

the night until you had or else you tore the unfiled pages out of the script. This was a work-through-the-night one. Unions were weak. Unemployment was rife. You could get away with it. The title of the film was *The Price of a Song*. At the beginning a pianist is murdered, leaving the rest of the plot to be taken up with the inquiry. I was the hero's girlfriend's brother and, at the time, aged about 13 or 14. Towards the end of the last day of shooting, a very long day, I went to the only empty room I could find, the extras' dressing room, and fell asleep. At two o'clock in the morning I was woken by an assistant shaking me. I didn't know where I was. He shoved two pages of script into my hand and told me to learn them. The scriptwriter, realising that time was running out, had put in a cut and tacked the two outer bits together. This was the result. With bleary eyes I started to read only to be interrupted by another assistant. "You're wanted on the floor now," he said.

I went down to the set. Michael Powell, a difficult, hard man who didn't care if an actor was 9 or 90, snapped, "Know your lines?"

"Oh, Mr Powell, no," I said.

"What?" he shouted, "You wretched boy. Hundreds of children out there would give their eye teeth to have your job!"

"But these pages, they've only just been given to me," I said.

"God, I'll kill him!" yelled Powell and summoned the assistant who had brought them. "Do you mean to say you've only just given this boy these pages? He should have had them half an hour ago. That's when they were written. It was your job to see he got them." Before the assistant could answer, I spoke up. "Excuse me, Mr Powell, I think I could learn this in one or two minutes. I'm very quick." I read the scene through a couple of times and told him that I knew it. He didn't say, "Well done," or