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## Will Jones after last night

In a couple of recent pieces in TV Week, I've touched on the sidewise contributions of Czechoslovakian film makers to American TV. Some rather wild footnotes and amplifications have fallen this way since.

In one set of comments, I quite cleverly deduced that the Diet Rite Cola people had glommed onto a technique that Milos Forman used in "Taking Off" and used it in those Diet Rite commercials in which there are quick cuts of a number of different persons singing the Diet Rite jingle.

From the Diet Rite headquarters in Georgia has come a note of my admiration for my powers of observation. They didn't just borrow the technique. They were so fond of it that they borrowed Forman himself, at considerable cost, to direct the commercials.

In a more recent article, I expressed annoyance with the way the subtitles were "Edited for Television" when Ivan Passer's "Intimate Lighting" was presented on "Film Odyssey." Some apparently rough language was blocked out of the English subtitles.

Now the word has been passed to me, from some Czechoslovakian viewers who tuned in to the program expressly to hear their old-country tongue spoken again, that there was nothing in the original dialogue that was censorable.

If there were any dirty words in "Intimate Lighting," they suggest, those words were the contribution of an English subtitle writer who was trying to make the subtitles saltier than the spoken word.

"Maybe somebody thought it would make more money in this country with a few naughty words," their spokesman suggested.

A weird idea. I hope I can check it out with Passer himself. Like Forman, he lives in this country now, and the University Film Society is trying to get him here for some sessions with students.

More weird stuff.

Jack's Auto Repair, the lonely sponsor of Garrison Kellor's "Prairie Home Companion" on Minnesota's public radio network, obviously is way ahead of his time. For many weeks, the educational division of

Jack's has been offering special courses in Speed Listening, the auditory version of Speed Reading. Kellor, as Jack's on-the-air spokesman, has reported amazing cases in which graduates were able to listen to a long-winded two-hour speech in a matter of minutes. Some of the more successful alumni he reported to be already days ahead in their absorption of boring conversations.

Perhaps some of us Kellor fans were too cynical when we regarded these commercials as a running gag. Speed listening is for real.

Last week, delegates to the Association for Educational Communications Technology convention were being invited to the Minneapolis Auditorium to watch demonstrations of a device called VOCOM, developed by some University of Minnesota people, which compresses tape-recorded speeches electronically so that they can be heard at double or triple the speed at which they were delivered.

It's not a matter of speeding up the tape, say the VOCOM people: that would produce the familiar Donald Duck kind of gabble that happens when normal-speed recordings are played fast. This gadget brings off a stunt they call selective deletion, eliminating the pauses that occur in normal speech and shortening the vowel sounds. What's left, whizzes by the listener much faster, but remains

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