

'Hawaii Five-O' a Big Hit on TV But It's Still Not Making Money

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HOLLYWOOD

FIVE YEARS AGO "Hawaii Five-O" was \$1,200,000 in the hole with ratings that weren't half as high as shows that were being canceled, but the lure of the islands has prevailed. This year the detective series, based in Honolulu, begins its sixth year on the air only \$60,000 in the red.

"One of the reasons we keep going over budget is that we have the longest communications lines in television," said producer Leonard Freeman. "My headquarters are here in Hollywood, but the entire show is filmed in Hawaii.

"We have to fly all our guest stars 2500 miles and put them up at a hotel while they're working."

Why doesn't Freeman shoot the show in Southern California, focusing on the palm trees and faking the rest?

"We developed the pilot film three years before we went on the air. The big discussion was whether to make the show in Los Angeles or in the islands.

"We held out for the cinema verite feeling of Hawaii and the extras and bit players who have never seen a movie camera before.

"Hawaii is one of the great assets of the series. It's not just the geography and setting but a special mood of a romantic and beautiful way of life.

"Oahu is only about 46 by 30 miles, but we could shoot there for 100 years and never use up all the backgrounds."

Another healthy element of the show is that Hawaiians, unlike Hollywoodians, are wildly fanatic about the show. Its rating in the islands is an audience share of 88 per cent.

Very few shows on the tube enjoy a similar zeal among viewers.

"We have a stock company of 2000 Hawaiians to call on for acting jobs over there," Freeman said. "Not all of them are professionals. Even their inexperience is an added quality for the show.

"In the beginning the Hawaiians were



Jack Lord

hostile to us because other television companies had made promises and not kept them.

"But we built a studio over there and have invested \$400,000 in equipment. Much of it is mobile facilities for shooting on locations all over the islands."

Biggest hitch in the show is putting it together after the scenes have been photographed.

The day's film is rushed to the Honolulu airport and put aboard a jet for Los Angeles. On its arrival the negative is taken to a laboratory and developed. By 2 p.m. the next day Freeman sees the rushes.

"We have never lost any film," the producer said, "but it's been misplaced more than once. It happens often enough to turn us to jelly.

"I watch the rushes and if we have a problem I call by direct line to Hawaii and we iron out the difficulty. If necessary we reshoot a scene, but that's expensive.

"We're trying to keep costs down and get into the black side of the ledger for the first time this year."