

By George Maskin
observing sports

Can't you visualize George Maskin in the movies — on the early, early show on Channel 98 or the late, late show on Channel 41?

Well, it almost happened.

Here we sat, in the midst of a real Hollywood production in the Tiger clubhouse at Tiger Stadium.

And, then, lo and behold, the producer of the extravaganza sounded off:

"Everybody who doesn't belong in here... get it."

So we did.

The moguls from Hollywood, who were present in the flesh, had come to "shoot" the Detroit Lions in an earlier episode of the screen version of "The Paper Lion."

That's the story of how George Plympton came to the Lions' training camp five years ago and tried to make the team as a quarterback.

He failed... at least to make the Lions.

But he did write a best seller, a book that topped the markets for several months and brought him riches when Stu Miller stepped in and bought the rights for the films.

MILLER DECIDED that since Plympton had written about the Lions... then the Lions themselves should do the acting.

So he arranged to have members of the 1957 Lions team turn to a new profession.

For almost two months during the recent winter, most of the Lions, including Joe Schmidt, enjoyed the warm Florida breezes as sequences of the films were shot. One of the stars turned out to be Alex Karras.

This past week, the scene of shooting turned to Tiger Stadium, specifically the clubhouse.

All of which forced Jack Hand, the Tiger equipment manager, and his staff to empty the Tiger gear in a hurry after last Sunday's game so that the Lions could bring in their uniforms, shoes and what have you.

The stagehands and electricians moved in. Directors and cameramen bounced around the room.

For the first time, there even was a woman strolling around. She had to be the producer's gal Saturday.

THE IDEA of this particular sequence was to reenact a game-day scene for the Lions... their arriving at the stadium in a bus, their entering the locker room; their dressing into their grid uniforms, etc.

It even was worked out to have available three sets of white jerseys... set No. 1 freshly cleaned for the players in the scene prior to the game.

Then they had to change into a dirtier set so it would look like they had been playing for the next sequence which was to depict half-time.

And, of course, for the post-game shooting, the players had to dress in a very dirty set of jerseys.

The movie's brass have updated the story so that it includes all the '67 Lions, despite the fact there naturally have been numerous changes — like in the coaching staff — since the original story was penned in '62.

In fact, the Lions even made some changes last week when they traded away Milt Plunk, Pat Studstill and Tommy Watkins for Bill Munson of the Rams.

But this didn't eliminate Studstill, Watkins and Plunk from the Lions.

When the club assembled — all 40 of them Monday morning — there they were, the three of them back with their old mates.

"Heck, I'm not passing over this chance to be in Hollywood," laughed Plunk.

IT SHOULD be noted that the players all are paid handsomely for their movie work.

"They get above scale," the producer noted.

Each also received a sizable amount in expenses to go to Florida and they collected some "extras" to come from their homes for this week's shooting at the Stadium.

For a player, like Mel Farr, who came from California, the expenses could run fairly high.

When they finished at the Stadium this week, the Lions along with the camera brigade moved in to St. Louis where there'll be more shooting.

It seems the game that will be featured in the movie was one which the Lions played in St. Louis last season.

So, to make it all the more realistic... it's back to St. Louis.

In case you're wondering, the movie is set for a gala debut in October... in Detroit, naturally.

Prep Schedule

BASEBALL	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Stevenson at Farmington	Clareville at Farmington	Clareville at Farmington	Clareville at Farmington
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Lack Of Batting Punch Plagues Tigers

Special to the Observer

WASHINGTON -- The hitting isn't what manager Mayo Smith would like to see.

The Tigers don't believe in making too many runs and they accumulate a shortage of safe blows.

Yet, they have managed to pull themselves up again after last slump that cost them four out of five games, by combining superlative pitching with some sparkling defense and a few timely hits.

What's more, the Tigers again appear to have the "number" on the Baltimore Orioles.

A year ago, Detroit won almost every time it met the Orioles, although both needed serious efforts by the Birds and the Tigers left Baltimore in a fairly happy frame of mind.

In the Wednesday victory, Tom Matchick emerged as the Tigers' batting hero. The young redhead came through with a pinch double that knocked in the two Detroit runs with two out in the ninth inning.

Lolich and Tom Phoebus had matched almost innings for eight frames -- Lolich in his bid to make it nine in a row over the Birds against whom he hasn't lost since May 26, 1964.

Then in the ninth walk to Willie Horton followed by an intentional pass to Don Wert put two aboard for Detroit. Brown's infield roller.

There were two out when Matchick delivered while swinging for Lolich.

BALTIMORE, WHICH had an eight-game winning streak snapped, retaliated with a homer by Boog Powell in the ninth off Fred Lasher before rookie Jon Warden came in to get the final out.

Lolich, incidentally, didn't allow a hit until two were out in the sixth.

Warden got a chance to perform some heroics the next night after Wilson issued back-to-back singles in the ninth with none out.

In game Warden got the side out and he would have escaped without giving up a run, had not Wert muffed an easy roller down the third base line.

The final Detroit marker resulted when Al Kaline doubled and Horton singled.

The Tiger Schedule

SUNDAY -- At Washington, 1:30 p.m.
TUESDAY -- Baltimore at Tiger Stadium, 8 p.m.
WEDNESDAY -- Baltimore at Tiger Stadium, 8 p.m.
THURSDAY -- Tigers at Toledo (exhibition)
FRIDAY -- Washington at Tiger Stadium, 8 p.m.
SATURDAY -- Washington at Tiger Stadium, 2:15 p.m. (Channel 2)

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