

# Notes for an article I could not write



Someone once imprinted the phrase "Honesty is the best policy" on my impressionable mind (I think the culprits were my parents) and I haven't been able to erase it since.

I went to great lengths to write a piece about *125 Rooms of Comfort*. I tracked down stills, got cast and crew lists, studied resumés, read backgrounds, talked to anyone/everyone involved in it. I really tried.

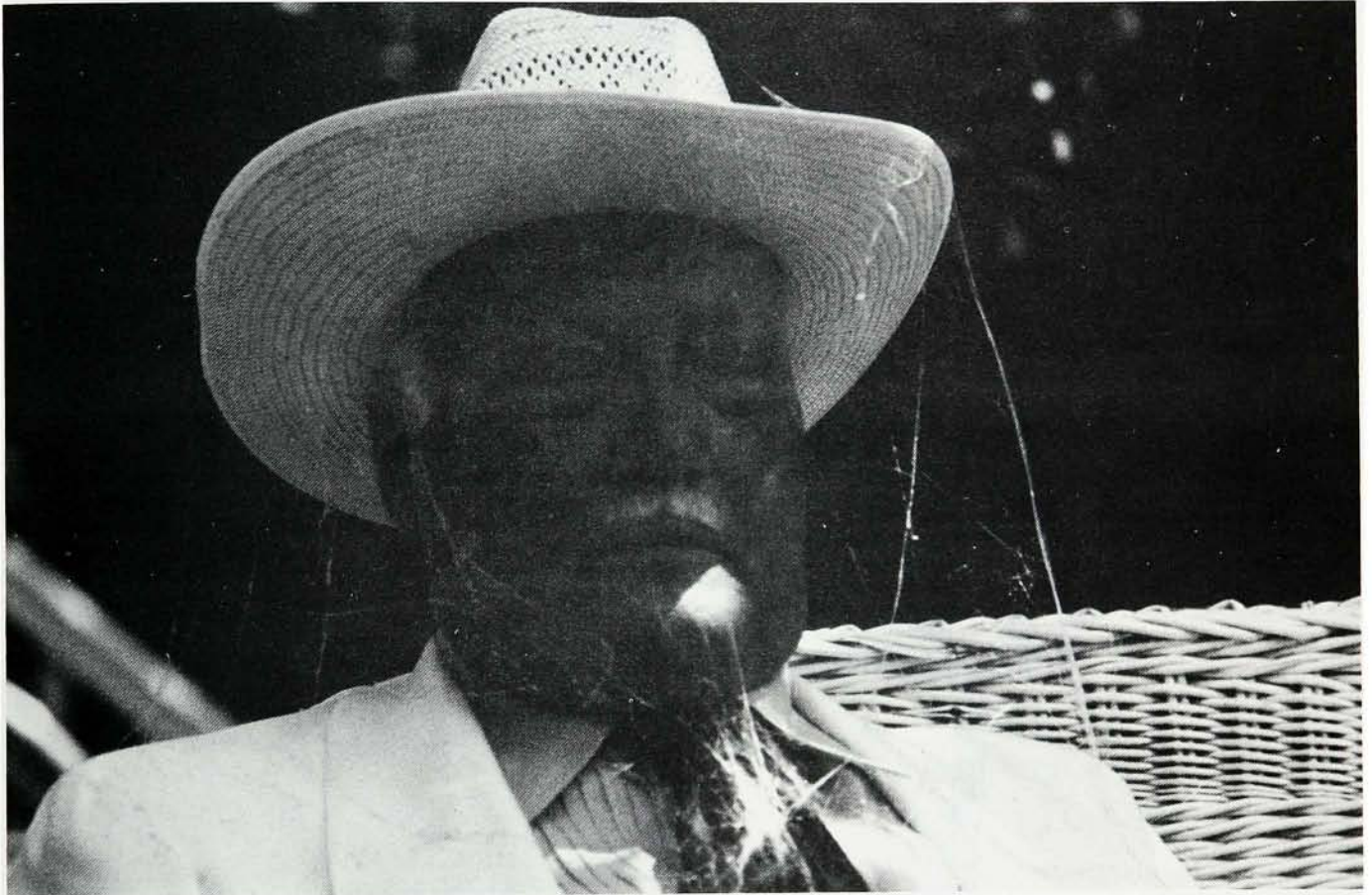
Couldn't do it.

All I've got is 125 versions of confusion, 125 visions of collages . . .

Talked to producer Don Haig. Suffering from paternal labour pains. He's one of the most respected editors in the business. Has his own company – Film Arts. Produced their first feature. Haig really believes in this film. He's beautiful. After getting enough of a reputation (and resulting work) to be able to take it easy in security – he's got the itch. Taking enormous risks. Hassled through the CFDC rewrites, the on-again-off-again money, and is now ready to hassle through the insanity of trying to get a low-budget Canadian feature *seen*. May the Gaffer in the Sky bless producers like him . . .

Interviewed Patrick Loubert. Very nervous about the film. Took so long, so long. Innovative, talented, he's one of that precious handful of emerging directors English Canada needs so desperately. He's young, yet old enough to have bittersweet memories of starving on Spadina and wondering if you could make another film by hocking your useless honors awards

**125 Rooms of Comfort** – directed by Patrick Loubert, produced by Don Haig, Associate Producer – Deanne Judson, written by Patrick Loubert, Script Consultant William Fruet, based on a story by Victor Coleman and David Young. Director of Photography – Henri Fiks, sound by David Lee, edited by Thomas Berner and Gordon McLellan, 2nd Unit Director – Michael Hirsh, 1st Assistant Director – Ian McDougall, 2nd A.D. – Bill Corcoran, Assistant Cameraman – Gred Guthe, continuity – Penny Hynam, Key Grip – Lou Graydon, Gaffer and Special Effects – Jock Brandis, Grip – Robert Holmes, Boom – Aerlyn Weissman, Set Designer – Patricia Gruben, Wardrobe by Granada Gazelle, and Danny Storto, Production Assistants – Ken Brown, Rhoda Goldstein, Gretchen Park, Stephanie Aboud, Tony Hall. Make-up by Fred Kondal, titles by Clive Smith, music by Patricia Cullen, Libra and Fergus. CAST: Bob Warner, Tim Henry, Robert Silverman, Jackie Burroughs and introducing Les Barker. A Film Arts Production with the assistance of the CFDC. Premiered at Filmexpo, 1974.



from university. Survived (like everyone else) on Canada Council and POCA grants falling intermittently his way. As if someone forgot to lock them up.

Not that he hasn't produced – he's had all kinds of scripts on radio and television, all kinds of really fine shorts for Telescope, Gallery, OECA, the works. Just no money . . . Some of his stuff I really loved, like *The Great Canadian Comic Books* (written up in No.5) and the script he wrote for *Super Joe* (should have been written up – fantastically fine animated theatrical short – funny, beautiful, good feelings). Never got to see his book on Cdn. Comics – should call up Peter Martin or maybe even buy a copy. He's good. One of the crazy and wonderful people who call themselves Nelvana Limited. Doing a lot of interesting work mixing animation and live action in children's films. And Daffy Duck and Jesus Christ are two of his all-time idols. What are you supposed to do with *that* gem in a straight article?

Henri Fiks – getting to be pretty scary watching his work. He's becoming absolutely brilliant. Loved his camerawork in *Monkeys in the Attic* (raved about it in No.16). Really looking forward to seeing what he did for *Mourning Suit*, Leonard Yakir's feature. Should be seeing a print pretty soon . . .

Jackie Burroughs. Whew – what a lady! We may not have a star system yet in English Canada but there are a lot of us already who'll watch detergent commercials if she's doing them. Hope to interview her soon. Little nervous about it –



she's such an amazing actress! So fine!

Haig and Loubert were hoping no-one gets singled out – everyone worked so hard getting this film done. The editors! Try not to forget to include their names. Fantastic job. Clive Smith, who did the title sequence. Beautiful work. Really. The hassle is, how do you get everyone in when there are so many fine people involved? Would love to feel (just once) that we could do justice to all those folks whose work we admire. The actors, costumes, sound, the music, the lighting, the mix, the AD, the gaffers, the grips . . .

What can I say about the film? Kept asking the crew that while they were shooting. Nobody knew what the film was about. Jock finally came up with his perennial sunshine philosophy, "When the whole crew thinks it's good, it's gonna bomb for sure. When they don't know – well, it could be fantastic!" No wonder I never (almost never) write reviews. Probably get some for next issue. Hope they're good. Love reading good reviews. Better to leave that for people who like doing it, anyway.

What is it about? Twenty-four hours in the Grand Hotel in St. Thomas Ontario. People come and go. Lives interconnect and disentangle. What can you say? It's about people in Canada, the way only our low-budget features seem to be able to capture them. Maybe that's why I love low-budget Canadian films. They're more real. How Canadian to have to make films for such absurd amounts. How Canadian that you never get to see them. The people are people I know. Keep getting the feeling I've met them somewhere, seen them in a streetcar maybe. Or in a train station. Or shuffling back and forth on the streets between jobs/homes/jobs. Sometimes the absurdity of filling this magazine with stuff on films they never get to see gives me them old futility blues. Sometimes it's funny. It sure is Canadian.

– A. Ibrányi-Kiss



Scenes from "125 Rooms of Comfort"



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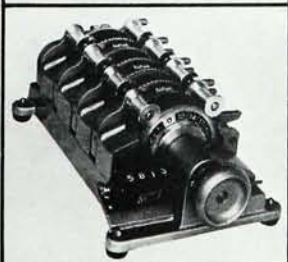
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