

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OSCAR-WINNING FILM PRODUCERS SIGN
EAST COAST PRODUCTION AGREEMENT

Washington -- Hartleben/Stoll Productions of Los Angeles and Moses, Epstein and Wiseman, Inc. of Washington, D.C. today signed an agreement to jointly market a nationwide package of communications and media production services.

Dale Hartleben, who earlier this year won the Academy Award for Best Feature-Length Documentary for THE MAN WHO SKIED DOWN EVEREST, noted the importance of developing a presence on both Coasts. "We want to broaden the scope of our production services. This agreement with MEW, Inc. will enable us to do just that," he said.

MEW, Inc. is a consulting firm that specializes in the design and development of tailored communications, information and community education campaigns. Its clients include government agencies, private corporations, human service and cultural organizations and public television stations.

Hartleben/Stoll Productions produces and distributes dramatic and documentary films for theatrical and television release. H/S also produces sponsored films for corporate, government and non-profit clients. Along with Mr. Hartleben's Academy Award, its films have won Gold Medals at the prestigious Atlanta and Edinburgh Film Festivals.

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In explaining what this package means to clients, Nancy Moses, president of MEW, Inc., emphasized that individual media products work best when applied within a total campaign. "Our clients need first-class films," she said, "and Hartleben/Stoll can produce them. But our clients also need to know how, where, when and in what contexts to use them." By working together, she added, the two firms will be able to give clients "not only the superior media materials they need, but also a carefully-planned strategy for using them."

Services will be offered out of offices in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

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Its clients include

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ABOUT HARTLEBEN/STOLL PRODUCTIONS

HARTLEBEN/STOLL PRODUCTIONS is a motion-picture production company that draws together professionals with nearly four decades of experience in the film industry. That experience received the industry's highest accolade last spring when Dale Hartleben received the 1976 Academy Award for Best Feature Length Documentary honoring THE MAN WHO SKIED DOWN EVEREST.

His partners, Jerry Hartleben and Otto Stoll, have won gold medals at the Edinburgh and Atlanta Film Festivals.

More important than awards are the many clients who have chosen these filmmakers to produce commercials, industrials, educational and motivational films. They include Getty Oil, Whittaker Corporation, Canadian-Pacific Corporation, Southern California Edison, U-Haul International, Armour-Dial, Samaritan Health Services, Eaton International, Blue-Cross/Blue Shield, and the National League of Women Voters.

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ABOUT MOSES, EPSTEIN AND WISEMAN, INC.

MOSES, EPSTEIN AND WISEMAN, INC. is a communications consulting and service firm serving local, state and international clients in private and public sectors. MEW, Inc. specializes in designing custom-made communications strategies and media tools tailored to specific program goals and target audiences.

The combined experience of the firm's key professionals -- Nancy Moses, Mark Epstein, and Larry Wiseman -- includes print journalism and public relations; film, television and multi-media production; cultural program management; special project development; regulatory and legislative analysis; and management consulting.

Clients of MEW, Inc. include the Walnut Street Theater and Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, public television stations, the Kettering Foundation, the Developmental Disabilities Technical Assistance System, and International Paper Realty Corporation.




AFTER THE SEA CAUGHT FIRE

A Film Documentary
Proposed by

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in association with

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It appeared as though the sea had caught fire.
A great huge fire rose up into the sky and a
noise was heard that was louder than any thunder.

-- Chief Johannes of Enewetak

AFTER THE SEA CAUGHT FIRE is the story of an isolated Pacific atoll called Enewetak, its ecology, and the people whose culture is rooted on it.

Each has been altered by its contact with the West. After thirty years away from home while their atoll was used as a nuclear proving ground, the Enewetakese are now returning. Our film will capture the drama of their homecoming, and use that drama to illuminate how the Enewetakans rebuild their culture, and readapt to their rich, yet immutably transformed environment.

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Chief Johannes will never forget the day in 1947 that the ship came to take them away:

A man told us: "You cannot protest or fight. You are like the rabbit fish wriggling on the end of a spear. You can struggle all you want, but there's nothing you can do to change this."

Chief Johannes and his people left the Pacific atoll of Enewetak -- quietly -- in December of 1947. They were taken by the United States Navy to Ujelang, another atoll about 125 miles away. Over the next ten years, forty-three nuclear devices would be detonated at Enewetak -- as part of the United States weapons development program.

* * * * *

Enewetak atoll -- a ring of islands in which Enewetak is the largest -- was first inhabited by the descendants of canoe voyagers who had chanced on it 1,000 years ago. The people of the atoll lived undisturbed until the early 16th century -- when a Spanish explorer briefly visited the atoll. Spain ruled the island until 1886. Then the Germans came and signed an agreement with Chief Piter. They traded with the islanders for almost thirty years: foodstuffs and tradegoods for Enewetakese copra. No Germans settled on the islands; only an occasional missionary lingered long enough to baptize the "natives."

In 1914 the Japanese wrested control of the islands from the Germans. But the islands were too isolated, too far from the normal trade routes, too barren to support extensive plantations. For the next quarter-century, the Japanese maintained the same desultory trade relations as the Germans had -- and the same lack of contact with the Enewetakans.

The industrial revolution and the mercantile explosion that had reshaped the world had barely touched Enewetak atoll or its people. But by 1939, the nature of modern warfare had changed as well. And Enewetak island, just large enough to accommodate an airfield, became a key building block in the battle plans of the Japanese. They finally settled on the atoll, and rebuilt it into a fortress. The Enewetakans were confined to two smaller islands.

On February 17, 1944, the United States began its campaign to drive the Japanese off the atoll. Admiral Nimitz, in a report to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet, indicated that

...the usual procedures in island campaigns were followed. The islands were subjected to heavy gun and bomb attack, which was continuous from the time of the arrival of the Task Force until troops landed on the island. For a period of two hours immediately before the landing of troops, each island was subjected to concentrated destructive fire. Landings were made on all these islands from the lagoon beaches, in each case with two battalions abreast.

Six-and-a-half days later, the atoll was secured. More than 3,400 Japanese and 348 Americans died during the battle. Enewetak's 142 inhabitants were prohibited by the Americans from returning to the atoll's main island -- their home. Almost all the coconut trees had been leveled; other vegetation had been burned off. According to Chief Johannes, Enewetak and Enjebi (the atoll's second largest island) had been seriously damaged. Rusting ships dotted the lagoon. Concrete bunkers were left to crumble on the beaches.

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Enewetak is tiny by Western standards. Forty-two islands circle its twenty-five mile diameter lagoon. But taken together, their dry land area totals only two-and-one-quarter square miles -- most of it coral sand, most of it uninhabitable. There are no mountains or valleys on Enewetak. On the average, islands in the atoll reach only ten feet above sea level.

The ecology has been jarred by its contact with Western science and warfare, but not overturned. Many of the coconut palms have grown back. World War II bunkers and the remnants of the proving ground facilities are covered with morning glories. The lagoon and the atoll's water-filled A-Bomb craters teem with plant and animal life. Thousands of species of mollusk have been catalogued, including a giant clam that can weigh over 400 pounds and measure over three feet in length. Over two hundred species and varieties of corals are found there, and hundreds of crustacean species, including crabs, shrimps and lobsters. At least seven hundred species of fish frequent the lagoon.

Since 1954, over 800 scientists at the Mid-Pacific Marine Laboratory on Enewetak have catalogued and examined the atoll's rich plant and animal life. Enewetak has been called the most studied atoll in the world.

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Anthropologists estimate that the population of the atoll could once have been as high as 1000. Typhoons are uncommon at Enewetak, but not unknown. Over its 1000-year history, occasional storms washed over the islands and stripped them of vegetation. Many people drowned. Without food, more died of starvation. One of the few Westerners who reached the island during the 18th century recorded contact with a "tribe" numbering less than eighty.

* * * * *

Enewetakese legend claims that the people were always of that atoll. At the northwest tip of the Marshall Islands, and more than 2750 miles west of Honolulu, they remained isolated -- and insulated -- from the rest of the world. They created their own small society, with its own gods and songs. Their culture was deeply rooted in the place where it had grown. The Enewetakans sing

I love the way my atoll is,
There where I was born...

I will never stay away from it,
For that is my true home and ancestral land,
My heritage forever.

Every Enewetakese family has a special place on the atoll, inherited from its ancestors. Their lives were infused with this sense of place, of continuity. And they were inextricably bound up within its ecology. They took their food from it; they lived in delicate balance with it. The lagoon was more than literally at the center of a complex ecosystem of which the Enewetakans were but one link. Chief Johannes told the United States Senate in 1975

That land, that atoll, is part of us and we are part
of it in a way which is difficult to describe.
...Enewetak atoll is the only place which is ours.

* * * * *

In 1947, the Cold War was heating up. Europe was exhausted and not yet able to defend itself. Nationalist China was on the verge of collapse. Our monopoly on "the bomb" was soon due to run out. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the United States attempted to maintain continued superiority in nuclear weapons. But nuclear weapons

development meant nuclear testing, and the Atomic Energy Commission noted that "tests should be held overseas until it could be established more definitely that continental detonations would not endanger the public health and safety."

Enewetak was chosen as the test site.

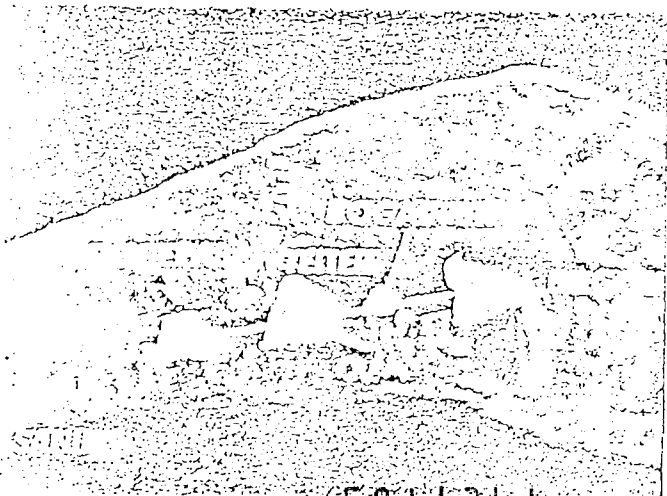
Paradoxically, it was the same isolation that had once insulated Enewetak from Western culture that now finally thrust it into direct contact with the most elemental forces in Western technology. The area downwind from Enewetak was uninhabited for at least 500 miles. And, according to a December 1947 A.E.C. press release, "Enewetak has the fewest number of inhabitants to be cared for." Ujelang was to be their new home. Much smaller, much less bountiful than Enewetak, this atoll held no attraction for the Enewetakans. One of them wrote a song.

On the day of the twenty-first, all of the people
came to this atoll.
But we do not worry for it is the will of the Lord.
We are very sad. We miss the islands from
which we are separated.
But we do not worry for it is the will of the Lord.

At Enewetak, a city of 10,000 was built. Airfields, bunkers, research laboratories and barracks were crammed onto the atoll's two-and-one-quarter square miles.

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On October 31, 1952, "Mike" was detonated on an Enewetakese island named Elugelab. The world's first hydrogen bomb -- over ten megatons -- vaporized the island and left a crater over a mile wide and three hundred feet deep.



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Chief Johannes remembers the day vividly.

We were told to look in the direction of Enewetak. Those of us who did will never forget what they saw. First, a bright flash rising up from the water; then it appeared as though the sea had caught fire. A great, huge fire rose up into the sky and a noise was heard that was louder than any thunder. . . . What we saw caused us to worry about what was happening on our atoll, but we were told that we could not go there to see. Instead, we continued to wait.

Thirty years of waiting ends on May 1, 1977. Forty million dollars will be spent by the United States government to clean up the islands, and to remove the remnants of the now brush-covered test facilities. The Enewetakese people will be coming home.

THE FILM

The film we propose is about that homecoming. It will focus on the Enewetakans' efforts to renew the bonds between themselves and their environment, and to pick up the thread of their thousand-year history. This is a story of regeneration. But it is as much about the atoll ecology itself as it is about the people who are returning to it.

In telling this scientific side of our story we enjoy a unique opportunity to explore first-hand how Enewetak's face has changed and its plants and animals have evolved. Ron Nolan, noted marine biologist and world authority on reef biosystems, will guide our exploration. We will dive with him in water-filled bomb craters -- some of them more than three miles across and three hundred feet deep -- to examine the plant and animal life that now thrives there. He will show us how Enewetak Atoll has adapted after ten years of nuclear testing and a devastating war.

Dr. Nolan is also important to the human side of our story. Readily accepted by the Enewetakans, he is at home with their society. Yet at the same time, he himself is a Western scientist. In many ways, he is an ambassador between cultures. His is a uniquely penetrating perspective from which to view the Enewetakese homecoming.

At the core of our documentary will be the Enewetakese people themselves. Even after their abrupt and traumatic collision with the West, they remain a quietly poetic people. Their attachment to their homeland is unshakeable; already they have written a song to commemorate their return. The spirit of these people -- and the simple drama of their homecoming -- will bind our story together, give it depth and energy. By observing how they once again close the circle that joins them to their atoll and their heritage, we will learn much about human nature, and about nature itself.

With this dual focus -- nature and human nature -- AFTER THE SEA CAUGHT FIRE cannot serve as a platform for any political ideology. Perhaps we will find in AFTER THE SEA CAUGHT FIRE a metaphor for other issues. Perhaps it does represent the most jarring clash between man and nature; perhaps it is somehow symbolic of our loss of innocence in the nuclear age. These are issues which must for the moment remain open, because our aim is to tell the "story of Enewetak" in terms understood by those who know the story best -- the Enewetakans themselves.

ABOUT HARTLEBEN/STOLL PRODUCTIONS

HARTLEBEN/STOLL PRODUCTIONS is a motion picture production company that draws together professionals with nearly four decades of experience in the film industry. AFTER THE SEA CAUGHT FIRE is the first documentary project undertaken by H/S since Dale Hartleben received the 1976 Academy Award for Best Feature Length Documentary honoring the MAN WHO SKIED DOWN EVEREST.


His partners, Jerry Hartleben and Otto Stoll, have won gold medals at the Edinburgh and Atlanta Film Festivals.

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PRODUCTION TEAM

<u>Name</u> <u>Title</u>	<u>Selected</u> <u>Credits</u>
DALE HARTLEBEN Producer	The Man Who Skied Down Everest
JERRY HARTLEBEN Director	Defiance (Universal)
RICK ROBERTSON Director of Photography	Journey to the Outer Limits (NGS) Go For It George Harrison Tour Drift Away (Universal)
JACK McKINNEY Director of Underwater Photography	The Deep (Columbia) Andrea Doria (Peter Gimbel)
PETER PILAFFIAN Sound	Journey to the Outer Limits The Eiger Sanction Ascent on Mount Everest (CBS)

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