

Story Conference

(Preliminary)

SEQS. 4A and 4B - DWARFS AT MINE AND MARCH HOME

Those present: Dave, Geo. Stallings, Carl Falberg, Bill Cottrell,  
Joe Grant, Payzant, Mac Stewart, Perce, Dick Richard,  
Larry, Jaxon, Hal

Time: Wednesday evening - Oct. 28th - 7:00 to 10:00 P.M.

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Jaxon: Dick and I felt that since it is the first time we see the dwarfs, there are two bad points: they are so widely separated that you don't know how many of them there are until they start the march, and secondly, their characteristics should be better planted.

Dave: I believe introducing them should be done rather quickly. Bill is of the same opinion. The title is "S. W. and the Seven Dwarfs" and you expect to see seven of them. You start out with four, finally get to one more and stay quite a while with him.

Jaxon: As it is, you start and finish three separate locales and what goes on there. Would it be possible to select a different pattern to establish locales more quickly. Establish locales, then come back and pull your gags on what you have established.

Perce: My impression is this - that attempting to do a whole lot more than you can possibly do in the footage leaves you with nothing. I suggest you take the footage you have and put the seven guys in the mine - keep them inside and do what you can with that footage without the costly movement from one spot to another and all this jewelry business. Make little miners of them, and put across a few good gags. Have a clock in the mine and Doc's forge in the corner, but mainly plant the idea that there are seven of them and that they work in a mine. You're not putting across any personalities in that footage beyond what you might do with Dopey. Even Doc is just one of the dwarfs to the audience unless you can take him into dialogue.

Take the total footage that you can afford to give the mine - 232 feet, or whatever it is, and keep it all there, and work out good group stuff and then cut or dissolve outside and they march out on their way home. You get across a dandy opening flavor on the seven little dwarfs. You can't break them down to individuals in this footage. These new fellows felt it right away. I feel you are not putting individuals across and you are losing both ways.

Stallings: I think you are right - it brings everything together and incorporates Jaxon's and Dick's ideas.

Bill: You can still use the mine and cart coming thru if there is value in it. You don't have to exclude everything.

Larry: You can still have the crusher, too - inside.

Perce: Not unless there is a particularly good use for it. I don't mind a forge in the corner of a mine. They are not just all digging.

Stallings: I like the color change from something like black and yellow in the mine into the sunset reds and blues out in the open.

Dave: Walt spoke of cutting it to the bone in footage -- that we might even open on them marching home. I think it would be nice to show the seven of them - maybe one on the mule cart and run two choruses of 16 feet each, then start the cuckoo clock and the Hi-ho and cut out 125 feet. That would be more to Walt's liking than this, although he wanted us to build it this way and see what we could do with it. I think he'd like us to decide to group them in the mine and get some good business over and march them out.

Jaxon: You need to establish that they work in the mine for the value of the picture later, and because there are seven of them there you don't have an opportunity to plant their personalities. This can be pared down because in the sequence that follows it seems each individual is brought out.

Dave: Walt contends it's not necessary to plant their personalities in this sequence, so the grouping is probably all right. Just show that they are workers in a mine.

Dick: I'd retain that Doc is the leader of the crew in the group.

Dave: You should use the Angelus bells and the cuckoo just the same. But the clock was just bridging the turntable gap, and I'd say leave it out altogether.

Perce: It seems a good thing to get rid of the cuckoo clock. It's the first time you see the dwarfs and the first gag we pull is the cuckoo clock. Use the footage on something that is new.

Jaxon: Yet you want something to finish it up. Wouldn't they build a clock that would only cuckoo or whistle once a day and that's when it's time to go home?

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Dave: Suppose we put them all in the mine. What do you think of the gag of Doc at the forge and Dopey sweeping up the things and the diamonds in Dopey's eyes, scaring the squirrel? Would that work in the mine with the other stuff?

Jaxon: I don't see that it fits. I don't see the life in them.

Perce: It doesn't seem like Dopey. I like him sweeping them up.

Dave: Sleepy and the fly is all right isn't it inside the mine?

Bill: One gag that doesn't seem to come in on the mine angle is the crown business. Although from the effects standpoint, the forge is good.

Dick: It might be a funny angle that they make all this stuff and stick it on the shelf, having no use for it.

Jaxon: One basic feeling I'd like to see retained is that to them precious stones are cheap.

Dave: In the business of Dopey sweeping the gems away he is supposed to be tricky like Laurel with steps and dances. I'd like Dopey doing something like that...instead of mining. He is doing the odd jobs - throwing stuff away

Dave: - hold that in the mine too.  
(cont.)

Dick: Another thought on Doc as leader: When the whistle blows, have him work as a timekeeper. Checking them out.

Jaxon: On the business of sorting the gems, I wondered if it would be better contrast to have Grumpy the one who sorts them. He is grouchy about what he keeps. Dopey likes them all and tries to keep them all whereas Grumpy has taken pains to set out only the good ones.

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Dave: Couldn't we open on different levels then come down to the four singing? A long shot of them all, but on different levels.

Jaxon: This one room could be all carved, and the entrance to the mine could be natural - like a cave. It would be picturesque.

Dave: Might open on the black cart. When you pull away, it's the exterior of the mine with the big opening. The cart starts in the blackness and as you get in and things lighten up, here are the six other guys digging - the seventh is on the cart. It stops and they start the digging song, probably loading the cart.

Jaxon: Use the cart to dump the little diamonds outside in the creek - the ones they don't need.

Larry: Suppose you went thru the first chorus taking the sneeze out and went thru the second working chorus and at the end picked up a little singing which leads into "We don't know----" and the sneeze and clunk on the head which is your dissolve to the outside of the mine and they come marching out in the Hi-ho.

Dave: It seems abrupt.

Larry: Maybe - but it seems like a natural top there.

Jaxon: I have a similar point. The sneeze comes soon now in the sequence. It should come nearer the end. I like the idea of the whistle and the clunk to show they are thru.

Larry: He gets clunked, which is the end of the digging, then the incidental music which is a build up into the Hi-ho.

Dave: The sneeze climaxes the interior of the mine, but the whistle blows - pick up the Hi-ho all over the mine and go into the marching.

Jaxon: In working it out you'll find several little incidents you'll want to work in. I had a feeling that if you could tie up somehow what the different ones are doing - like separating stones, sweeping up of Dopey, singing and digging, pulling the cart back and forth...if it could all be tied up with the sneeze so it reacts on one guy, then another, and another so that you get back to where you started. Or if it didn't work as a result of the sneeze, establish different people doing different things and come back and gag one after another. Build your tempo of laughs.

Bill: I think you are counting too much on the importance of the sneeze when the character is not known. I don't like building up to a climax with someone sneezing.

Bill: Might let the sneeze blow the diamonds back in the wall where they were.

George: Asking Perce if the sneeze is necessary here to plant it for Perce's sequence.

Perce: It's not necessary. If you use it here, it will be because you want it. We plant the sneeze in the Spook sequence.

Hals: If you're using the sneeze in the second chorus, you could start it with the dust from the sweeping.

Dave: I don't see where the laugh comes in except the diamond spinning on top of his head.

George: I question the diamond on his head.

Bill: I think your result should be funny, but not just blowing everything down. Perce does enough of the blowing.

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Jaxon: I think we should emphasize the screwy things they do as a matter of routine - clever things - and the fact that they are indifferent to the value of the gems. I don't think we should look for out of the way things to happen, but use things that would be funny if they happened every day. Like Will Rogers in that picture where it opened up with everything happening on the minute...comes down to breakfast on the minute - the butler hands him the same paper at the same time in the same way, etc. It would heighten the effect of the dwarfs coming to the house and finding it had a light in it, if nothing else had been out of the way, but all a routine.

Perce: I like gags that show their cleverness along labor saving lines.

Dick: Could Sneezzy sneeze the stones down to Doc?

Perce: Dopey might be worked as a cause and result of the sneeze. He might be sweeping by the ashcan and the dust sends Sneezzy off into a sneeze and Dopey gets it, maybe gets blown into the ashcan and comes out with diamonds on him. Then you wouldn't have to stop the song and break it up just for the sneeze.

George: He sweeps up the diamonds and is going to put them in the ashcan and the sneeze blows them up into the ceiling again.

Perce: Some kind of gag that wouldn't stop the show but would still have a funny top to it in relation to a character like Dopey.

I think that the only excuse for milking a lot of Sneezzy and the fly was because you had to move the car out to the mill. I don't see using Sneery and the fly in the mine unless you have something awfully funny. The fly is almost out of the picture now anyway.

George: If we use the fly, we ought to do something else besides just having him buzz around.

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Jaxon: Would it simplify things to take this stand: basically, I

JAXON:

(cont.) feel these fellows have gone along for hundreds of years unmolested, with nothing out of line happening. They have all their individual characteristics, but something new is going to enter their lives, so don't try gags that will break up machinery or blast the mine with the sneeze, but work for a pleasant happy feeling that you can get in a musical sequence. The way they have always mined, just another day in their lives. Let it be short, but interesting - pleasant in a humdrum way - everything going according to schedule. They have clever machinery to help them get from place to place and it's all to the music. Don't interrupt the flow in any way to get gags in. It might make an easy sequence to carry thru. Get a clever way for them to do these things.

Bill: As it is in Santa's Workshop.

Jaxon: Or loading the ship in Noah's Ark.

George: As though the camera slipped in one day and caught them doing what they have been doing day in and day out for hundreds of years.

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Bill: Would you want to introduce them digging in a certain part of their music - all seven of them, then wipe over to show lapse of time and they are sorting, and wipe over again and they are doing something else?

Dave: It might work that way.

George: If we use a voice chorus here, we'd be breaking right into it. Maybe we could go into the first chorus without the singing and show them working and come into the singing on this second chorus. It might be musically incorrect though. There's a tag on the end of the Snow White sequence. The camera draws back. You're fading out and then you're in the black and here's the mine car going away on what we have more or less, an interlude - 14 feet to get away. As soon as it gets away here's the mine and the dwarfs. Truck down and center on them.

Larry

Dave: Advise it is better to have the singing on the first chorus.

Bill: I think you could have your first chorus in humming or singing and come back to a repeat in the close ups if that would help.

Jaxon: I like them singing while they work - gives a happy atmosphere.

Something bothers me. You leave Snow White at the house and come to the inside of a mine. Couldn't we show the outside of the mine and go in so you'd know you are underground?

George: There's a good connection. We have a truck away from her, singing "Whistle while you work" - it's a musical cross dissolve, and as we truck away it grows dark and from the darkness the wagon is pulled away as the rhythm is built.

Dick: You can plant that it's in a mine by the atmosphere.

Larry: Don't you think you can catch that they are in a mine by the structure?

Dave: I'd say if you use this in 2 56-footers and build into the Hi-ho song and use 3-28's for the march home, you'd have it. I wouldn't want to go over 112 feet of that business in there. Two choruses in the mine with the whistle on the end for the interlude into the Hi-Ho building up and having them coming out.

Larry: Dissolve to the outside and the Hi-ho is building and as they come, pick up the chorus of the thing.

Jaxon: It would be easier to handle. You'd find a chorus full of good rhythm. I think audiences like to see working to rhythm.

George: Frank has written this for a definite change of orchestration. He has three choruses in there and each is different and yet the same thing - just thru orchestration. Two would be enough, though.

Larry: Yes you can do any orchestral tricks in two that you need.

Dave: Singing to the first and rhythm to the second.

Larry: And an interlude building to the clock which builds the Hi-ho and as they come out.

Charlie: Suggests a cage running between different levels dwarfs work on - run by Dopey. Suggestion over-ruled.

Hal: After the mine car goes in, have a long shot of the mine showing the seven of them working, then cut to closeups of them. Use a pan or short cuts of each. (Dave: Yes, something like that.)

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George: Then we'll open on the mine car pulling away from the camera, and show the seven dwarfs in the mine. Not the seven in the picture necessarily, but working down on them so we'll pick up our musical line-up. Might show a long shot if it could be worked, with a general set up as the cart pulls away. The dwarfs would be spotted on different levels. We wouldn't have to show a tunnel, but show the car going out of the scene. After seeing the general set up you cut down on possibly Bashful and Happy doing their duet together there: "IT AIN'T NO TRICK TO GET RICH QUICK" and over to Grumpy and Sneezy: "IF YOU DIG, DIG, DIG WITH A SHOVEL AND A PICK". Then moving in and picking up Doc and Dopey and having Dopey more or less considering Doc his idol. Doc takes up his part which might be: WE DIG UP DIAMONDS BY THE SCORE - A THOUSAND RUBIES, SOMETIMES MORE" and Dopey just agrees with him. Then to Sneezy who would not go into his sneeze, but would probably have a part in it.

Dave: Do you see working the echo there?

George: Yes. That would be with the four you first picked up or maybe with the whole seven of them. It would be funny with the whole seven if we could do it. Always have Dopey a little late.

Hal: All of them working all the time?

George: Working where the dig-dig-dig stuff comes in. That's the only part where we can see them work.

Dave: Why can't they be working on the rest of the stuff. Why

Dave: dig his pick in on "IT AIN'T NO TRICK" and the other put his  
(cont.) in on "TO GET RICH QUICK" -?

George: Explains timing - illustrating with dialogue. Works patterns.

Perce: Let them pause only for the echoes.

Dave: DO you see them each with a pick digging?

George: No, one might be hitting, not both, on "IT AIN'T NO TRICK, etc."

Dave: They could be doing different things. Doc at the bellows, for  
the sake of argument, and they all work at different tasks  
rather than each with a pick digging.

George: Might open on Bashful. He says: IT AIN'T NO TRICK and throws  
his pick in, then comes Happy to GET RICH QUICK, but not  
digging.

Hal: You wouldn't want to show their characteristics now, would you?

Dave: I am wondering - as long as you are going to have a musical  
chorus that follows, if they are not just working here,  
digging or whatever it is instead of getting into personalities  
and characteristics that at this time. Can't we work thru  
the first chorus showing them all doing something rather  
than stopping their work? Overall, I mean.

Perce: They don't all have to be working with a pick.

Jaxon: What I saw there, I think, on the first part you have two  
lines or a phrase in which they are singing and digging away  
on the dig-dig-dig. There you establish that they sing and  
work and then pick up at one end of the line, and one guy  
stops long enough to say "IT AIN'T NO TRICK" and another is  
raising up as you come to him.

LARRY: You can have two guys in a shot to save time.

Jaxon: There'd be a bunch working like everything and they would  
take time off to wipe off brows, get drinks of water and so  
on and get back and work again. I see them singing and I  
don't mean they pick each time they sing. --- It sounds  
like seven or fourteen feet while they are working and sing-  
ing and they take time out for breath and to listen to the  
echo. You finish up with them all working and singing.

George: On the same line, say, you have four fellows working, some  
coming down on the dig-dig-dig, but natural action so  
you have picks and shovels and everything going, but one  
guy won't be standing there hitting every beat.

After we get thru the first section of the singing we are  
going to try and work down into the mine here to take two  
56 choruses for the first part and three 28's for the second.  
So if we go thru showing the seven dwarfs and giving them the  
best set up, building their personalities and working out  
their individual traits as far as possible, with a wind-up  
of Doc and Dopey -- condensing mechanical devices as much  
as possible -- This will give us about 200 feet for the  
mine sequence and work us into the second part with more  
or less close up situations.

Dave: More or less mechanical gags, don't you think?

George: I would say mechanical gags would have to fit in the second  
56 feet, but we can't go into much detail to put them over.

George: Have them fitting in with their general actions. We would  
(cont.) possibly have to eliminate the sneezing sequence and just  
go into the interlude that would introduce the clock in some  
way that would change the situation from the inside of the  
mine to the Hi-ho song sequence. As I see it right here, I  
like the idea that all of them are in the mine and I  
think there is a good chance to do something with the colors.  
Inside there are blacks and blues and highlights, with  
the feeling they are in a mine. When the clock interlude  
comes and they hear the Angelus bells and it's the end  
of the day, they start the Hi-ho business by Hi-hoing to each  
other. They would march out of the mine and come into a  
red and gold sunset - a change of atmosphere into the open  
where there's lots of air. Marching along singing the  
Hi-ho would take approximately three 28's with the different  
effects shots at different angles, including the whistling  
interlude which is very good in the final shot. From scene  
to scene you'd gradually see the red and gold sunset deepen  
and darken. As they finally went into a very deep sunset  
we'd end with a tag of the original 14 feet which is good  
for a fade out of the Hi-ho blending out in the distance.

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Dave: There are several gags you should decide on keeping or  
leaving out. One is the fly, another Dopey and the dustpan,  
throwing the bag in the vault, diamonds in the eyes, the  
sneeze and the squirrel in the cage. Should any of them  
be used or all of them thrown out.

George: We talked the fly out.

Perce: You are keeping them all working throughout. That would  
eliminate the fly.

Jaxon: If you are working in character, Sleepy might be more  
interested in getting rid of the fly than in working.

Larry: If you have only 56 feet, you don't have time to put over  
much. I would rather see little rhythmic things.

Jaxon: Everybody is working industriously and for contrast you  
come to this guy with the fly.

Dave: Then you might say the fly is a possibility.

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George: Now we have Dopey with the dustpan and the ashcan, sweeping  
up diamonds.

Dick: Thinks it has value.

Perce: Likes it.

Larry: If you could see a funny way to do it.

George; Against that - if we can only use one gag with this mine -  
how about Doc throwing the diamonds in the vault and Dopey  
going in with his bag? Is the dustpan better?

Perce: The dustpan is better. You show Dopey better and get over  
the point of the value of diamonds in their minds.

Dave: Suppose we used it after the whistle?

Larry: You might want to get your clock over and get outside as  
quickly as possible.



Jaxon: If it fits in before the line up, it would be all right.  
It might be something to do when they are all busy - some digging, others sorting and so on.

Dave: If we have place and it fits with the music, it can be used.

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George: How about Sneezy sneezing - to what extent can he sneeze outside of blowing the diamonds out of the mine, or do you like the diamonds being blown down?

Jaxon: Doesn't. Too much mugging the camera. Unless they had some use for it. (Somebody suggests using it as dynamite.)

Larry: Here you don't explain and justify it. Later you explain the hayfever.

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George: Does anybody like the dusting idea (squirrels)?

Perce: I like the thought of developing a buffer.

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George: How about diamonds in the eyes?

Perce: That has that mugging quality, and I don't think it's Dopey. It jarred me right away. I can't see Dopey doing that - playing tricks with squirrels. Things happen to him, he doesn't create business, but is the victim of circumstance. It has that label of being a neat gag - a cartoon gag.

Bill: I don't get the connection of the diamonds in the eyes.

Charlie: It gets back to what you are trying to eliminate - extraneous gags.

Dave: It's a screwy picture.

Jaxon: I can't see a laugh in it, unless it fits into a situation.

Dick: It might be funny if you knew Dopey.

Perce: It would bother you more if you knew him. Dopey wouldn't do that.

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Jaxon: You brought up the question of the squirrels. Does it make a difference in the rest of the picture whether they have animals working for them?

Dave: It would be nice to use them, but if you don't use them consistently, I'd say not to do it at all.

Jaxon: Better concentrate on the seven dwarfs themselves unless it is necessary to build the animals.

Dave: The whole picture has been built with the idea that the animals are friendly to them and to Snow White. They could easily be friendly here, but if we don't use them much, we ought to drop them out and not remind the audience they are around.

Dick: Better to use the mechanical gadgets.

Dave: That's what I think - forget the animals.

Larry: We've got a tune that's like a tinker's song - I'd work everything to build that sound effect.

Jaxon: I wouldn't use the animals until the bed building.

George: With the exception of the deer which is a larger animal and can be tamed.

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Dave: You're in favor of forgetting the mine car now?

Jaxon: Yes - there are a dozen ways of getting in the mine.

To have somebody running it takes one of them away from the group.

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Bill: I can't think of a gag, but I would put something in besides the crown and craftsmanship business.

George: Rather see Doc polishing stones?

Dave: The forge and steam coming up is good production.

Bill: I don't think it's in character - in keeping with the interior of a mine. What would they use it for? You'd have to go into melting gold and pouring it in molds.

George: We are using it already in the forge - the crown is made. Dopey was holding the bellows.

Bill: You use the song of dig-dig-dig and then you go to some other art or craft. Offhand it doesn't sound right.

You'd be better off polishing these big gems or separating them and classifying them - show them in trays or sacks.

Dave: Seeing the forge is a good picture, maybe he could be repairing a shovel or something similar. (Out because they build too for S.W.)

George: Suppose he has a long tube and pours in gold and sprinkles diamonds in and brings out a necklace?

Perce: You have a definite chance to use it and it's in line.

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George: How about the colored birds and stones?

Perce: They wouldn't be in the mine and the business would fit better in the bed building sequence, anyway.

Jaxon: I like the gag, but it would be better to keep the animals out of this.

George: Almost every gag we have will fit into the bed building sequence.

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Perce: I think you have a good chance to work up a pedal machine - for a guy to work at, shining cut diamonds in a rhythmic effect with his feet on a pair of pedals or some clever machine-like thing. I'd like to see something in the mine

Perce: that makes them look clever not only with their tools, but  
(cont.) in building contraptions. Shining up stones is something  
they might naturally be doing, before they put them away.  
A character might spit on them, like you do an apple before  
shining it up---

Jaxon: Goes to all the work of buffing it then shines it on his  
sleeve.

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George: I think possibly if we get right down to it that we might  
show the pumping of the bellows in a tricky way and the dust-  
ing machine working off the same mechanism.

Perce: One fellow supplying the power and three of them working.

Jaxon: The difficulty is making it consistent with your first shot.  
I'd think you'd want to take these decisions, but reserve  
the right to throw them out in case you can't work the  
first shot.

George: We'll have to come down on four of them and pan to pick up  
the other three.

Charlie: I don't think according to the song you have to have the  
majority digging.

George: I'd say in that case, take out the echo and let the other  
three be the echo.

Perce: You mean not show the seven at the opening?

George: Unless you could do it very conveniently.

Perce: I think you ought to show all of them right there.

Jaxon: I think so too.

Stallings: You'd have to show all seven to get the echo over.

George: We'd need a very long shot to show the seven of them at once.

Perce: A medium long shot would do it.

Charlie: Some can be closer to you than others.

George: It would work better eliminating the mine car.

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George: What's the general opinion on how much footage the marching  
home could stand? We'd show them for 84 feet. Is that  
too long? That includes the start of the Hi-ho. You'll  
probably have 56 feet of them marching, 28 of coming in  
and getting out of it.

We can four 14 shots or eight seven foot shots.

Dave: I think the 56 feet would be all right.

Oct. 28, 1936

E. Tobelmann