

# IN PROGRESS...

## Your Ticket Is No Longer Valid

d. George Kaczender **asst. d.** Charles Braive  
**sc.** Leila Basen, Ian McLellan Hunter from the  
novel by Romain Gary **ph.** Miklos Lente **ed.**  
Peter Sintonick **sd.** Richard Lightstone **p. design-**  
**er** Claude Bonnière **unit pub.** Lana Iny **pub.**  
David Novek **cost.** Julie Ganton **l.p.** Richard  
Harris, Jeanne Moreau, George Peppard, Jen-  
nifer Dale, Winston Rekert, George Touliatos,  
Alexandra Stewart **exec p.** Robert Halmi **p.**  
Robert Lantos, Stephen J. Roth **assoc. p.**  
Wendy Grean **p. manager** Lyse Lafontaine  
**p.c.** R.S.L. Films Ltd. **col.** 35 mm.

On the sunken dance floor, they appear to be filming 'Disco Runs Amok' as the glittering patrons of an exclusive nightclub boogie and gyrate to the sounds of perfect silence. Fantasies of a plot about the kidnapping of Donna Summer's vocal cords begin to shimmy beneath the permutable grid of pulsing, dizzying lights.

The movie, though, is **Your Ticket is No Longer Valid**, and the elegant extras can shake, but must not rustle, their booty so that Richard Harris and George Peppard can run through their scene with proper sound recording.

The 'art decadent' disco setting is Jim Daley's (Peppard) private nightclub cum business lair in Paris where, as "Europe's fourth richest man," he wheels and deals with partner Jason Ogilvy (Harris) and other nabobs.

The scene being shot (though not mortally wounded) is rather innocuous and will serve to establish the relationship between the two men.

After first A.D. and chief martinet Charles Braive scolds the dancers again because sound mixer Richard Lightstone can still hear them whispering during takes, the camera is readied once more.

Daley introduces his fiancée Maryvonne (Michelle Martin) to Ogilvy who offers the couple a drink. Daley refuses, saying "I'm off the stuff. It affects my frequency, if you know what I mean." He, evidently, is not referring to how often alcohol sends him knock-kneed to the bathroom.

Daley then adds, though, "I jumped on her bones three times last night." Maryvonne is caught off guard but, composing



Jennifer Dale and Winston Rekert in **Your Ticket is No Longer Valid** ...Keally?

herself, coos that she'll "never forget last night."

Unimpressed by her performance at the table and by his own in bed, he sneers "You lying little c..t" and sends her away.

It takes an hour for the crew to set up, and when everyone and everything is in its proper place, a modified fire extinguisher spews a smoky haze (quite the role reversal!) over the club to 'enhance' the sordidness of the atmosphere.

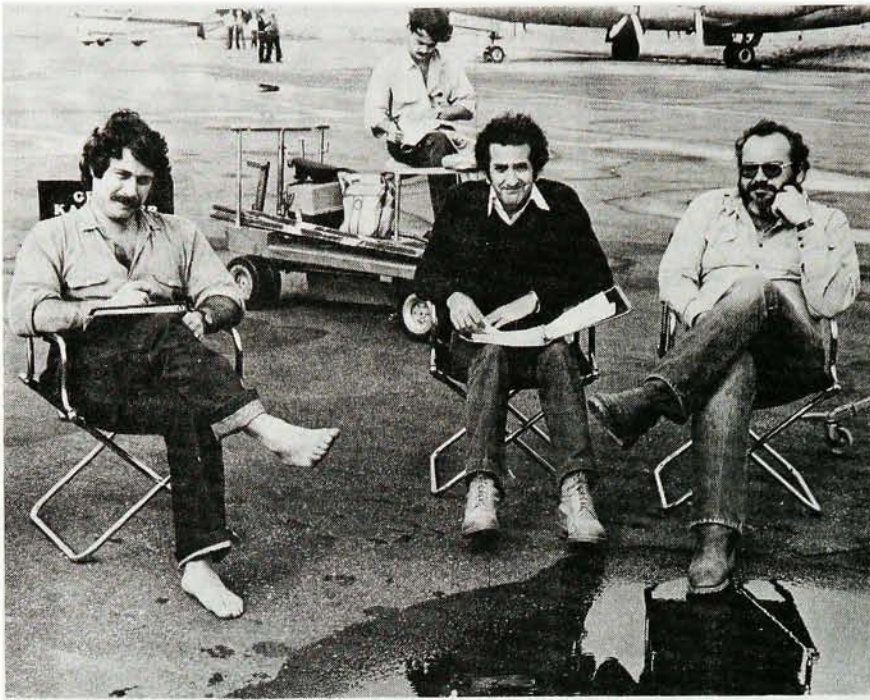
Peppard relaxes between takes, but Harris is easily animated or distracted. One moment, he begins to dance as he watches the extras go through their paces, the next, yawns just off camera. After laughing raucously during a run-through, he solemnly promises not to crack up when the camera is rolling.

Six takes later, director George Kaczender and director of photography Mik-

los Lente are satisfied, but the cameras roll again to prepare a T.V. version... Now, instead of Peppard jumping those pliable bones, he and his friend have 'made love.' And he no longer dismisses her with an extremely offensive epithet like 'c..t.' She is now merely a "lying, little tart."

The film, based on Romain Gary's novel (with screenplay by Leila Basen and Ian McLellan Hunter), has not been pre-sold to T.V., but producers Stephen J. Roth and Robert Lantos of RSL Films know the market, and are confidently preparing for an eventual network deal.

Although the previously quoted dialogue centres on Peppard's character, the film's leading figure is Harris' Ogilvy. Its prime concern is his descent into madness as he begins to fail in business and romantic affairs. Paradoxically, his decline



On location with **Your Ticket is No Longer Valid**, producers Robert Lantos (left) and Steven Roth (right) with director George Kaczender —waiting for the next flight?

coincides with his first discovery of true love.

The object of his affection is Laura (Jennifer Dale), a twenty year-old "innocent and romantic" Brazilian dressage rider. Only with her does he sense meaning in a life that has been filled with fifty years of lies and cheating. Trying to please her, he hopes to perform sexually like some 18-year-old stud. (High hopes!)

She's not terribly preoccupied by sex, but he fails to understand this, and becomes increasingly obsessed with his own shortcomings. His commercial empire falters along with his potency, and his subsequent fall from grace is portrayed as a microscopic, metaphorical reflection of the West's decline. The corresponding rise of Arab oil potentates and the emergence of Third World leaders is equally

devastating.

Ogilvy's despondency renders him suicidal. He wishes to die, not in the hope of 'saving' himself by dying, but, rather, to save the girl from being dragged into his very private hell.

Certain complications appear to make suicide an untenable choice and there is a carefully kept secret ending. Producer Lantos promises that the film ends "with a very powerful visual statement about a shocking solution to this man's torture."

Lantos was very impressed by Jennifer Dale's work in Robin Spry's **Suzanne** (also an RSL Production) and after auditioning two hundred actresses she remained the most exciting choice. The producers hope that, for the first time, a Canadian actress will earn a great critical reputation and enduring star status by appearing in indigenous films. In director

Kaczender's eyes. "she's a consummate actress and very conscientious."

Canadian, Winston Rekert, plays the fantasy lover through whom Ogilvy feels he can, at least vicariously, conquer Laura; while Jeanne Moreau is the other international star. She plays Madame Lili, a bordello-keeper who had fought beside Ogilvy in the French resistance. She now serves as his confidante-psychologist and is a key to the resolution of his conflict.

"From a business point of view the film has been very carefully put together," declares Lantos. While Moreau will help generate sales in France, Germany and England, Harris is looked to for markets such as South America, the Middle East and Hong Kong where Moreau is not well recognized. Peppard, who is most closely associated with the programme Banacek, should be a natural for generating T.V. contracts.

Shooting began on October 21 and concludes December 14. There will be a few exteriors shot in Paris but most locations are in Montreal. Some horse riding sequences have been shot in Senneville and at the Bromont Olympic equestrian site.

So far, the film is on schedule and has respected its six million dollar budget. The CFDC contributed some interim financing, but the final budget has been covered by private Canadian investors and an American distribution company.

George Kaczender is very pleased with what he's seen to date, but he admits that "the rushes always look good." He is satisfied to be working with "absolutely consummate professionals" who are interested in the project and who are not just 'walking through' their scenes.

**Your Ticket is No Longer Valid** is slated for release in the fall of 1980. The public should then have the opportunity to decide whether or not the promising rushes, original plot and explosive ending have combined to create an artistic triumph and a financial success.

Stan Shatenstein

## The Last Chase

d. Martyn Burke sc. C.R. O'Christopher, Roy Moore, Martyn Burke d.o.p./cam. op. Paul Van Der Linden sp. video effects Michael Lennick sp. effects Tom Fisher sd. Steve Weslak sd. rec. Brian Day a.d. Roy Forge Smith set dress. Jacques Bradette m. Anne Brodie ward. Mary Jane McCarty hair James Brown cast. Victoria Mitchell cont. Sarah Grahame prop. mas. Anthony Greco scenic artist Nick Kosonic l.p. Lee Majors, Burgess Meredith, Chris Makepeace, Alexandra Stewart, Diane D'Aquila, Hugh Webster, Deborah

Templeton Burgess, George Toulaiatos, Harvey Atkins, Ben Gordon, Trudy Young exec. p. Gene Slott p. Martyn Burke, with participation from the CFDC co. p. Fran Rosati p. manager Joyce Kozy-King p.c. Herb Abramson Production, via Argosy Films col. 35 mm.

Six million dollars?! Lee Majors slumps through the crowd unnoticed, his face worn, his step pathetic. As Franklyn Hart,

in Martyn Burke's \$4.96 million **The Last Chase** (in production since October 9 in Toronto and scheduled to wrap November 19 in Arizona), Majors has never looked better.

Burke is well-known for his recent work on the CBC series **Connections**, for which he won an ACTRA Award for Best Documentary Film **Winter**, and the Wilderness Award for Best CBC Television Film.

His awards also include an Etrog for Best Screenplay for the feature film **Power Play**, now in distribution in over 30 countries and soon to be released in Canada.

**The Last Chase** is a "futuristic action-adventure story" on which director/co-producer/co-writer Burke collaborated because, he says, "It was offered to me during the gas crisis in California last January. I was intrigued by the script's social allegory, but it's also a character piece."

Set 25 years from today in America, totalitarian rule is the norm, due to a situation of exhausted oil and gasoline reserves and a resultant era of plague and mass-confusion. The story follows Franklyn Hart, an ex-racing car champion now employed in his middle-age as spokesman for the Boston Mass Transit Authority, through the stages of his submission to the new society, eventual indignation, and final break away in a roaring metaphorical race across America.

"There's an existential quality to the script," says Burke. "I wanted to work with Lee, whom I feel is such a strong actor, as good as anyone around. And there's a chance at marvellous humour in the

characters played by Chris Makepeace and Burgess Meredith."

Makepeace (who starred in **Meatballs**) plays the young runaway, "Ring," who manoeuvres a place beside Hart. Burgess Meredith plays Captain Williams, the retired pilot hired by the "Safety Commission" to stop Hart's Porsche with his fighter jet. These two resurrected machines obscure all consideration of governmental rulings in their loving owners — once again in his jet, like Hart back at the wheel of his car, Williams cares only to continue his free flight.

Editor Steve Weslak, new to feature film editing after much involvement in television documentary, says of Burke (with whom he had experience working on **Connections**), "Martyn is the kind of director who likes to work very closely, shot by shot. We work as friends on editing. There are no ego problems about criticism from either of us." For Weslak, there is no relation between **The Last Chase** and the projects with which he has previously been involved. "There's no documentary feel to this film at all... The big budget is limiting in that you have to keep it all tight. Weather, special effects, and crew, affect costs. Whereas in docu-

mentary, on a smaller scale, you can experiment, play around."

Burke says he wants to keep the two sides of his work separate. Rather than try for a "realistic documentary look" in **The Last Chase**, Burke is interested in achieving a "surreal look." Two of the sets include the government headquarters of the "Safety Commission," and the "Catalogue Bar," a kind of federal night club where citizens can, without guilt, drop their trench coats and forget their places. Burke says there will also be extensive use of the matte painting process to create whole new cities (as in **Logan's Run**, and **The China Syndrome**), behind actual buildings such as the Scarborough Civic Centre, and the Royal Bank in downtown Toronto. In addition, Burke will be including a mixture of older architectural styles which he feels will contribute to the "surreal" effect.

Director of photography Paul Van Der Linden, has worked for many years as a cinematographer on television projects as well as feature films, such as **Lies My Father Told Me**, **Eliza's Horoscope**, for which he won an Etrog in 1975, and the soon-to-be-released **Kings and Desperate Men**, to name only a few. Van Der



Alexandra Stewart on location with **The Last Chase**. Wondering who will have the last word?

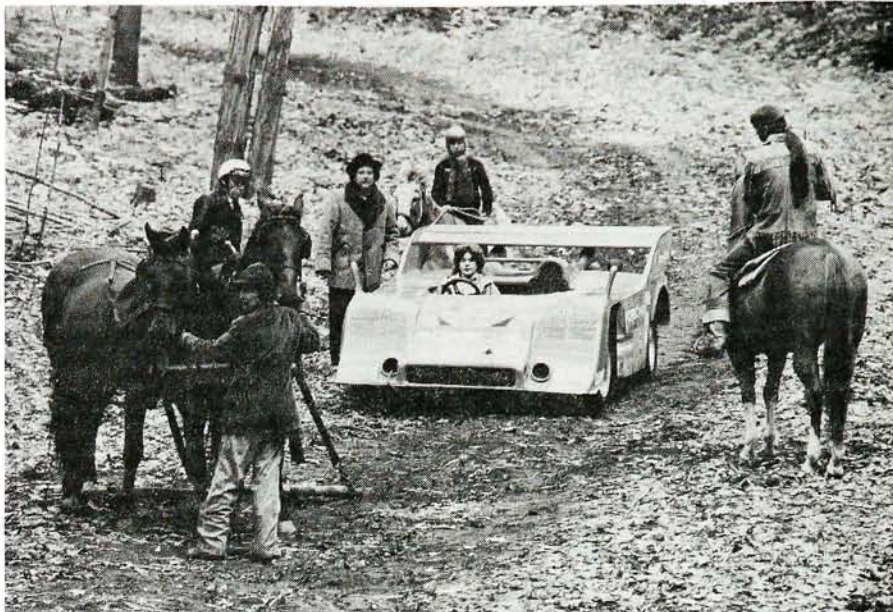
Linden says he is "filming Toronto as a steel and glass, old city." Different photographic styles, a variation of filters, lighting, and colour in the sets, will be used to illustrate the progression from the early society to the modern society which is "brighter, clearer, clean, harder lit, harder edge." He will then contrast this to the different look of Arizona, as representing California. In some respects, Van Der Linden says this is the most difficult film he's ever done. "It's very technical — lots of mattes, artwork to do, understand, and put together." In one sequence, Hart is driving his car on the highway at 285 mph with the jet spewing bullets just behind. Positioning the cameras will take some ingenuity under these circumstances. Says special video effects planner, Michael Lennick (**Middle Age Crazy** and **Title Shot** were his most recent projects), "Here, we are into many different levels of technology. That speed is as slow as a jet can go. But we're also dealing with helicopters, land cruisers, other planes — coordinations within a limited time and budget."

Lennick describes the city culture as envisioned in **The Last Chase** as a "video culture," one that *watches* rather than *does*. Giant video screens dominate the homes. Technical advancements in video must be duplicated in the film with credibility — "futuristic" films always fight audience expectations of cardboard comedy. Lennick is now experimenting with various video systems, declaring that under no circumstances will he "compromise on the film's scientific accuracy."

However, he goes on, "the main change in Frank Hart's society is not in its technology — the main change is in people's attitudes. People adapt to what there is, in an energy crisis or whatever. But the system in **The Last Chase** is one that's lost contact with its audience — a bit like the networks today. In one scene, Frank Hart is watching a newscast about the plague and ravages, which ends with a caution that there is only enough inoculation serum to save a fraction of the population. Then there's a Kentucky Fried Chicken commercial."

In **The Last Chase**, the society watches the cameras and the cameras watch the society, and each has lost sensitivity to the other. "It is like 'Big Brother,' says Lennick. "You don't enter production with this specifically in mind, but you can't help the parallel." Burke feels that, "The idea of America running out of oil and gasoline is really just all background. It's really about two older men chasing across America trying to recover lost dreams — involved in a chase and not wanting it to end."

**Katherine Dolgy**



Chris Makepeace trying out Lee Majors' Porsche in **The Last Chase** — certainly will be, on a road like that!

## Highpoint

d. Peter Carter. sc. Dick Guttman. ph. Bert Dunk. sp. effects Cliff Wenger. ed. Eric Wraite. sd. Peter Sewchuck. a.d. Seamus Flannery. cost. Patti Unger. l.p. Richard Harris. Beverly D'Angelo. Christopher Plummer. Kate Reid. Peter Donat. Robin Gammell. Sol Rubinek. exec. p. Jerry Pam. William Immerman. p. Daniel Fine. assoc. p. Bob Opekar. pub.

Glenda Roy. p. manager Marilyn Stonehouse. p.c. Highpoint Productions (1979). col. 35mm.

"The stage, that's where an actor gets the most satisfaction. Film acting is like a kind of exercise to get back into shape,"



Who said 'All work and no play'? Christopher Plummer and producer Bill Immerman caught playing backgammon on the **Highpoint** set (photo: Camil LeSieur)

remarked Christopher Plummer as he relaxed on the set for the filming of **Highpoint** in Quebec City recently. It's doubtful however that Plummer got a good workout because the \$7 million Canadian production is an action-packed adventure film where the stuntmen are key figures. As Plummer put it, "there's a lot of hanging around."

Essentially a contemporary escapist film, **Highpoint** takes us on a wild chase from Los Angeles, through the winding streets of Old Quebec City, finally coming to a head in Toronto.

Christopher Plummer plays James Hatcher, the villain, whom he describes as a "crazed, larger-than-life character, a mixture of John Huston, Howard Hughes and Errol Flynn." The 'gentleman' villain is pursued by the infamous Mafia and a CIA agent, Richard Harris (**A Man Called Horse**). Ironically, they don't know why they're after Hatcher and they don't find out until they hit Toronto.

Two weeks of shooting, out of a ten week schedule, were completed in Quebec City on the Thanksgiving weekend. Hundreds of tourists, who normally throng the streets of Old Quebec City, were down at the Quebec-Lévis ferry-crossing where they were treated to a spectacle of daring stunts by Henry Mills, considered by producer Bill Immerman to be "the next Evel Knievel." A particularly impressive sequence involved a horse and buggy which successfully leapt onto the ferry just as it prepared to leave the dock. Predictably enough, the good guy didn't quite make it, and the second horse plunged into the St. Lawrence River. What appeared to be a comic scene by most onlookers wasn't written into the script however — the stunt horse paused before taking its fatal leap into the water. That sort of twist is what gives director Peter Carter and producer Immerman their headaches. "At an estimated cost of \$30,000 per day for special effects and stunts, including rental of the ferry, tug-boats and other equipment, the figures could go up to \$50,000 if we don't get the footage we want," sighed the exhausted Immerman. That's where improvisation comes in. "If it turns out to be of comic value, we use it."

Why is it that Immerman feels box office success is almost inevitable for **Highpoint** though many other Canadian films seem doomed to obscurity? Immerman, one-time vice-president of Twentieth Century Fox, says it's not a question of talent or quality. The problem lies with the lack of marketing expertise in Canada.

Comparing Canadian films such as **Mon Oncle Antoine** and **Kamouraska** with European art films, Immerman points out that they appeal to a very limited



One **Highpoint** is the wedding scene filmed at Place Royale in Old Quebec City

(photo: Camil LeSieur)

audience. Art films simply aren't marketable. Plummer looks at it philosophically, and describes the public as "a mysterious animal which changes as quickly as a chameleon does." The public mood must be constantly gauged in order to judge the type of entertainment desired. In a period of financial anxiety, people need that element of fantasy which allows them momentary escape. **Highpoint** promises just that, and, furthermore, it's the honest man that survives in the film. What could be more encouraging?

When asked if the future looks bright for young Canadian actors today, Plummer quickly responded "You're damn right. They've got a chance to make it in Canada!" Reflecting on his own acting debut in the early Fifties, he recalls how

the lack of opportunities forced an ambitious young actor to leave the country. "It was the only way one could bring back our acquired experience to Canada."

Plummer certainly has no regrets. His world-wide travels have enabled him to become one of those exclusive "international men." Referring to his profession as an actor, he describes himself as a gypsy who must continue to travel and learn. Then, quoting George Bernard Shaw who also left his homeland for a time, he adds "I didn't know my own house because I'd never been outside it:" or, one can't fully appreciate a specific situation until it is contrasted to a broader reality.

**Marcella Smit**