

STORY CONFERENCE

PERSONALITIES OF THE SEVEN DWARFS

Present were: Fred Moore Perce Pearce Art Elliott
Bill Tytla Dave Hand Ole Johnston
Frank Thomas Wilfred Jaxon Bill Shull
Fred Spencer Dick Rickard Don Towsley
Art Babbitt George Stallings Berk Anthony
Les Clark Carl Fallberg Hal Adelquist
Dick Lundy Ham Luske Jack Larson
Geo Geopper Riley Thompson

Meeting Held: November 3rd, 1936. 7:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Projection Rm. #4

DAVE: The purpose of this meeting is to work up the characteristics of the dwarfs. There are seven of them, and it is indeed difficult to get a hold of each. Therefore, we will take one at a time.

Doc is one of the outstanding characters, and we will go over this reel a number of times to get his personal actions and touches, - and see if we can get him, - then go onto the next one.

We find Dopey, Grumpy and Happy quite easy to get a hold of, but still there is a definite difference in their constitution, and we want to talk about that tonight.

When we get into the picture more, we ought to have a meeting a week so that every body can get together and work them all in together so that they will act alike and look alike. Thus when we start out tonight, it may be that in about three weeks, we can have another meeting, and when you get working on it- have a meeting about every week.

You see we are still having trouble with the characters. For instance - Doc and his hands. You don't know what to do with his hands. They are a very vital part of his characteristics. Definite things should be established so that they will be pay-setters for the rest of it.

We would appreciate it if Bill Tytla and Fred Moore would help us on this.

Fred had this mixed up stuff (Doc's hands) and didn't know quite what to do with them - hands were running all over the place.

GEORGE: You say that Grumpy resents Doc's leadership?

FRED MOORE: He doesn't want any leader.

DAVE: There isn't a feeling of jealousy.

PERCE: He gets under Doo's skin when using authority. Walt has always seen Doc as a self-appointed leader because none of them wanted the job. Maybe more of a wind bag than leader. Grumpy doesn't think he is so hot.

BILL TYTLA: Grumpy is more keener mentally than Doc, but he is a little sour about everything he knows.

DAVE: I think he is just an old sour-puss, and seems to think he knows something about everything. He is always looking for trouble - always seeing the worst side of things. We want the audience to feel this.

HAM LUSKE: He is the grandpa of the house. He says what he thinks.

DAVE: Bill has a second situation, - that Grumpy won't show his hands. S.W. won't let them eat before they go out and wash, and Grumpy doesn't want to go out and wash. S.W. sends him out and he sits on the barrel. This leads on until they finally take Grumpy over and give him a bath.

Do you want to go over Doc?

PERCE: The main thing is to get the relation of Doc and Grumpy. They are two outstanding characters. They are the conflict of the two types and they get a majority of the dialogue all through the picture. The others play in and out in different sequences. All through the picture these two characters, - Doc and Grumpy - are your standouts.

Of course Dopey is another outstanding character, and of course get everybody clear on that, - not only his characteristics, but his attitude mentally and physically.

DAVE: This is the first time that the audience is getting a hold of the dwarfs.

DAVE: Perce has a sequence that Bill and Fred are not going to handle at all. We had originally planned that Dick and Les would carry the opening of the mine sequence. That is the first time you have ever seen the dwarfs. However, we cut that out, - that is we have cut out the mine stuff and show them going home from the mine, - the first shot we see is the dwarfs going home from the mine. So you see all you fellows are starting at the beginning of the dwarfs' stuff, and as you build in later, you will get into their characteristics.

Art Babbitt, Spencer, Lundy, and Clark, you fellows have to carry about 700 feet.

FRED MOORE: I think we ought to talk about the stuff we have missed and the trouble we are having and what to aim for.

FRITZ: What is the criticisms of the hand business?

DAVE: The criticism is not that he uses them too much because they are used considerably, but that they are not used properly.

SFENCER: He is rather nervous.

DAVE: He starts out to say something, and there is an undecided situation as to what to do with his words, and in trying to fit a word in he becomes rather nervous with his hands.

FRED MOORE: There should be more of an eccentric movement of his hands as he says the wrong words, comes back and starts all over again.

DAVE: There should be eccentric gestures with his hands at all times.

HAM LUSKE: You might have Doc using his hands as he is trying to get the words out.

HAL: Pattern Doc after Atwill.

DICK LUNDY: You anticipate the gesture before you do the word, fast and nervous-like.

DAYE: Atwill is the fellow taking the part of Doc, and you will notice the eccentric movement of his hands. This movement is more or less what we are trying to pattern the hand action after.

FRED MOORE: After the word APPLE DUMKINS, wouldn't his hands come out in front instead of holding the jerk down in front of him.

PERCE: This was a play back.

FRED: You don't think this gag is a good one to stop on.

PERCE: It isn't a natural reaction.

In this first scene of Doc, there is an example of not complete authority on the mix-up. There should be more of a hand-punching attitude. This has a lot to do with putting the characters across in that type of speech where he is fighting to say one thing. You notice too that he swells up when he is getting into his speech, - that feels right along with the dialogue. If it isn't definitely handled, it doesn't mean anything. This is a good example where it does bring out the stuttering dialogue very nicely without over doing it, and still brings out characteristics.

Walt points to this as a splendid example of Doc in this particular scene.

Watch body action and hand action working with it.

ART BABBIT: I think another thing that if you have one hand standing still, you should not make the other conspicuous.

DAVE: When Doc became confused, we had him shake his head. We got better results.

FRED: It might be pretty good to have Doc when he saying the wrong word, - comes out of the mix-up - shake his hands, and then get pause at the top before he gets into it. Possibly have the shakeup stop before he goes into next mix-up. Then he starts again. There should be a pause that is a freeze. Whether it is absolutely a freeze is another thing. Doc gets mixed up - turned around, freeze - and then go back to mix-up.

DAVE: You won't use this all the time.

FRED: It would help 24A to have that in.

DAVE: In regard to personalities, does it clearly show how we are trying to handle the guy.

FRED: We can establish definite personalities which we will all have to carry over. There should be much punch in Doc's personality.

FRITZ: That is the only real tangible thing about his character, - have one definite thing to carry through the picture.

FRED: The main characteristic of the whole sequence of Doc is that he is always saying the wrong word, mixing up words. He always catches himself and corrects himself, and then comes back sometimes and repeats. That is about the only thing we are building Doc on to me. He uses eccentric hand movement.

BABBIT: So far whatever characteristics have been built, have been built to his voice, - not in his animation when he is moving around.

- PERCE: Where Doc is listening to Grumpy, look over the group. You get a feeling of personality in a way.
- BABBIT: There should be more of a feeling of moving around. I think they are going to have a little walking in here.
- HAM LUSKE: These characters are the way Walt sees them. There is no need to find a way to change them; this is the way he wants them. This is a pattern.
- DAVE: Sort of a pattern, - working out details and trying to get them nearly right.
- In the picture we were trying to point out the characteristics and personalities of Doc. We haven't gotten so much animation in the picture, - what he would be doing when he is not talking.
- PERCE: There is one thing along that line which I think we ought to bring up, - his posture. (meaning Doc)
- I think we ought to keep Doc dignified instead of sloppy, - always dignified. This is a definite problem.
- FRED: (Illustrating on blackboard with sketches)
- (DOC) There should be a little more flesh added in the middle, with legs swung in. In other words make him have a dignified carriage by rounding him out, - as though he had a big stomach and carried it as a chest. The main thing to watch out for is to not let his chest overlap the belt.
- HAM LUSKE: He tries to carry that shape so that he is not a cast-iron or inflated figure, - chest always back, but only for a time.
- BILL TYTLA: He can get chesty every now and then. He could get up on his toes, come down, and then relax.
- PERCE: Have him carry himself with an air of pompous dignity.
- You might say that all dwarfs have short legs.
- PERCE: I think you might make a good comparison of Happy and Doc, - two different types physically.
- FRED: Doc would have sort of a carriage holding himself up in an erect manner and Happy doesn't care if he is fat and if he sinks.
- PERCE: He relaxes and lets everything go. Happy's belt is much higher than Docs, and has wide hips with legs swinging way in. Doc in some poses has his legs spread out to support his weight.
- LES CLARK: Happy is more of a barrel shape.
- PERCE: Like a full sack. Doc holds all his weight up unless he assumes another pose.
- HAM LUSKE: Happy is more loose, - appears as more of a waddy type.
- PERCE: There is a certain connection with the personality that Walt mentions and that has some bearing on the way he is built. Doc isn't fat for the sake of being fat. He is designed stout to give a pompous flare. Happy is definitely fatty character, with a little comedy along with it - the way he waddles around, the relaxed, fat-man attitude, that is where his fat has something to do with his character. Doc is just a fat man, but more of a senator type, - where he carries himself with a lot of pride. Never relaxes his stomach action the way Happy does.

FRED: Doc has medium large eyes with glasses, and has heavy jowls. Happy's eyes and nose are much smaller and flatter. His jowls spread out when he rolls his body around. Happy's whiskers follow the same pattern, and when he smiles, his cheeks will relax and jowls spread right out. Doc's fit his face. Happy's more flexible than Doc's.

Happy has fluffy eye brows that move with his eye.

Speaking of jowls, Doc's hang behind. This adds age to all the dwarfs to have jowls.

FRITZ: Because of the fact that Happy is a fat fellow, would make a person believe that he was intended to have heavier jowls.

BILL: They all have jowls, but Happy's spread across his chest so that his face rests on it. They are all more or less the same.

DAVE: They are all more or less loose, so that you follow through on them.

There is one real difference between the dwarfs and that is the construction of the nose, especially between Sneezy and Dopey. There is also an expression around the eyes and mouth of Sneezy and Dopey.

FRED: Happy's eyes are more or less on a slant.

PERCE: Your problem is going to be pairs. Here are two fat guys rather personally distinguished. Your next problem is Sneezy and Sleepy, who are both average weight and who have to be distinguished from each other.

FRED: (SLEEPY, SNEEZY & HAPPY) Sleepy and Sneezy are of the same build. The main difference I saw between Bashful and Sneezy is that Sneezy's head might be a little oblong. Walt liked a teardrop on Sneezy, and also wanted to make his legs a little shorter and fatter. Sneezy's shoulders are dropped. His nose sticks up in the air and lower lip hangs out.

PSRCE: On Bashful point out the Will Rogers angle, - looking up from under. We always thought that Bashful would carry his nose down low and he would have to look up. He could never look straight at a thing and face it.

FRED: Have nose stay down and use eyes looking up instead of raising his head. He might even look out the side of his eye.

PERCE: Bashful eye's are carried much larger than any of the others. They are going to be big brown eyes with lots of lashes.

FRED: Sleepy's arms are limp, and has a limp thing on his hat. Walt liked this idea.

BILL: Is his nose quite similar to Doc's?

FRED: Very much the same thing, only his jowls hang out. He has prominent pouches under his eyes.

BILL: Sneezy's eyes are small on account of the cold in his nose.

PERCE: Tell about the beards on the three, - Bashful, Sneezy and Sleepy.

FRED: Bashful's is long. Sneezy's is short and stubby, and stands out a little. Sleepy's is very heavy and very long.

PERCE: Let's go to Grumpy and leave these three.

FRED: Grumpy is slender and very much underslung. Walt likes the idea of having his head buried in his shoulders, large snoot and hat fitting close to eyes and hanging down in the back. The main thing to bring out in Grumpy is that he is rather cocky. However he turns to rather a chesty guy.

BILL: He is more defiant that way, which is a good part of his personality.

PERCE: I sometimes see him with his hands folded.

BILL: He has a chesty pose with his arms and hands folded a great deal when he is arguing about something.

FRED: Grumpy has a long coat.

BILL: The second drawing of Grumpy is the one I prefer, - more of a little cocky guy. No matter what anyone has to say, I prefer this view. He really in animation turned out to do what this second drawing suggests.

PERCE: The beard is kind of stringy and comes down to a point. Dopey has the shortest one.

BILL: Dopey is sort of character that is dressed up in cast off clothing of the others; so is everything else. Dopey's belt line is quite low and things just drag after him a bit. His coat sleeves are much too long and hang over his hands. Everything about him gives this sloppy feeling which is quite amusing.

(Dopey)

He has large ears.

HAM: Tell them about the general characteristics of the bunch.

BILL: Fred said that the heads all ran about 3 3/4. There are two or three of them with shorter beards and others have longer beards.

HAM: Dwarfs at first were regular men.

BILL: Keep that within the 3-3/4 head because if you don't, they will start looking like normal men instead of sawed-off.

DAVE: They are practically all the same height with the exception of Doc, who is a little taller, and Dopey, who is a little shorter.

BILL: They are always in action, and when they remain in action, they never remain in one size for any length of time.

DAVE: There is a feeling that Dopey is a little smaller than the others, and the remainder the same size.

BILL: Doc remains in more or less a dignified attitude. Grumpy always knows what to say, but never can say it, and yet not everything that everyone else would like to hear. Doc has more or less a slight pout on him, - whenever he wants to say anything, he gets up on his toes, and then comes back and relaxes.

SPENCER: You do not want to go to extremes in bringing out the personalities of these fellows.

BILL: Most of the stuff so far hasn't gone to extreme exaggeration.

FRED: There is no hair on their head, - they are all bald headed.

HAM: In talking about the legs and arms, all of them have short legs, but sometimes they might be a little longer. The hands should not be made to give that cartoon effect, - all dressed up in fat gloves. Get away from that Mickey Mouse type of drawing.

Are all the eyes the same distance apart?

BILL: Dopey's eyes were at first a little far apart, but it looked much better to have them closer together. You can see the expression more than you can when the eyes are spread out.

Sleepy's eyes are always partly closed and always puffy underneath. Whereas, in Sleepy when the eyes are half closed, one eye could be a little bit more closed than the other - as though it was an effort to close both eyes.

There is evenness in the drawing of Bashful's eyes. He has perfect control over his eyes.

HAM: Bashful has big eyes. Sneezzy's eyes are smaller. The rest are about the same size.

BILL: Dopey opens his eyes up and has a goggly look. Grumpy's eyes are more or less small - sort of piercing.

DAVE: Grumpy's brows are more or less contracted. To me he has the most concentrated look of any of the seven dwarfs.

DAVE: Perce has a point here that I think it well to bring out. Walt's attitude of the cuteness of these characters. It is a very important angle, and should be considered. Otherwise you may run into trouble in animation.

PERCE: Walt feels very strongly the point that we have got to keep these little fellows cute, - mustn't get grotesque. In some cases you want to see how far it has developed in the early stages from the first reel. The head size has a definite bearing in it. We are playing with figures with bulgy noses and features. Walt points out that the animators must always try to feel the cuteness in the personal treatment of all these characters. This is a hard thing to catch. Take Dopey for example, - Dopey has been an awfully tough problem. He is not an imbecile. He is full of fun and life. Life is just a bowl of cherries to him and just a game. The way he acts, while he is slow-witted and childish, etc. - he isn't a goof in the sense that he is a nut. It is more that he is a little guy that hasn't grown up. Because of these characteristics, Dopey could become very grotesque, unless he is kept in a cute little manner. He may be funny, but if he isn't kept funny in a cute little way, he ceases to be funny and becomes imbecilic. For example - Dopey yelling. Right away the general reaction would be that it would make a mute out of the fellow, - a fellow with an affliction. That is a parallel with what we have got to search for in animating. He is not goofy, a freak, but a cute little elfish guy, child-like in his reactions and actions to things.

One thing we have not done much with in our story so far is the use of Dopey's ears. We have a few props here that are going to be played up in different parts of the picture. Dopey's ears are not going to be over played, but at certain times they are very dog-like. He wiggles them when he flirts with S.W. We may have other spots where his ears can come into play.

This nose of Grumpy's, - we occasionally have a chance to gag that nose. We have one spot where Doc takes a swipe at his nose, and the nose flops back and forth, and then we cut to close-up.

THOMAS: Do you ever see the hair?

PERCE: No only when they take off their caps.

PERCE: However you will notice this in the animation, - the way Dopey's cap is carried on his head. The cap is loose on his head.

In regard to the looseness of Dopey's shirt around his neck, we found out that Dopey's neck is not to be played up, except in such cases where he is in a stretching attitude.

FRED: I feel that they all have necks, but better if they do not show them. He hasn't a beard, and thus when he stretches he has more of a chance to show his neck.

BILL: Grumpy is supposed to be sourest - never mean or cruel, because there comes a great moment for him later on.

PERCE: Dopey's actions are loose, in keeping with his clothes. At times there is great violence done him, - just like the duck. By treating him this way he is pretty flexible, - whether he gets socked on the head or whatever it is, it never hurts him. Another thing that you can't see in the rough is the treatment of Dopey's little blue eyes. They are light blue and have that vacant look that you get with a light blue color.

DAVE: Practically no black in them, - just the blue.

PERCE: Develop a cuteness in them.

Esther Newell
5 Copies.