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"The real fun of living wisely is that you get o be  
smug about it."

(Bill Watterson, *Calvin & Hobbes*)

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DEC 29 1992

• William Rotsler • 17909 Lull Street • Reseda, CA 91335 • 818/342-1895 •

Dear Bill:

No way I could write a regular column, for this reason: Ten years ago a truck moved into my lane on the freeway, wrenching me around & sailing me across 2 lanes. No blood, but a WRENCH which has left me feeling (all these years) like I lost the karate fight, and ten years-plus of non-stop headache. The head throbs are somewhat reduced now, but still there. Also there, an inability to sit at the computer for more than 90-120 minutes without getting a pocketbook-sized pain at the lower end of my spine. As a result, I reserve my time at the machine for making money.

However, don't despair. Since about 1985 I've been writing a personal zine, my old MASQUE (or KTEIC) you may remember. Writing it, pasting it up, putting in the *best* of my cartoons...but not printing it. It is now about a \$600 printing job & I'm broke (because of that inability to work).

But I could send you Xeroxes of pertinent passages and you could fabricate them into a column, should you care. (If you don't that's okay.) Use the artwork, too. Have LOTS of filler quotes, as well.

Yes, it was "Good" that we set gaze upon one another and wagged tongues. (That sounds vaguely obscene and if there is anything I hate it's vagueness, thank you Mr Bloch.)

Cheers all over you!



Have no pix on hand, so if there are any enclosed  
I did some just for you.

Wrote  
12/24/92



wrote  
7/7/97

• William Rotsler •  
• 17909 Lull Street • Reseda, CA 91335 •

I guess I'd always wanted to make movies, but this is not something you can just do. It's very technical, if nothing else. I'd been a sculptor after art school, and decided to be a photographer, and was strongly influenced by Andre de Dienes. I got to know him, volunteered some of my sculpture to be in his photos. (He, I and Marilyn Monroe went househunting for her in 1951.) I began seriously photographing nudes (which was my interest) in 1958.

The first nude I shot (excluding girl friends & my wife) was Diane Webber, against an 18-foot high wall of sculpture I was making in a rented barn in the Malibu hills. I sold that first set right away--and in fact, it sold for almost 20 years!--and I did others but I didn't really get into it until 1960.

In 1961 I shot stills on my first nudie-cutie in Searchlight, Nevada, (I'm blanking on the title, but it had Virginia Gordon in it) and all during the 60s I shot still photos on all kinds of naked lady movies-- *Kiss Me Quick*, *(Dr. Breedlove)*, *Knockers Up* (where I met one of the great loves of my life), *The Butler Did It*, *Coupled*, *The Hippies and the Square*, *Norma*, *The Joys of Jezebel*, *Matinee Wives*, *One More Time*, *Last Step Down*, *Pinocchio*, *Love Thy Neighbor and his Wife*, *Southern Comforts*, *Astro-Naughties*, *Come Play With Me*, *Casting Call*, *Hot as Hell*, *Kama Sutra '71*, *Paradise Lust*, *Erography*.

I was to do *The Secret Sex Lives of Romeo and Juliet*, but Harry Novak found someone to do it cheaper, so I was stuck with only playing a part, something which was unusual (I wasn't directing or taking pictures, so we just played grabass). I did the prince of Verona. In one scene I was right up front with the married Vincene Wallace who I'd not fooled around with at all, and we got so hot I think if we had been in the back of the orgy we'd have done it for real. (Two years later she called me up from Seattle, said she had left her husband and could she come live with me? I said, "You mean, like in sin?" She did. We toured the USA in 1973, en route to me being Guest of Honor at the Toronto World Science Fiction convention and I took nudes of her everywhere.)

I also did stills on *The Exotic Dreams of Casanova*, *Drop Out*, *Below the Belt*, *Country Cuzzins*, *Sweet Georgia*, *Please Don't Eat My Mother*, *Little Miss Innocence*, *The Notorious Cleopatra*, *The Notorious Daughter of Fanny Hill*, where I played a part as well. (In fact, I did so much and took it to a local publisher, he started a



magazine ADAM FILM WORLD because of it). I did many more, but I didn't own the negs so I don't remember them.

In 1960 I thought I should learn how to make movies. Dwayne Avery & I did a lot of fun things--single-framing down Hollywood Blvd. at 700 mph (apparently), a cutie called "Rock Fight," and other stuff. About 5 or 6 minutes of film. One noon I went into a big, hip ad agency, Carson/Roberts, where Ken Sullet (an ad writer who I'd met through Stan Freberg) worked. "Got something to show you," I said, "Great," he said and grabbed his brownbag and went around gathering up *everyone* in the agency. I was embarrassed--it was only a few minutes of "fun film" not a product reel. The film was still running when one of the agency heads turned to the other and said, "We ought to have Bill do the Mattel film."

I was launched. I soon started my own industrial film production company, Nova Productions (which had to change to Greentree Productions, when we found that Nova was a holding company for one film, *Twelve Angry Men*). My partner was Dan Easton, who had been a child actor (Little Danny Mummert), who had been the nasty boy next door in the Blondie movie series). In the next five years I did everything--product animation, live action, animation, wrote, shot, directed, edited, etc. for such companies as Carnation, McCullough Chain Saws, Mattel, Lockheed, etc. I had zoomed low over Lake Arrowhead in the Cinerama B-25. piloted by the legendary Frank Hill, for a beer commercial. I'd dropped out of helicopters, stood in front of the Ben Hur chariots at full gallop, shot the first hot air balloon ascension under official rules, with the one of one of the famous Picard brothers, shot charging bulls in rodeos, etc.

All the time I was shooting nude and doing stills. Then one day I said, "I know how to do *everything*. It's time." I went into Harry Novak's office and walked out with a two-picture deal. I know now and I know then it was because Harry got me cheap.

Frankly, since so many of my early films were in cheap black-and-white I never thought they'd be put on tape. That, and the fact they were Very Tame. In those days we weren't sure what we could show. No crotches or cocks, and breasts were not to be touched or "displayed prominently." No body part was to be "dwelled on." No real sex, of course--all the guys kept their pants on and the women their panties. Restrictions galore, but we were working in unknown areas then.



AGONY OF LOVE was used by theaters a lot for some years I was told a when they'd first open as a sex film house, since it was so "cool," had a Moral, and was well-crafted by the standards of the time.

The lead was a busty stripper named Pat Barrington, whose pix I'd seen in stills from *Orgy of the Dead*, and wanted instantly. I playted the "artist" in the epic. She took me off at the end of shooting and had her way with me. For two or three weeks I'd edit at night, then pick her up at work and we'd go do nasty things. The first night, I was in the saddle, as it were, and she raised me up off the bed. I had my hands on her bottom and she had lifted my 200 pounds right off the linen. "My god, you're so strong could throw me out of bed!" I said, and she did! And without dropping back to the bed to get leverage either! I stood up, said, "You know what they say about getting thrown."

She finally came to my house toward the end of these little sexual playoffs. I expected her 2:30 am or so. I lived in the Hollywood hills in one of those houses where you come in at ground level and the bedrooms are down stairs. When she came in, never having been there before, she found a dotted white line (of cut shirt cardboards) with a rose between each. (Roses grew with wild abandon all over the lot.)

I'd heard her come in but it seemed to take her forever to get downstairs. Then I saw her backing down the stairs on her hands and knees, writing (it turned out later) a poem-part on each white card. She followed the dotted line to the foot of my bed, where there was a huge white X. She proceeded to do a full production strip tease at the foot of the bed. When she got into bed I took a gallon container of loose rose petals and scattered them all over her. Nothing that romantic, apparently, had ever happened to her.

The next morning the petals were withered, rolled-up black things, so I dumped the rest on her and we started again.

I just looked at *Agony of Love* for the first time since 1965 and it seems very slow. True, I had cast the lead because I wanted to bed her, but she couldn't act, so *all* of her lines were dubbed--without even a picture to look at--by another former lover of mine, Gloria Saunders, who was in *Captive Women, O.S.S.* and played The Dragon Lady in the *Terry and the Pirates* series. The Corvette at the end was mine & the bashed-in front was the result of a slight accident, so it worked well.

I did *Agony of Love* and *The Girl With Hungry Eyes* back to back. The first was an idea suggested by Harry Novak, and the other, he said, was to "do something with lesbians." He suggested the



titles, too. About ten years later I found he had intended each title to be on the other film.

When I had shot and virtually finished editing them, Harry said to add "10 or 15 minutes" to each, but gave me no money to do it. (\$100 each, I think.) Reason: They would be so heavily censored in Europe and in some USA areas there wouldn't be enough left to make a show. Why he didn't tell me this before, I don't know. He probably didn't know. This is the reason so many scenes are dragged on, to gain time. I added the psychiatrist scene after Pat Barrington had used her movie money to get her nose changed & a new hair style--thus the dark glasses.

I had enough money for a camera, film & one girl to add to *The Girl With Hungry Eyes*, I played Vicky Dee's lover--as I come cheap--just a bit at the end in the first cut, but after Harry wanted for footage, I shot the swimming pool dream, which ended very sexy, actually, when the camera stopped. So, by accident, I ended up as the male lead, you might say.

I had used water a theme to shoehorn in the extra minutes, starting with the terminally-cute Vicky in a shower, who remembers her heterosexual affair. We cut to romantic interludes, then to both of us in my swimming pool. Now I'd talked a buddy, Mitch Evans, into turning the camera off & on, and while she was naked, I had on dark blue bathing trunks. Mitch said they showed, so I took them off. Now I'd used Vicky in countless photo sessions, and we were comfortable together, but this was the first time I'd been naked with her. This amused her no end, and despite being married, she started playing with my cock. Naturally, I got an erection.

I had blurred the lens for this dream-like sequence, added a star filter, so each drop of water would star-up. I had her lightly oiled so the water would bead up. I lifted her up and she spread her arms and I let her slid back down. My erection went right into her. We could have practiced all day and not done that.

I pulled back at once and you can't see it on film, but it really turned her on. After we did a scene faking making love in my harem tent. (Okay, okay, so I had a harem tent where many interesting things went on. Theodore Sturgeon, among others, pronounced it fantastic.) The moment we were done I looked at Mitch, he looked at me, and he vanished with the equipment and we continued without him. (Think of that if you ever see the picture.)

The Corvette Cathy Crowfoot drove was still mine. When she pulls into the slanted parking lot of Barney's Beanery to make a phone call, she forgot to set the brake and once she was out the car it started to roll backward. I was festooned with expensive camera





gear, which I couldn't just dump, so the Vette was well on the way to shooting out backwards in Santa Monica Boulevard when I flung myself on its back. I reached for the brake, but she had put it on just part way. I had no leverage, and there was a tripod in the passenger seat. I had to turn around, insert myself behind the wheel (which in a sports car is like putting on a glove) *then* put on the hand brake. Just in time, too.

Cathy--who was always very, very "cool"--had her cool blown completely, a most unusual sight. An hour later, at my house in the Hollywood hills, where the end is filmed, we stopped for a drink. Joanne Rotolo (the girl in the ad for *The Fare Hunt* in the Something Weird Video catalog, is aka Jody Lynn) was living with me then. I found her in the kitchen, wearing only panties, standing before the open refrigerator. For reasons I don't know she said, "Look!" and showed me the biggest clitoris I'd seen. "Go show Cathy," I said.

Cut to the living room. Cathy is looking the other direction. "Look at this," Joanne said and when Cathy turned her head a contender for The World's Largest Clitoris was three inches away. Blew her cool, *again*.

I thought *Agony of Love* and the other black-and white films were transferred from a not-so-good looking print, or the transfer itself was, um, casual. They look dim, with none of the good, crisp quality of the originals. As if the houses were lit with 20-watt bulbs.

I had done AGONY OF LOVE and THE GIRL WITH HUNGRY EYES at \$15,000 each, SUBURBAN PAGANS and FOUR KIND OF LOVE for about \$11,000 each. No wonder I couldn't get real actors.

PAGANS and FOUR KINDS were ad-libbed. I scripted only the first part of FOUR KINDS. Harry Novak, who never ever called me, called me up and started telling me how bad my films had done. Which told me right away he wanted me to do more. I asked if he wanted budgets like the previous films (\$15,000) and he said yes. I wrote half-page outlines, he selected two And I worked a week to get them down. He said, "to much," so I worked & worked. I had cut all the fat and was into meat when I finally asked what budget he *did* want. \$10,000-\$11,000 he said, which annoyed me.

If you are going to do the invasion of Normandy you don't do it in a \$1.98 budget, you pick a squad or a team, do it as best you can within that budget. So I wrote stories you



could do at that VERY low budget in the late Sixties. They okayed two new ideas and wanted a script. I heard myself saying, "No. You want two scripts or two movies?" They said, of course, they wanted movies, so I said to just give me the money and leave me alone. They annoyed me.

Everyone in the film had fun. I knew most of these women pretty well, and would cast them accordingly, but said they had to "act" when they were really just being themselves. I was in it and Mitch Evans, an improvisational-trained friend. I'd give everyone an idea of the scene and we winged it. They said they never had so much fun making movies. Only once did no one talk, and only once did two people talked at once.

But Novak gave some film to a new lab as a gesture of goodwill & they screwed it up. I had to reshoot. This gave me an opportunity to fill up holes...and more fun.

One of the actresses had been after me for months--the busty brunette--and when we wrapped she said, "Now, can we do it now?" I had a house full of cast & crew & the lady I was living with (we were breaking up) was out of the house. She came on strong and one of the actors wanted in on it, too, and we didn't know a nice way to get him out. We were trying to get it up on the bed--when you make these features you KNOW you aren't going to get laid, so you don't get an erection, usually--but neither of us were getting anywhere. The lighting guy kept wrapping & moving lights and finally said, "Are you guys gonna do it or not?"

We moved into the shower (seen in that & many of my films) and she did EVERYTHING she could but neither of us were hard. It just seemed so weird, after all the time of "not." Finally I got about half an erection, then he did, and we moved to the bed. But I kept hearing the cast & crew & just couldn't concentrate. I left her with him--not what she wanted--to pay everyone off and we never did make it, ever.

You couldn't show real sex in these things, not even feel a breast (on camera), not even a good simulation--so we did a lot of cutaways, fooling around, etc. and today that seems damned quaint.

I'm also the writer-director of *Four Kinds of Love*, and *Suburban Pagans* using the pseudonym of Shannon Carse. (They were shot back-to-back and used parts of the same cast in both.) I think I used Carse on *Shannon's Women*, too, or maybe I used it as the sex film director's name, which I played. The film is jerky & has



jump cuts which are the fault of the print used to transfer--not my editing. The lab also lost a roll of film by putting it in the silver recovery vat instead of developer, which required a re-shoot, so I roughcut both *Suburban* and *Four Kinds*, then got everyone together to bridge the losses.

*Like It Is* was made from a number of silent mail order (8mm) films shot in 16mm, but I really had fun putting it together. Very "psychedelic" and I did all the "effects" for \$1.98. It was filled with ladies I've known Biblically including late 1960s footage of Los Angeles "love-ins" and of Haight-Asbury. The guy who stole the 8mm film for *Like* had it blown to 35mm!)

Of the 27 films I've done MANTIS IN LACE and A TASTE OF HOT LEAD (which sometimes may be known as THE HOUSE OF PAIN AND PLEASURE, or just HOT LEAD--don't ask me why) are the two films I did not write.

The house in *Suburban Pagans* and *Four Kinds of Love* was my house and it was nostalgic to see the place high in the Hollywood Hills again. As those few short years passed that house was the scene of many wonders. It was transferred into a kind of harem tent inside, which you can see it in *Taste of Hot Lead*.

I was going to do a picture for Harry Novak in '69 or '70, about a hit man, then almost at the last minute they had a fight with the money-man (who I think got into it for sex, a common enough reason) and they parted. The accountant apologized, I said that's the way it is, we hung up. Two minutes later he called back. He'd gone into see Novak to break the news and Pete Perry was there, who said, "You mean Bill is available?" (Like I was some hot director).

Pete said, "There's this film coming out called *The Godfather*. Could your story [about the Mafia] be retitled?" I said no, but I'd write a new one, which I did.

I auditioned and cast a sexy blonde, who could act a bit. We shot the end of the film, first, on an abandoned farm miles in the country. The second bad guy has staked out a whore (the blonde), put her out as they put goats to attract tigers, terrorized her to attract the attention of the Good Guy (only slightly less bad than the Bad Guy). We do a take and there she is, having been shot dead, with a sweet smile on her face. I explain to her no smile, and we are in the middle of the second take and the "terrorized" girl is still smiling. I rewrote the picture before I called "Cut!"

I hire another girl for one day's shooting, then she goes to the beach and is so sunburned--big red bands--that I can't use her. So Uschi Digsart finds me a stunning girl (Lois Maxwell, I think was her



name), absolutely gorgeous, to be the third woman to play what in essence was the same part.

We're doing a fake sex scene and she is brilliant. Then my assistant, who was sitting elsewhere, whispered that they did it for real. She thought she was supposed to and just put the guy in and since I hadn't called cut, he went ahead.

One of the things I hated most about pseudo-sex scenes is that they are dull. I'd always wanted to do a scene with a time bomb under the bed, so the very thing that makes you bored does the opposite. I shot some hitmen looking at the hotel, taking guns out of a briefcase, attaching silencers, getting keys ready...meanwhile always cutting to the simulated sex scene. Building tension. Will the Good Guy be finished in time?

It worked well, with the shootout that followed. Only after I'd turned in the director's cut, Pete Perry wanted surprise, not tension, and cut everything out but the breaking in. Thus the couple in bed do jump cuts to this position and that. He moved sex scenes from the back of the film to the front, thus making it make no sense whatever. You look at two people doing it, then three others, then go on with the story. It's an abortion!

The negative cutter made terrible, sloppy mistakes. For example, we had no money for special or mechanical effects. Blanks for the guns were all. In one shot I had a guy run past a junk pile, and I put a real .38 slug into and exploding a gallon jug. Only this was missed by the neg cutter, so you just stare at this jug a bit and go on. Perry ruined a well-constructed sim-sex film.

In one scene I had the voluptuous Uschi plus a black girl who later became married to Richard Pryor do a double bit on a john. I'd cast a rough, tough guy but the agency sent me a fella who...let's put this charitably...probably liked a different gender. Two of the sexiest women around and this jerk doesn't even know where to put his hands, looked embarrassed & uncomfortable. Uschi saved the scene and I wrote some quick dialogue to cover, but it was so dumb. We shot it in Harlan Ellison's house, by the way, and he is in a scene, though you don't see his face. Same with me, I'm all over the future Mrs. Pryor.

In *Mantis in Lace* (not my title) the same thing just happens over & over, so I just shortened and shortened the routine to speed it up. But the lead was Lila, played by Susan Stewart (now a real estate agent in the San Fernando Valley, I heard) who couldn't act her way out of an open phone booth. But she was a "comes-with" with the script and budget, which

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was the biggest I had to that date (early 1968), a monstrous \$35,000.

The next film my cameraman, Lazlo Kovas, did after this was *Easy Rider*.

*Mantis in Lace* was released as that, then the owner of several theaters in the Washington, D.C., area thought there wasn't enough blood in it--I had deliberately downplayed the blood--so he hired Susan Stewart again, even the same stage--and I shot the stills as she used my father's meat cleaver with wild abandon. Every time she struck two fat guys below her would throw up a paper cup or two of fake blood. He retitled it *Lila* because I think he didn't know what a mantis was.

The psychedelic sequences was made projecting motion picture film and slides on faces. The chopped leg sequence was a big tan squash getting the axe.

When Pete Perry was re-editing it I saw that they had used a "psychedelic" film I had made for mail order, but they begged me not to get upset, as the Washington guy was a pain they just wanted to get out of their hair.

You see me in *Mantis* as the guy who puts his hand on Pat Barrington's stomach. (She had become a blonde & a bellydancer and was often known as Pat Barringer.) And I'm the bearded guy in *Agony*, *Suburban*, *Four Kinds*. The last two we ad-libbed--all the spoken dialogue you see was made up as you see it.

Something Weird Video was kind enough to send me copies of five of these films recently, along with two reels of trailers. Looking at the video of trailers was fun, too. I saw former lovers, one-night stands, and so on.

*Street of a Thousand Dreams* was the result of kind of hobby. Almost every time, during the 60s, when I shot a nude set, or did a whole (ha-ha) "nudist" magazine, I'd also shot a few feet of 16mm. I had no real idea what I was going to do with any of it. Some of it showed up in *Like It Is*. I'd load a 16mm Bolex and run it off past the punch marks as I was walking back to where the naked ladies were. It got so that they were so used to this they'd do crazy things, just for the fun of it. I remember Christine (the girl from the no-sex-in-the-shower) who, when I re-entered the bedroom, had hooked her hair "fall" in her pubic hair, was dancing on the bed, sucking at one of her big breasts.

Another time I had just finished reloading the Bolex when my huge sound man (Frank Coe) came into the room and dumped a very lumpy black camera changing bag on the bed. I started shooting. Frank unzipped the bag and here was a fine, round, perfect ass. He



took a naked Karen Thomas out of it. She went Tra-Da! and he stuffed her back, threw in 16mm Kodak boxes and tried to put a trombone in, zipped it up. I'd shot a roll and had to reload.

I did a lot of POV footage, i.e. the camera was the point of view of the onlooker. I'd put my hand out, trail it across naked breasts and buns, sometimes as many as five women. Since it was a hand-wound Bolex I had only 10 or so seconds, so I'd move down to "kiss" some portion of an anatomy, stop, rewind, start with a pull back from black. In one shot I went into the mouth of a girl I'd dubbed "Supertongue" and came out her vagina. It was all fun and all the models cooperated. There was no sex.

In my backyard I'd made some arches and some Arabian-esque wall units, which I could shift around. I set-dressed the place with fabrics, screened overheads, pots, maybe an Arab (Mitch Evans). Then I'd go into a hanging over an arch, and "discover" beyond anywhere from one to four slave girls. I'd "roam" over them, go on into the next piece of fabric, or "kiss" them. One of these pieces of film is Uschi Digart's first nude photo session & first movie session. (Uschi is a wonderful, highly intelligent, utterly charming woman, who I say is The World's Most Famous Figure Model, since probably more pictures of her have appeared in magazines than any other woman.)

But what was I to do with all this lucious footage? I was approached by a successful naked lady film producer we'll call Mr. Ripoff, for reasons you'll soon see. He seemed honest and we made a deal to use all this Arabian slave girl stuff and shoot new stuff to frame it. I went up to my family's ranch, used an empty building to construct a slave market set and a club interior. (One of the young assistants was the future excellent science fiction writer Tim Powers.)

We shot at an airport (I hung a sign in Arabic on a fence saying this was Such-and-such Airport in Arabia), in a plane, etc. Then we did a slave auction, pseudo-sex scenes, etc.

Some time later we began to realize we were getting NO money out of the release of this film. Excuses, excuses. My partner saw him in a car, chased him across Hollywood, got the brush-off and told him we'd be at his office at 9 in the morning for an accounting. When we arrived at 7:30 we saw him driving away. So I took a quarter-inch felt-tip marker and wrote our complaints on his office door, along with two cartoons, so everyone in the building understood our annoyance.

When we got together a few later he looked at me sadly, said (of the door), "That wasn't a nice thing to do." I looked at him



with one of those looks with steel in it and said quite calmly, "Oh, don't worry, we won't do...that...again." He bought us out.

I was in San Francisco, courtesy of the Mitchell Brothers, shooting extra stills on a huge orgy for *The Resurrection of Eve*, along with a lot of reporters, even LIFE and a couple of TV stations. (They were eagerly shooting stuff they could *never* use!) It was wall-to-wall fornication & sundry perversions. I remember I stopped dead as I was crossing, to stare at Johnny Keyes, who was lounging on a sofa, and Marilyn Chambers, who knelt on the sofa, fellating him. Every time she sucked in her body undulated as if she was drawing him deep, deep, to the very end of her body. It was, and is, the most erotic fellation I've ever seen. No still picture would do it justice, and no movie camera was on them at the time. Later, when it was, they weren't doing it.

I did a book for Ballantine Books, in 1973, called *Contemporary Erotic Cinema*, and it did well. It had interviews in it with the Mitchells, Chambers, others.

It was a lot of fun and you bedded a lot of beautiful women, the kind of let's-have-fun-no-strings-attached kind of sex. I got out of it because I was sick and tired of the Front Office, and their dumb penny-pinching ways. Especially when not one of them had ever made a movie or knew how to, although they always said they knew "everything."

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So let me know what you think, whether you want something expanded or added to, etc. You can cut anything you want, that's okay.

Later (in 1969-1970) I wrote & directed *Wet Lips*, *Midnight Hard* and *She Did What He Wanted*, and others whose names I cannot now remember.

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William Rotsler  
[his mark]

