between Cade and Iden. It also includes passages that indicate two different styles of fight. Cade exhorts his blade: "Steel, if thou turn the edge, or cut not out the burly-boned clown into chines of beef..." It is obvious that he uses the blade as a cutting weapon. On the other hand, Iden kills Cade with a thrust, and vows that never "shall this blood be wiped from they (his sword's) point."

In Act V, ii, the growing enmity between the houses of York and Lancaster finally produces a major clash of arms, at St. Albans. Two single combats highlight the battle. York kills Clifford, and later Richard, York's son, kills Somerset. Dialogue indicates swords as the weapons employed in both cases.

A NOT-SO-BORING HISTORY OF FIGHT DIRECTION

From The Fight Director
Spring, 1980

1. THE ACTOR SWORDSMAN

"History is bunk" said Henry Ford, which showed how little he knew. History is not bunk, but it can be very boring, if it is on a subject that does not appeal to you, or if it is badly taught or dully written. If you think this article is going to bore the pants off you, just give the first few paragraphs a whirl, and, if they don't grab you, read on.

People who arranged fights in the past come into one of two categories. On the one hand the actors, on the other the fencing masters imported for the occasion. First, for the actors.

The Elizabethan actors probably arranged their own fights. One actor contemporary of Shakespeare was a qualified Master of Defence, who must have done his own arranging, and the rest almost certainly did theirs as well. Fencing was not the comparatively rare skill it is now--how many people do you know who fence for sport? -- but a part of everyday life. Swords or daggers flahsed in every street encounter. Marlowe himself was killed in a tavern brawl. With swordplay so common, the standard of stage fighting must have been reasonably high, or the audience would have shown their disapproval in no uncertain fashion.

The swordplay in Shakespeare was exteremely topical. Sword and Buckler, Rapier and Dagger, occasionally the Long Sword, clubs, bills and partisans. Shakespeare was no respecter of period. Elizabethan weapons are nominated for combat even in plays set in periods hundreds of years before that time. So the combats of the Exliabethan actors were often unhistorical, but must have been effective enough to please a sword-wielding audience. Of course, the women's parts were played by boys, so no girl was allowed to fight on the stage.

Of Restoration and eighteenth century actor/fight arrangers we know rather more than of the Elizabethans. By this time women played women's parts. Although members of the female sex were not supposed to learn fencing, an exception seems to have been made for actresses such as Mrs. Bateman, "a noted swordswoman" who partnered the Chevalier D'Eon in the fencing exhibitions that played so large a part in the final phse of his life. No doubt she was more than

capable of arranging the fights in the shows she appeared in. Apart from the female fighting roles in Shakespeare, such as "Twelfth Night" and "Henry VI", a number of seventeenth and eighteenth century plays featured fights for women, usually in "breeches roles" where the girls were disguised as men. These girls certainly had to be taught, either by a friendly fencing master, or a fellow actor, or, if they were sufficiently beautiful, by the actor-manager himself.

The actor-managers dominated the theatre scene for some hundreds of years, and although they may well have taken instruction in basics from a professional fencing master, when it came to setting the fights they ruled the roost. After all, it was their production, and they were the stars. At least one eighteenth century star introduced into his "Hamlet" an elaborate contemporary salute that he had learned from some master, quite inappropriate to the period of the play. Some of them even used the fashionable small-sword of their own times, instead of rapiers.

The fights were as good as the stars. Edmund Kean as Richard the Third introduced the stage "business" of continuing to lunge with his hand, after he had dropped the sword, a trick copied by many other actors after him. In the London Chronicle of 1792, we read:

"I love to see ferocious Dick the Third
Jump up and out the side scenes with his sword;
Rush on, with haggard eye, and bristling locks
As if he meant to storm the music box.
I love to see him, when you think he's slain,
Start up and stagger, and be killed again."

In the following century, an actor, also playing Richard the Third, in America, was so carried away by the excitement of the fight, that he refused to be killed at all. He parried every attack and ignored death strokes. The actor playing Richmond, faced with a demented opponent who would not die on cue, fled from the stage into the street, whence he was pursued by the lethal Richard. History does not record if they were both arrested by the cops.

Another actor who would not die on cue was Frank Benson, playing Paris to Irving's Romeo. Infuriated, Irving seized Benson's sword, hit him over the knuckles with his own, prodded him in the stomach with his knee, and said "Die, my boy. Down, down, down." Then he elbowed and kneed the wretched Benson into the tomb by brute force. Irving was not a man to be trifled with. He had stage swords specially wired so that sparks would flay at every clash.

Irving and other stars did have access to fencing masters, as we shall see in the next article, but were clearly a law unto themselves when it came to staging the fights. In the same way some of the stars of Hoolywood, if they were lucky enough to be their own producers, used fight-arrangers, but worked out the grand strategy of their fights in person.

The phenomenon of the actor/fencer, who could and often did arrange fights, continued until the present era of specialisation. Names like Gabriel Toyne, Anthony Eustrel, Laurence Payne and Kenneth Gilbert come to mind, but there were many others. However, from the actor's own point of view, skill with a sword could become a distinct disadvantage. You could be typecast as a "fencing actor" with no scope for palying other roles. "Who's going to be killed today, Jack?" people would aks when seeing an actor/fencer at a T.V. studio. It is understandable that many of those with dedicated overall ambition in acting felt compelled to give up the swordplay to further their main intent. Actor Barry Jackson was a fight-arranger under the name of Jack Barry, but gave up the fighting side of his work to concentrate on acting.

All these, and the stars who were actor-managers, had been taught fencing at one time or another. But in the provinces, during the last century, it was a different story. There were few fencing masters, and touring actors could not afford to go to them. Some actors played in theatres called "Portables", like fairground booths, put up for one night at a time in the market square, and lit by flickering gas-jets. The origin of the provincial actors' own peculiar kind of swordplay is lost in theatrical antiquity, and may well reach back into the eighteenth century. The best known of their combats, called the Round Eights, seems to have been derived from a corrupted version of the first four diagonal cuts of the old cutting target. The target itself goes back at least to Elizabethan times. By omitting the parries altogether and each swordsman making the same attacks simultaneously, but without lunges, a series of blade clases are created, which are easy to perform and easy to remember, since each actor performs identical strokes. The actors themselves acknowledged the unreality of the combats by calling them "bastard fights", and fencers often refer to them as knife-sharpening.

The various simple routines are as follows:-

The Round Eights (eight diagonal strokes, sometimes called
the Scotch Eights)

The Threes

The Fives

The Skeleton Sevens
The Glasgow Tens
The Long Elevens
The Double Pass

All these were derived from the Round, or Scotch, Eights, and were known collectively as the Standard Combats. They were passed down from father to son, or from actor to actor. But there were other popular routines, outside this canon:-

The Square Eights (including four real attacks to shoulder
with lunges)
The Glasgow Eights (no relation to the Glasgow tens or
the Scotch Eights)
The Gladiators (more elaborate, done to the music of "The
Floral Dance")
The Drunk Combat

The last-named featured two swordsmen so inebriated that they had to hold onto one another to remain upright, and included two surprise blows to the buttocks, one arriving on target, the other deftly parried.

Whatever one may think of these combats today they gave every actor who learned them a complete do-it-yourself fight kit. It was perfectly possible to go onstage with an actor you had never rehearsed with, and cue him by whispering "Round Eights. Threes. Fives. Double Pass. Long Elevens". Every fight was ready made, and no bones broken, although one was advised to "watch your knuckles" on the Skeleton Sevens.

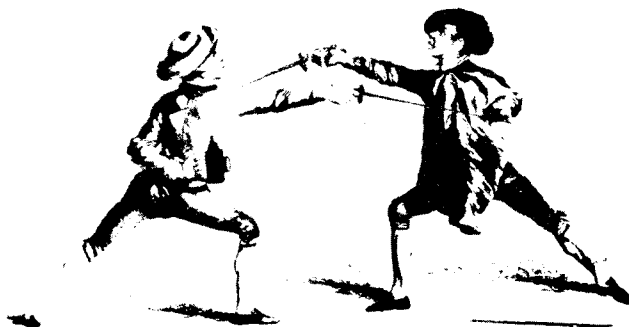
The old Portable theatres were probably rough in acting - three or four short plays performed nightly. Dialogue was often improvised. "Gagging" meant ad-libbing. One song of the day went "I am the villain of the gaggy show". But the Portables were certainly strong on combat. One Manager was called Fighting Fred, for his prowess with the sword, and the prominence of fights in his shows. As the policeman arresting the villain in "East Lynne" he used to say "I arrest you for the murder of _____ but never let it be said that a British policeman arrested a man without giving him a chance to fight for his life." The policeman then went to the wings, fetched two swords and said to his prisoner. "Choose your weapons and fight Eights". He thus cued not only the fight but also the actual combat they would perform. Presumably he meant the Round or Scotch Eights since only these were "standard". After the fight, which Fighting Fred the Policeman naturally won, he completed his arrest, and marched his man off.

Audiences used to the antics of Fred and his friends obviously

wanted action all the way, and a minimum of chat. To appease their public in the possible event of boredom, one company employed an actor called a Play Saver. The Play Saver waited in the wings, sword in hand. At the first sign of restlessness from the audience at the proceedings onstage, he would rush on and say to whoever happened to be there "Ha, I know what you would, but you shall not. Draw and fight". There would then ensue a vigorous swordfight, that could have had nothing to do with the play, but regained the wandering attention of the paying public. One can think of many verbose and depressing modern plays that might well benefit from the attentions of the sword-wielding Play Saver!

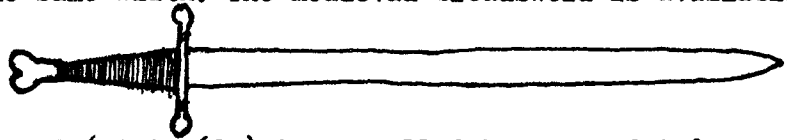
The standard combats are still seen nowadays occasionally, and the curious thing is if they are performed with some good footwork by actors who know how to fence, they can form an effective part of certain kinds of stage fight, at any rate as "background action".

The provincial actors with their crude combats, and the luckier performers - actor-managers and actor-fencers - with some fencing background were only half of the story of fight direction. The other half was the work of the Fencing Masters, with which we shall deal in a second article.

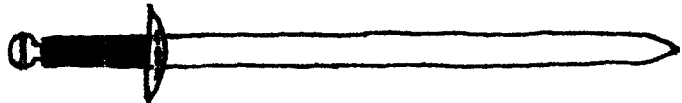


The A.F.S. Armoury now offers two combat-worthy broadswords. What we have done, is taken two swords which originally were primarily decorative and through the efforts of Chris Villa and myself, have made the necessary alterations in order to make these weapons durable for " intensive " stage combat purposes. Chris and I have worked with these weapons for approximately one year now, in various combat situations, and can attest to their strength and durability. They are as follows:

The Medieval Broadsword (Art. 8C) a "two-hand" wire wound grip of silver grey, with a heavy "T" cross-guard and large heart shaped pommel both antique gold in color, can be equipped with an extremely long and heavy 37" blade about $2\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, or with a shorter, lighter, 33" blade of approximately the same width. The medieval broadsword is available for 65.00.

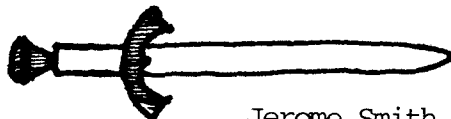


The Oriental Broadsword (Art. 69) is so called because of it's round guard and grip. The guard is about the size of a foil guard, and is cast in gold. The round grip can be cut to varying lengths (one-hand, bastard, two-hand, etc.) is made of wood, and is covered with black leather. As a final touch we have added a black leather thumbpad inside the guard. The pommel is round as well, and is the same gold color as the guard. The blade options remain the same. The oriental broadsword is available for 55.00.



I reccomend either of these weapons for any stage-combat purposes. We have worked with them regularly and have found them to be consistent and reliable.

Postscript: I have also recently developed a Roman Shortsword that is durable and dependable. It too has a round wooden grip wrapped with leather for one hand with a heavy gold cross-guard that curves slightly toward the blade and a large gold pommel. The blade is the same used on our broadswords but is out to an appropriate length (approximately 20-25 inches). Though this shortsword is not totally authentic in any partucular period, it is admirably suited for a variety of warriors, Romans, Greeks, Gladiators, even Vikings. I designed this weapon for the production of Caligula I am choreographing, and have found it too to be durable and reliable. This sword is not in the Armoury catalog but is available upon request.



Jerome Smith
A.F.S. Armoury

PART VI

DUELS IN BRITAIN

From: The Duel: A
History of Duelling

Britain was slower than France to adopt the duel of honour, and during the sixteenth century quarrels still tended to be settled and slights avenged by means of 'killing affrays' or attacks by hired gangs of assassins. Gradually, however, the more honourable method of settlement by means of a fair fight in the presence of seconds was imposed by public opinion; and before long the English gentry had become as sensitive and punctilious about the point of honour as the French aristocracy.

One of the earliest recorded duels of honour which took place in Britain in the seventeenth century was fought in Islington in 1609 between two courtiers and favourites of James I, Sir George Wharton and Sir James Stewart. We have no details of the cause of their quarrel, but are merely told that 'reproachful words passed betwixt them'. However, the letters they exchanged about the duel are still extant, and these reveal on both sides a deepseated hatred and an implacable determination to fight. In the first, Wharton remarked that Stewart's misconstruction of his message gave him 'cause to think you extreme vainglorious, a humour which the valiant detests'. He went on: 'And whereas you unjustly said I durst not meet you in the field to fight with you, you shall find that you are much mistaken; for I will fight with you with what weapon you shall appoint, and meet you where you will, being contented to give you this advantage, not valuing the worst you can do.' To this proud challenge Stewart replied as follows:

Sir: Your message either being ill-delivered, or else not accepted, you have since, though ill-advised, retracted, and have repented it; for your messenger willed me from you, that either of us should make choice of a friend to debate the matter. To which I confess I did but lightly hearken, since I knew some odds which no breath could make even. And now you have to acknowledge no other speeches than you charged me with, which is, that I said you durst not meet me in the field to fight. True it is, your barbarous and uncivil insolence in such a place, and before such a company (for whose respect I am only sorry for what I then did or said), made me do and say that which I now will make good. Wherein, since you find yourself behind, I am ready to do you all the right you can expect. And to that end

have I sent you the length of my rapier, which I will use with a dagger, and so meet you at the farther end of Islington (as I understand nearer you than me) at three of the clock in the afternoon; which things I scorn to take as advantages, but as my due, and which I have made indifferent. And in respect I cannot send any of my friends without great hazard of discovery, I have sent my servant, herewith who is only acquainted with this business.

James Stuarde (sic).

The only description of the duel which has come down to us is contained in 'a lamentable Ballat of a Combat lately fought near London', in Nichols's History of Canonbury. In this work, after laying the scene and recounting the preliminaries, the ballad-monger tells us that

Seven thrusts in turn these gallants had
Before one drop of blood was drawn,
The Scottish Knight then valiant spoke-
'Stout Wharton, still thou hold'st thy own.'
With the next thrust that Wharton thrust
He ran him through the shoulder-bone.
The next was through the thick o' thigh.

After some more fierce thrusts, delivered, so we are told, with 'ruthless hate', the duel came to a mortal and patriotic end, for

They made a deadly desperate close,
And both fell dead upon the ground.
Our English Knight was the first that fell-
The Scotch Knight fell immediately,
Who cried out both to Jesus Christ,
'Receive our Souls, Oh Lord, we die!
God bless our noble King and Queen,
And all the noble progeny!

The King is said to have been deeply grieved by the news of the death of his two courtiers, and he responded fittingly to their loyal sentiments by ordering them both to be buried in one grave. This was duly done, if we are to judge from the following extract from the Islington register: 'Sir George Wharton, sonne of Lord Wharton, was buried the 10th of November, 1609; James Stewart, Esq., godsonne to King James, was buried the 10th of November, 1609.'

Disturbed by the growing popularity of duelling, which he regarded as 'a vaine that bleeds both incessantly and inwardly', James I condemned the practice in his Proclamation against Private Challenges and Combats, published in 1613; while Bacon, when Attorney-General,

speaking before the Star Chamber Court, expressed the pious hope that the great of the land would abandon the custom when they found it 'adopted by barber-surgeons and butchers'. Bacon also declared in a letter to Lord Villiers that he was determined to make no distinction between a coronet and a hatband in his efforts to repress the practice, and added: 'I will prosecute if any man appoint the field, though no fight takes place; if any man send a challenge in writing or verbally; if any man accept a challenge, or consent to be a second; if any man depart the realm in order to fight; if any man revive a quarrel after the late proclamation.' However, neither James nor his attorney-general could do much against what the King called 'the bewitching duel'.



A Book Review:

ERROL FLYNN

The Untold Story

By: Charles Higham

He gave a valedictory interview to one of his favorite reporters, Vernon Scott, of the Los Angeles Herald Express. He said, "I've squandered seven million dollars. I'm going to have to sell the Zaca. I need the money, old bean. But don't grieve for me when I go. The way of a transgressor is not as hard as they claim. I suppose I'll be criticized, but it's a question of living life the way you see fit, and I've been careless of other people's opinions. I never thought the public would be interested in my so-called antics.

"Years ago it was a matter of choosing which road to travel. After all, there is only one road to hell, and there weren't any signposts along the way. I've taken the human disasters in the same stride as the good times. And I hope I manage to face it all with a brave front. You shouldn't detress your friends or have them feel the disasters.

"I've lived hard, spent hard and behaved as I damn well chose. You'd think I'd be ready for the wheelchair after the last twenty years of hell raising, but I never felt better."

This pretty well sums up Errol Flynn's attitude towards life and his pursuit of adventure and intrigue throughout his career.

Charles Higham doesn't have a great deal of good to say about Flynn. In fact, this has been the major criticism of the book. Several critics feel that many of the facts are distorted and up to conjecture. There are also those who say that Mr. Higham's picture of Errol Flynn is "spot on."

The book covers Flynn's life from his birth in Hobart, Tasmania (1909) through to his death in Vancouver, B.C. (1959).

He was the son of a professor of archeology and an over-bearing mother who apparently punished him quite severely during his early years, which has led many people to speculate that this was a major reason for his mistreatment of women throughout his life.

He was a very adventurous youth from the start and took chances that many of us only dream about. Everything from smuggling opium for Chinese bandits to evading hostile pimps and prostitutes. According to the book, his life wasn't devoid of women. In fact, one would have to question the myriad sexual adventures he was engaged in. One would have to assume he had a voracious sexual appetite and he spent roughly fifteen hours a day in bed! I started to O.D. on his

sexual adventures. I am sure many of them are true, but I imagine many were strictly word of mouth. After all, when you are the silver screen's greatest lover, the myth has to be propagated.

Flynn's bisexuality was often mentioned. Such interludes included affairs with Tyrone Power, Howard Hughes and Truman Capote. His bisexuality is common knowledge but the author did make a point of stressing it whenever the moment presented itself.

I think the most distressing aspect of the book is the linking of Flynn to the Nazis before and during World War II. It is well documented with a great deal of the information being on file with the Pentagon and F.B.I. I feel there is little doubt that Flynn was certainly a Nazi sympathizer, and was indeed involved with harboring Nazi agents. This is pretty scary stuff but when you think about it, it is right up Flynn's alley. He was very anti-Semitic from childhood. He admired the discipline of the Third Reich, and to be involved with espionage and intrigue was part of his make-up. He thrived on it! Apparently, Flynn was responsible for the deaths and imprisonment of many German anti-Nazis who were betrayed by Errol Flynn and his doctor friend Herman Erben (himself, a Nazi).

The book deals a great deal with Flynn's escapades during his various films. His bitter feuds with Jack Warner (a Jew) and his many brawls with various men and women. I couldn't help but laugh when he took on Victor Jory at a Hollywood party and got knocked on his ass!

The only mention of Flynn's swashbuckling image in regards to his swordsmanship was when he was contracted to do the Adventures of Don Juan. He didn't want Fred Cavens to do his fight work. He said Cavens was "too old-fashioned." He wanted Aldo Naldi, the Italian fencing champion. As it turned out, Cavens did the work anyway. I was surprised to read the especially since Fred Cavens had done most of his swordplay up to that time.

Perhaps the most bitter words I read in the book were an indication of Higham's dislike for Flynn. Or should I say his disillusionment with Flynn. "Like many evil men, Errol was drawn to kindness and goodness only as a temporary peaceful refuge from the misery of being himself. Then he grew bored." A rather biting statement!

The book is certainly worth reading. If you swashbucklers have fantasies about the Errol Flynn image (as many of us do) perhaps you shouldn't indulge. It's an eyeopener that sheds a lot of light on one of the silver screen's most complex idols. You will have to judge for yourself as to whether or not you feel Errol Flynn was justly represented.

D. L. Boushey

'Points' of Interest

At a meeting of this Society on Sunday, April 20, the following resolution was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously:

The Society of British Fight Directors fully recognises the authority of the Society of American Fight Directors to conduct tests within their own country. We rule that certificates issued by the Society of British Fight Directors should only be issued for tests conducted in the United Kingdom.

This statement was forwarded to:

David L. Boushey	President, S.A.F.D.
Erik Fredricksen	Secretary-Treasurer S.A.F.D.
B. H. Barry	Society of British Fight Directors
Patrick Crean	Honorary Member of S.A.F.D.

The Society of American Fight Directors appreciates and concurs with the British Society in regards to this issue. We hope that this decision will make it clear as to who should have the influence in the area of fight directing in the United States. We are most pleased that our certificates will be the only certificates issued in the U.S. thus substantiating our position as the representative of the vast majority of fight directors and teachers in the United States.

If any certificates of British origin are issued after the official date of April 20, 1980, please contact the home office of the American Society and that information will be promptly forwarded to the British Society. It has been made perfectly clear that those individuals issuing British certificates in the U.S. are no longer obliged to do so under the authority of the Society of British Fight Directors. We appreciate our colleagues' concern for our position in making the Society of American Fight Directors a viable, representative organization.

David L. Boushey,
President S.A.F.D.

There are still members who haven't paid their 1980 dues to the Society! The Society will generously forward this edition of The Fight Master to those individuals but will cease to do so if the dues are not received by June 30. It is vital to the financial solvency of the Society that all the members pay their annual dues. I am sure

that some of you have forgotten to pay and we understand, but if you do wish to drop your membership to the Society, please notify the Society in writing.

Erik Fredricksen
Secretary-Treasurer

Joseph Martinez and David Boushey will be conducting individual combat/movement workshops for the National A.T.A. Convention in San Diego this August. They would enjoy the support of those colleagues who will be attending the conference. The Society of American Fight Directors will be holding their annual meeting on the last day of the conference, August 13. The exact whereabouts will be available at the workshop of David Boushey. The time will probably be in the early afternoon.

The Society is pleased to greet six new members to the Society of American Fight Directors. They are as follows:

George Bellah	Student	202½ W. Gowe St., No. 2 Kent WA 98031
Rab Bell	Student	345 Riverside Drive, No. 5H New York NY 10025
R.W. Cox	Affiliate	P.O. Box 443 Athens OH 45701
Ramon Martinez	Affiliate	2137 Chatterton Ave., No. 1R Bronx NY 10472
Gary Morabito	Student	646 Ninth Ave., No. 4RS New York NY 10036
Milton Robinson	Affiliate	Southern Utah State College Cedar City UT 84720

Mark Haney, swordsmith to the Society, is quite concerned that colleagues send the exact measurements in regards to weapons they want built. Apparently in one case the swords were not as the person ordering intended. Mark says he will make them any way you want them but if you give him a measurement, make sure it is accurate because it is not up to him to question your logic in ordering a 3" hilt and 48" blade. I am exaggerating of course, but you must give him well thought-out dimensions for the equipment you are ordering.

The National Fight School being held in Macomb, Illinois, this July 14, through August 8, promises to be a very fruitful experience for all concerned. The Society is pleased to see a number of student and affiliate members in the Society taking part. There are still a limited number of vacancies open to fellow colleagues who might be interested in this intensive workshop headed by David Boushey, Erik Fredricksen and Joseph Martinez. If you still wish to be a part of this first national workshop, contact Joseph Martinez at Western Illinois University c/o Theatre Arts Department, Macomb, Illinois 61455. The workshop will cover all aspects of armed and unarmed combat including modern fencing technique as a prelude to the more classical forms of combat.

The Society still needs more articles from its membership to make our magazine a source of valuable information. We now have 62 members in the Society, but the number of articles coming into the Society stays about the same. Come on folks! Do your part. Write an article. Don't worry about writing skills with regard to proper punctuation. We have an excellent editor. What we need are articles to maintain the high standards our magazine now enjoys. It is surprising to find so few articles written by those who teach combat in the university and college systems. We would love to hear from you.

SOCIETY NEWS

J. R. BEARDSLEY (Affiliate) is currently working for C.Y.P.T., a young peoples' theatre and choreographing a slapstick fight for The Marvelous Adventures of Tyl. He is choreographing a fight scene for the Berkeley Stage Company in their production of The Derby. He recently took part in the evening of fighting that was produced at the Julian Theatre in San Francisco under the direction of Cris Villa. He continues to work with Villa's group of assassins called Cloak and Dagger.

DAVID BOUSHEY recently choreographed Romeo and Juliet for California State at Long Beach and the University of California at Irvine. Most recently, he choreographed the fights in Cyrano de Bergerac at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago and Hamlet for the California Shakespeare Festival in Visalia. He is now doing the fight in Othello for Intiman Theatre in Seattle and soon will be off to do the fight work for the Illinois and Utah Shakespeare Festivals.

RICK DUET (Affiliate) choreographed the fights in Hamlet for Washington State University and will be doing the fights and acting in the company

for the Montana Shakespeare in the Park. He is just now graduating with an M.F.A. from the University of Washington. Congratulations!

STACY EDDY (Affiliate) did a workshop on armed and unarmed combat for a national convention of speech communication experts in Portland, Oregon. He is still T.D. for the Portland Civic Theatre.

ERIK FREDRICKSEN recently did an extensive workshop in armed and unarmed combat at Webster University in Missouri. He will be co-conducting the national workshop in Macomb, Illinois, this August. He will be assisting David Boushey in the A.T.A. convention in San Diego.

JAN KIRK (Affiliate) recently choreographed the fight in As You Like It for the Museum Theatre in Virginia. He also conducted a fight workshop for the Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

RAMON MATTHEWS (Student) recently choreographed the fights in The Bacchae for the Baltimore Actors Theatre.

DAWSON SMITH (Affiliate) is very much involved in pursuing his institute which will be an information center for those who make their livings as fight choreographers and teachers of combat. He is especially interested in forging techniques and the development of standard fencing terms for terminology used by the old masters of Europe.

JEROME SMITH (Affiliate) recently took part in the night of fighting at the Julian Theatre in San Francisco. He is now involved in choreographing the fights in Caligula. He is helping to re-design various weapons for The Armoury in San Francisco. He welcomes any comments from his colleagues concerning his article herewith regarding the design changes.

ALLEN SUDDETH (Affiliate) has been conducting regular classes in combat in New York. He choreographed the action sequences in Hide and Seek on Broadway. He is on the verge of producing an up-dated Night at the Fights perhaps on Broadway in the not-too-distant future.

ERIC UHLER (Affiliate) is acting in a production of Show Me A Hero in New York.

CHRIS VILLA (Affiliate) produced A Night at the Fights at the Julian Theatre in San Francisco. Apparently, it went quite well. As usual publicity was a problem, but the quality was first class.

NOTE: The title A Night at the Fights has been copy-written by Allen Suddeth in New York. He would appreciate that members no longer use that title in fight presentations.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Society of American Fight Directors was founded in May, 1977.

Its aims are to promote the art of fight choreography in such a manner that the Fight Director will be accepted as an integral part of the theater and cinema industry. Promoting the aesthetics of well-conceived fight choreography as an integral part of the total production is another aim of the Society.

Full members are professional Fight Directors.

Affiliate members are fencing masters in drama schools, overseas members, or Fight Directors of limited experience.

Actor/Combatants are actors working professionally and pre-professionals who want to increase their knowledge and skills as combatants for their use on the stage.

Friends are people interested in stage fighting but who are not necessarily connected with professional fight directing.

Student members are drama students who aspire to become Fight Directors.

SOCIETY RULES

Members are reminded that only full members may use the Society's name to secure employment; however, affiliate, actor/combatant and student members may use their status in any capacity other than securing employment.

Inquiries about membership and editorial articles should be mailed to the Society's permanent address:

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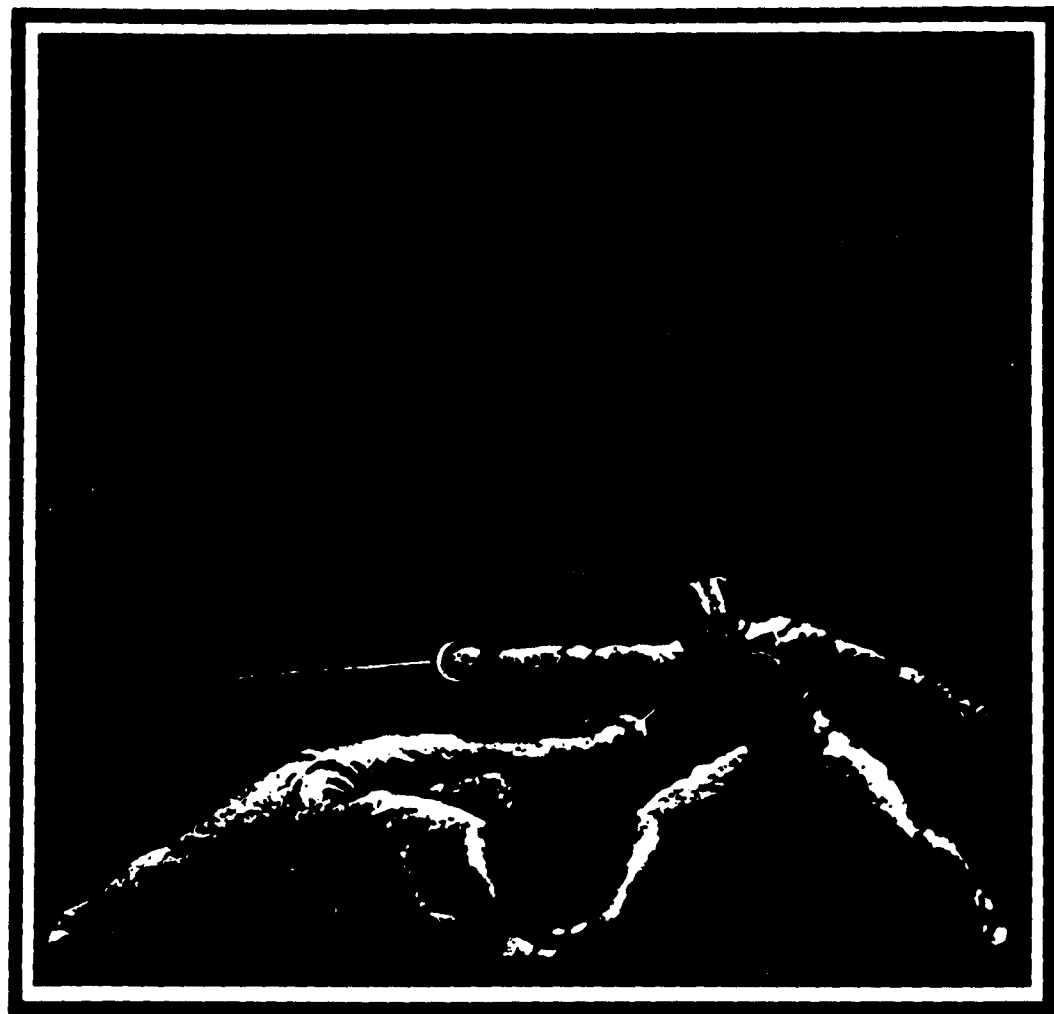
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