

November 1, 1955

TODD SPLITS WITH MAGNA, T-AO

Reisman Resigning As Todd Prod'n Prez

New York, Nov. 1.—Phil Reisman is due to resign this week as proxy of Michael Todd Productions.

Bowout is due to become effective immediately, but he may stay on a week or two, at Todd's request, to assist on distribution details for the currently shooting "Around the World In 80 Days." Film is an individual Todd Corporation production, separate and apart from "Oklahoma!" which was the first film in the Todd-AO process, in which "80 Days" is also being shot.

Reisman wants to go into production and distribution on his own and will lean to several co-production deals, involving foreign as well as domestic financing. It's expected that Todd will become proxy of Todd Productions, with Reisman, as an indie, likely to grab the Todd account.

As long-time veepee in charge of RKO's foreign distribution (until the abortive purchase of the filmery by the Koolish-Stolkin-Arnold Grant combine which ousted Reisman and kicked proxy Ned Depinet upstairs into a "consultation" job), Reisman has wide international experience which embraces a knowledge of production with an eye to the consumer market.

\$2,000,000 For His Magna Stock To Be Put Into '80 Days'

New York, Nov. 1. — Mike Todd has bowed out of both Magna and Todd-AO.

Seeking additional financing for his "Around the World In 80 Days," and at odds with Magna toppers, Todd today sold the last block of 346,000 shares of his Magna stock, plus 128,000 warrants, for a total take of nearly \$2,000,000. Simultaneously, he resigned from the boards of both firms.

Henceforth, Todd's only connection with either Magna or Todd-AO will be his Todd-AO franchise, under which he can make 10 pix in the wide-screen process in the next five years, and his position as Magna consultant.

Todd's holdings were bought up by Charles Allen & Co. Magna toppers, notably George Skouras, acquired a reported 60,000 shares via the Allen buyup. Todd got \$5 per share for the 346,000 shares and \$1.50 per warrant for the 128,000 warrants.

(Todd, reached in L.A. last night, said the deal leaves him without a single Magna share, currently quoted between \$6-\$7. However, Magna officials in NY said he still retains a small block.)

Understood here Todd has been having some financing trouble on "80 Days," which has a budget estimated by Todd at between \$5,000,000-\$6,000,000. He has made

no distribution deal for the film which will be handled by his own Michael Todd Productions.

Todd Praises Schenck

Todd and former associates in Magna and Todd-AO, notably George P. Skouras and Joseph M. Schenck, have been feuding and at one time Schenck, in turn, resigned or offered to resign as board chairman but changed his mind. Todd, discussing the buyout, paid tribute to Schenck whose "courage and vision" enabled the process to get off.

Others interested in the firms are showmen like Lee Shubert, Edward Small and Rodgers & Hammerstein. Arthur Hornblow, Jr., who produced the film version of "Oklahoma," first in Todd-AO, also at one time owned stock. Small got a large block for agenting some equipment, said to include some of Paramount's old 65m equipment, and reportedly sold out at \$13-\$14 per share, taking a capital gain.

Mrs. Lorraine Manville Baxter, a close friend of Todd's, has been a sizable investor in Todd Productions, as has Bernard Rice, investment counselor. Dave Stillman of Stillman & Stillman, Todd's attorneys, represents him. Rice is a secretary-treasurer of Todd Productions.

Magna sellout would be for the purpose of continuing the film financing and production on "80 Days," which is about 65% completed. Picture is on schedule and Todd said he is abreast of the shooting sked on Spanish, French and British locations. Pic fell three days behind in Colorado but has caught up since working in Hollywood. He is using RKO studio facilities there on a rental basis.

Preem Of Pic — And Beef

During "Oklahoma's" recent NY premiere it was apparent Todd and the Magna management (Skouras) were not seeing eye-to-eye. Todd in fact has been quite outspoken about the film's "shortcomings" (grainy print, etc.) and had to be quieted by pals who stressed that next to R&H, the only other important name on the marquee was Todd, from the Todd-AO of the same name, and whether he was displeased with whatever he thought of the technical deficiencies, this was not the time to air his views.

Todd claims that his decision to sell out dates from the "Oklahoma" opening.

Thus, his "Cinerama" pattern is repeating itself.