

Resp. Ex. 22

Respondents' Exhibit No. 22

NOTES ON DAVE'S TALK TO ART BABBITT

Sweatbox # 4 - March 3, 1937

Dave:

Here is what I think. I am quite open with you; otherwise you wouldn't know what I was thinking. I think you are going off in your corner and taking it upon yourself to present something in the sweatbox which is entirely out of line or away from what we as directors have tried to follow through from the story conferences into the sweatbox.

We try to give each animator the stuff the right way; work it all out with him so that he enters into it. When he leaves the room we like to feel that it is pretty much set as far as our mentality can go. Walt is above us in that, but we do the best we can.

The reason I am bringing this up is because of the trouble we are having with your scenes. As I have said, I think you are going off and working things out, as if, say, you were superior to the three of us working together and agreeing on one way of handling it.

Now I am going to pick out a specific scene. It is that scene of the door slam off stage and the take and the up with the punch and the "shush." Here is my angle -- we spent a lot of time with you, which we should do. It is our duty to do it in order to get the scene right. We spared nothing. We acted it out, timed it with a stopwatch, had you agree to what we were talking about before you left the room or we wouldn't have let you leave.

When you present it in the sweatbox, you have added footage without permission -- I think I am right in this. You have not done the scene the way we saw it. I am assuming for the moment that we know our business. I have got to take that angle on it.

Do you want to see the scene the way we laid it out? I did it just that way.

Then it is your duty to come up and tell us we are not doing it right. I have got something definite here to say. You have got to work with us, to give us the kind of stuff we want and the kind of stuff we are trying to follow through from Walt's angle. There is nothing personal in this. You have got to work with us or work by yourself. I can't work with you this way. I can work with the other animators.

There is something happening here. I feel I am responsible for it. I am saying it right now; I am trying to catch it. If there is something we are doing wrong with you, Art, we want to correct it. We are not having that trouble with the other animators. Let me say this that in working with a dozen animators

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD
CASE NO. 2104
EXHIBIT NO. 22
IN THE MATTER OF
DATE 10/14/41
WITNESS
ETHEL E. FISHER, OFFICIAL REPORTER
BY *Bridge*

Babbitt:

Dave:

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Dave: (Contd.) and having trouble with one, I assume it is the one who is wrong.

Now you talk, Art.

Babbitt: In the first place you are wrong in assuming anybody is trying to get off in a corner by himself. That is the way I have always worked. When I see a thing and know it is wrong, I take a stab at making it right. But in this instance I tried to explain to you -- I am not making excuses -- that these things weren't satisfactory to me but I had to get them in. I came in after the scenes had been lying around for three days and they hadn't shot them yet.

Dave: You have misinterpreted. You have gone directly against our directions in the matter. That is what I am talking about right now.

Babbitt: But where?

Dave: I will tell you. If you needed more time, you should have come up and gotten it, not misinterpreted the scene. It occurs in other scenes too. That is definite in my mind because we spent so much time with it in order to have it clear.

Babbitt: I will go up and get the exposure sheets and the test we did.

Dave: We want to do that, but there is not time right now. Let us leave it this way -- we will be glad to go over them and you point out where we are wrong. But that has nothing to do with the point we are making.

I have worked with a group of animators and directors and I see a condition that needs to be remedied. It is a bad condition, an unhealthy condition, with one animator. Whose fault it is we will find out, but we must correct that condition. That is my point. I bring it up directly to the animator in order to work out the differences and clear it up so you can be productive.

Babbitt: Don't get the misunderstanding that anybody is working against you. There isn't anything like that. The blame lies right with myself.

Dave: I would like to say you didn't throw the blame any place else.

Babbitt: I would like to say it wasn't my work but it so happens that is the result gotten. I have done a lousy job and wanted to fix it.

Dave: You tell me you know I can direct and I say I know you can animate. Now that we agree that each knows his business, we must come to an agreement before we leave the music room. You must not go down on the drawing board and go against direction without consulting with us. If you do, there is a loss

Dave: (Contd.) because you have not talked it over the new way. If you have a new way, you should come back and talk it over and convince us that the new way is better. Then we are working in unison.

I am criticizing going off in a corner and working, because you do things that surprise us in here, things we didn't imagine you were going to do. You mustn't do it, because we directors are supposed to keep you animators in line. That is what Walt says. Let the animator speak out, use his ideas, but let's come to an agreement and stick to it and get the scenes in sweatbox as nearly right as possible the first time without getting off the track.

Babbitt: Do you feel it any place else except the one scene?

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Dave: Yes, the scene following that, of the extra nods and the turn and the extra time we allowed you in there. We allowed that to you on your own recommendation that you would prove it successful, which you haven't done. We didn't agree that it was the right thing to do. Maybe you are depending on your own angle a little too much here, and that maybe you should not do it so much. I say you shouldn't, but I am trying to approach it from your angle. You get into trouble going on a track of your own too much. It obviously comes up in sweatbox.

Babbitt: You meant the nod?

Dave: The extra time and not getting any place...smiles, nods at audience and turns around; also the goose take he makes in there was not discussed. The goose take -- I remember when it came he was to spin around and come up with his hands in back of him. Instead of that you have apparently added the footage of a big stiff take and then he goes around into his goose, which to me spoils the action.

Would you let me go back to something else? In that other scene where the door slams off stage into up with the picks and a "shush" I remember saying to you that the directness and shortness or speed of the scene were what made the comedy. I heard the same words repeated by Walt this morning -- exactly what I told you.

My point is that Perce and I are being paid as directors and when we agree on a thing, you should be careful not to change it. We want to allow you liberties but not liberties that spoil things. We want to put over the point mentioned, in that we are Walt's spokesmen, and when I hear Walt speaking the words that we have spoken, well, a mistake is being made, and I don't like it for the sake of the picture.

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Babbitt: I have the test and I will show it to you, I animated it exactly in the time allotted. This seemed to me the obvious thing to try for in fixing it.

Dave:

We went over it eight or ten times with a stop-watch and put it on the sheets. I say directly that you didn't animate it properly or you would have had it right to that time, so something happened when you went down to your drawing-board. When you presented the test to us and saw it didn't work, what do you do but add and misdirect your characters. And that is my argument here.

I ask you not to do it from two angles: one is that you are losing money by doing it this way -- you might say, "I don't give a damn!" but I want you to make money. The other is that you are wasting time that we need badly to finish the picture. We want every foot of yours we can get in the picture. We are not getting it because you are misdirecting it yourself.

I don't care what you think. I believe what I am saying is right and that you should think about it. There is nothing personal in it. In fact, I am trying to help you. I could go to Walt and say, "That is just no good; get him off the picture." My object is to line you up so you can move the stuff through, to help you so you can move it through properly.

Either I don't know my business, the directors don't know their business, or you are going haywire on your stuff.

Babbitt: Don't say I am sitting off in a corner and getting ideas of my own. I am trying to do what was discussed. If I don't do it, it is my own fault.

Dave: Isn't it our job to help you?

Babbitt: Suppose you are working alone and thinking you are going along all right.

Dave: Don't think you are going along all right so often. You see, this is it. I like to allow an animator freedom on a scene, but now we find you are making mistakes in your direction. You mustn't go off in a corner. You mustn't use some of your ideas without talking them over with us.

We will drop it now. Think about what I have said and come up and tell me what you think of me.

Babbitt: My personal ideas don't change at all. We are talking of work always, and you think I have my own ideas. The failing is not so much that as at times one doesn't do what one is expected to do - that is all.

Dave: I have presented our side of it to you. That is my job. You think it over and do what you think is best from now on. I advise you to follow what I have said to an extent because I have been watching you and the other animators. There is a mistake there some place and we want to help you because we need you and your work. We need production out of you. I don't care what you do with your time down at the drawing board or away from the

Dave: (Contd.) Studio. Just present them as quickly and as nearly right as possible. This is all impersonal. Anything we can do from our end of it to help you or change our ways of working with you, we want to do it and will be glad to do it. Think it over and come back and tell us what we can do to help you.

Babbitt: Well, you might animate it for me!

Dave: Perce, would you like to add anything to what I have said - or soften it, or anything?

Perce: No. I think our idea is to see how we can get this stuff through and get the picture out. That is the main thing.

I think this, Art. This is just one man's reaction, looking at a lot of Dopeys by different animators, that it would be a good thing if you would accept Dopey as he is being more or less consistently visualized by everybody else. I am talking about his face now. I think it would be better if you took him as he is rather than to explore for a different face, which would mean a different personality. I think this would help us move along and I think it would move you along much faster.

Babbitt: That is perfectly swell.

Perce: In other words, I like Fred's Dopey and what the others have done with Fred's Dopey much better than your Dopey.

Babbitt: I was told to explore and that is what I did.

Dave: That is very true. I would have brought it up if you hadn't. Now we find Dopeys coming through that seem to be satisfactory. I agree with Perce that we should advise you now to stop the exploring and get down where you can really turn out some footage. If you like, I will ask Walt for an O.K. of that if there is still confusion in your mind.

Perce: Maybe Walt doesn't agree.

Babbitt: Walt says he wants a middleaged man. Then somebody else whispers in my ear, "He means boyish."

Dave: Who whispered it?

Babbitt: Tytla. Ham stopped me and said, "You ought to make Dopey more boyish looking." Fred says he should look like a child, a kid.

Perce: Forget that angle, I think, and draw the character. I will defy anybody to put the stamp of age on that character the way he is being handled, both in story and in animation.

Dave: I think a boyish personality but not necessarily a boyish expression. In other words, when Walt said he was 40 years old the meaning was that he mustn't be drawn as a Skippy.

Perce: You could put a beard on him and he would look like a brother of the others.

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You have seen men of 60 years with childish expressions. It is hard to put it into words; that is why we talk so much. I would like to say that I believe the period of exploration on Dopey is past. You can hold me responsible for saying that. I assume full responsibility. I don't mean in dances that you might be called on to do. I am talking now of those expressions. Any odd, out of character walks -- it doesn't seem worth while to attempt so much of that.

You see, Art, if there is anything we have said that needs clearing up.

Babbitt: An animator has to speculate too. If you don't speculate a lot, you will never get any place. This is just one of my bad speculations, that is all.

Dave: We are trying to help you make it a good speculation from now on. We sit here and look at your work from a distance and feel that what we are saying is right. You are working too hard to get something that will not be in character with Dopey as he has been established.

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Mary Lennox
2 copies
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