

REVIEWS

Tzipi Trope's **Tell Me That You Love Me**

Marriage, observed Blaise Pascal, the first existential philosopher, is the lowest condition in Christendom. In modern parlance, one could say that married life is the bottom line of ordinary human social existence, thus perhaps the secret of its endurance as an institution and its universal fascination.

As one of the fundamental vistas onto both the high hopes and the daily wretchedness of the human condition, the portrayal of marriages poses a considerable challenge to the artist. It takes the consummate mastery of a Bergman (*Scenes From A Marriage*) or, in a slightly different inflection, the eyes and ears of an Allan King (*A Married Couple*) to capture the drama of marriage.

For her first feature film, Israeli director Tzipi Trope took on a topic that might have scared off many a less gutsy filmmaker. Yet in an usually courageous kind of way, she did get it right.

Tell Me That You Love Me is that rare and astonishing thing: a film that's honest with itself. And this is all the more surprising given the number of reasons that might have caused *Tell Me That You Love Me* to fail.

For one it is a Canada-Israel coproduction, an approach to filmmaking that has only been used twice before and in both cases with lamentable results.

For another, the use of Canadian actors to articulate a story set in Israel might have seemed inappropriate. But it works, in part because Israel is (more or less) a Western country, and because the marital woes of the middle-classes are universal throughout that Western world.

Thirdly, the Israel of *Tell Me That You Love Me* has neither the realism of contemporary Israeli cinema nor any of the newsmedia imagery of the troubles of a local imperialism. Instead this is an Israel whose internal topography consists of the peaks and valleys of ordinary emotions and whose wars are of the common domestic variety. An imaginary Israel, some might say, but one that is perfectly adequate to the film's story.

Miri (Barbara Williams), journalist, wife and mother, appears perfectly content in her hectic, but enviable middle-class existence. She has a good job as a senior writer for a woman's magazine; a good, hard-working lawyer of a husband, Dan (Nick Mancuso); a good kid; and a best friend, her colleague Leonora (Belinda Montgomery) who is single and less happy.

Miri is working on a major expose on battered wives in the course of which she meets Naomi (Andree Pelletier) who refuses to leave her unemployed husband David (Kenneth Welsh) who beats her.

Tell Me That You Love Me, then, works within this triple play on relational possibilities. Miri, fascinated by her polar opposite, Naomi, does the upright, middle-class thing: she meddles. She persuades Naomi to assert her rights and move out, and after some resistance and a confrontation with David's brother,



● Belinda Montgomery and Barbara Williams trade office gossip in *Tell Me That You Love Me*

prevails and helps Naomi relocate. Naomi, however, is not at all grateful at having been liberated from male tyranny.

Puzzled, Miri returns home only to find her own husband in a rage. Dan accuses Miri of not being happy enough, of being too preoccupied with her job, of not wanting sex when he wants – and other husbandly complaints. (Actually Dan is angling for a big promotion to the New York office but it's a surprise.)

Miri abruptly discovers discontent everywhere: Leonora can't find the man of her dreams; Dan is fed up with the daily routine; and Naomi abandons her new-found freedom to return to her wife-beater. Miri's secure world totters.

She throws herself into work, and lands the editor-in-chief's job. Dan announces that they're moving to New York. Miri refuses to give up her career. Dan goes, and so does the marriage.

Now Miri becomes a single, working mother. The months go by. Miri is lonely and abandoned.

She goes off for a much-needed vacation and can't enjoy it. Life, she broods, is bitter and not at all what she thought.

But Miri and Dan meet again. She's missed him, he's missed her. As the sun sinks into the sea, perhaps they'll begin again, or perhaps they won't. There is no happy ending: only ordinary human beings seeking a moment's shelter from their solitude.

If all this sounds cliched, it is – and quite deliberately so. *Tell Me That You Love Me* is an exploration of all the cliches of the middle-class landscape, illuminated as it were from the inside. Witness the conventional décors, the harshness of the lighting, or the fact that Belinda Montgomery rises from bed, her make-up flawless.

It is wrong to assume, however, that cliches, just because they are cliches, do not need to be expressed, that because they are small and insignificant, do not merit to be inflated into artistic statements.

For it is *Tell Me That You Love Me*'s complete respect for the cliches of ordinary experience that allows the film, ever so gently, to suggest that perhaps even the cliches are less cliched than one might have assumed.

And so it is *Tell Me That You Love Me*'s unabashed lack of pretension that is precisely its charm. That this exceedingly modest little film, flaws and all, managed to sneak through the great wheels of the contemporary, global filmmaking machine is utterly delightful.

Much like the film itself, the performances reveal little out of the ordinary: Nick Mancuso is darkly handsome, Barbara Williams is nice, Belinda Montgomery is blonde, Andree Pelletier is odd as an Israeli, and Kenneth Welsh's considerable talents, except for one brief scene, are largely untapped. The little one sees of Israel makes it seem like a good place for a vacation.

Perhaps, in the end, that is what *Tell Me That You Love Me* is: a film postcard from an imaginary place that landed almost by fluke on our snowy doorstep.

Against a background of blue skies, sandy beaches and palm-trees, an ordinary modern woman sends out her message of ordinary misery. There's no extraordinary point, but, to employ the appropriate cliché, it's the thought that counts. And it does.

Michael Dorland ●

TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME d. Tzipi Trope exec. p. Harold Greenberg, Galia Albin p. des. Kuli Sander d.o.p. David Gurfinkle ed. Yves Langlois mus. Andre Gagnon sc. Tzipi Trope, Sandra Kolber sup. sd. ed. Glen Berman p. Israel Ringel, Jim Kaufman p. execs. Stephen Greenberg, Eddy Rosenberg p.c. Astral Film Productions Ltd., Roll Film Productions Ltd., a 30% Canadian-70%. Israeli coproduction colour 35mm dist. Astral Films Ltd. running time 90 mins. l.p. Nick Mancuso, Belinda Montgomery, Barbara Williams, Ken Welsh, Andrew Rubin, Andree Pelletier, Laurin Weisler, Joseph Bee, Lenny Ravitz, Rina Sheinfeld, Uri Rachlin, Lasha Rosenberg, Mark Ariel

John Hough's **Incubus**

I have a filing system into which things simply vanish, specifically my back issues of *Cinema Canada*. Which is a pity, because without them, I cannot offer you, good reader, an informed and reasoned commentary on the relationship of three interesting and important facets of *Incubus*: that it is i) a Canadian taxshelter movie that has ii) made a lot of money on New York City's 42nd St. and the U.S. drive-in circuit, despite being iii) a mess.

John Harkness, who groaned with me through a showing of *Incubus* one otherwise splendid day, avers that facet iii) is a direct result of facet i). He might be right, or it may be that *Incubus* is one of those films that changed hands or went into receivership sometime after principal photography and got gutted that way. The gap between completion and Canadian release suggests this may be the case, but without my trusty back issues, I, for one, shall never know.

Not that it is badly made. Not at all. Cinematographer Albert J. Dunk has learned some of the lessons about chilly Ontario light and the horror genre that Mark Irwin demonstrated so well in *Dead Zone*. British director John Hough displays the same choppy energy and fondness for effectively bizarre, though formally unnecessary, camera angles he showed in 1973's *The Legend of Hell House*.

The acting from old pros John Cassavetes, the hero, John Ireland, the cop, and Helen Hughes, the grandmotherly font of secret lore and terrible secrets, is competently melodramatic. The younger actors, Kerrie Keane, the love interest, Erin Flannery, the daughter, and Duncan McIntosh, the twitchy teen, fall flat fairly frequently, as young actors will in films like this – though McIntosh has a couple of effective scenes as a nervous wreck when sleeplessness and his fear that his dreams are causing the rape-murders drive him around the bend.

But there isn't an actor in the film who doesn't stumble at least once over the ludicrous dialogue and I defy any actor now working to deliver Keane's "I don't like to be berated by Hank" as a convincing, spontaneous eruption of anger.

But dialogue has never been a big virtue in horror films and lines like, "My family have always been witch-hunters," and "Twenty years ago, we burned your mother for witchcraft," need a context to work in and that context is emphatically not a middle-sized, non-isolated city at the end of the 20th century. Actually, there is a line that claims we're in a small, isolated village, so the fault may lie with the locations chosen, but every image, interior and exterior both, shouts city and thus adds to the ludicrousness.

Sub-plots are introduced in mid-flight, giving us scenes of apparently unmotivated conflict that aren't given their context until we've been thoroughly saturated in the confusion of the event. Worse, the all-important (I think) flashback death of Cassavetes' young lover is never adequately explained and, given the demon's daylight identity and the fact that Cassavetes ends up embraced by said demon, that death seems to have been the movie's one



● **Incubus** love-interest Kerrie Keane gets her share of ludicrous dialogue

chance – thoroughly blown – at depth.

Back in the '60s, when AIP and Hammer were doing this sort of supernatural thriller regularly, elements like context, plot and motivation (even the demon in *Incubus* seems confused about what it's doing: if it's an instrument of revenge, why is it killing all those random teens?) were firmly and plainly in place and, for the most part, they didn't matter; they were only there to provide a springboard for the willing suspension of disbelief that makes the scary stuff work.

About the only virtue that writer George Franklin (working from Ray Russell's novel) has carried over from those dear, dead days is that of conducting the mayhem and serious mutilation off-screen. The plot, of course, necessitates it, but Hough has turned necessity into virtue and the killings are classics of their type.

Which brings us back to facet ii): this picture is making money in the States, and one wonders why. It is possible, though not likely, that there's nothing else out there at the moment to satisfy the teenage lust for blood and gore. But *Incubus* is short on those elements, anyway. It's also possible that the notion

we've been fed for years, that the teenage audience is actively hostile to anything but graphic bloodletting, is false and that they do, in fact, crave a little more in the way of storytelling and cinematic competence. For, however bad *Incubus* is, it is still incalculably better than the utter, flat mindlessness of *Friday the 13th* and its army of clones.

Andrew Dowler ●

"D.S. Everett's" **Running Brave**

"D.S. Everett's" *Running Brave*, the story of Billy Mills, the American Indian who won the gold medal in the 10,000 metre run at the Tokyo Olympics, is a film forced to deal with the conventions of three different genres.

First are the time-honoured conventions of the *Bildungsroman*, where the young man goes out into the world to face the encroachments of impending adulthood.

These conventions overlap with the second genre, the alien confronting white society after a life of isolation among his own people. While more literary than cinematic, these conventions then double back onto the *Bildungsroman* aspects of the story, adding the layers of institutional hatred embedded not simply within individuals but within society as well.

The third set of conventions are those of the sports-hero biography, and these are most peculiar of all. In a sports movie, heroes never win because of their skills – indeed, the level of their skills is not relevant. What is important is that they demonstrate character by overcoming adversity. Thus we celebrate *The Stratton Story* (with Jimmy Stewart) because Stratton pitched after losing a leg, Lou Gehrig (*Pride of the Yankees*) for his sudden and unexpected eloquence on his retirement because of illness, and George Gipp not because he was the first Notre Dame runner to gain more than a hundred yards in a game, but because of his famous death-bed speech ("Win for the...").

What is silly about the sports genre, in celebrating people who overcome adversity, is that it loses sight of the fact that sport is about one team having more

talent than the other. I doubt that anyone would be interested in a film about the great superbowl teams of Miami and Pittsburgh, because there, no one had to show character – they had to go out and stomp their enemies, hardly an encouragement for those who like to see underdogs rise up.

Running Brave, directed by Don Shebib (who removed his name from the film after it was recut against his wishes), tries to do its best by all three sets of conventions, and actually manages to hit most of the notes it wants.

Young Billy Mills leaves the reservation to attend the University of Kansas on a track scholarship. He is leaving behind the desperate poverty of his early life for a world where natively suited white people thrust business cards at him during suburban garden parties. After winning his first few runs, facing minor prejudice, and getting a white girlfriend (and fiancée) he is forced, after a visit from his brother, to confront the conflicted nature of his Indian roots and white lifestyle, and returns to the reservation. After his brother's suicide, he joins the Marines and makes the Olympic team. The rest, as they say, is history.

Among the picture's merits, improbable as it may seem, is a startling performance by Robby Benson as Billy Mills. Benson, who has managed in the past 10 years to become an all-purpose symbol of sensitive youth, be it WASP (*One on One*), Jewish (*The Chosen*), Chicano (*Walk Proud*) and now Indian. He is usually so sensitive that he is less a character than a quivering mass, less a human than Bambi after sensitivity training. In *Running Brave*, however, Benson gives a performance of startling strength and what looks like authentic feeling. *Running Brave* is far and away the best film he's made and the best performance he's given, and I thought, until I saw it, that it was probably a better film than he deserved.

The film's other virtues include a genuine pictorial sense of how the west looks, and Shebib's patented gift for the depiction of masculine camaraderie in both the university and reservation scenes.

Where *Running Brave* proves somewhat lacking, however, seems to be in the issue of how society's institutionalized racism affects the Indians – and they are the only visible minority in our society that faces what is legitimately institutionalized discrimination, namely, the reservation system. There is no "Bureau of Jewish Affairs" in Canada or the United States, and one can imagine the outcry if there was.

The paternalism displayed toward the Indian seems to result in a programming of failure in the people. The percentage of Indians who succeed in the white world is much lower than that of other minorities, and this has something to do with the impact of white society on Indian culture over the past three hundred years.

It seems to me that the alternatives available to Indians establish a no-win situation. On the one hand, they can stay on or return to the reservation, where even if they become successful and respected, to the outside world they are still just "reservation Indians." On the other, they can leave and confront the prejudices and splendours of white society, the lying promises of middle-class suburbs and TV commercials. In the white world, success and failure seem to be drawn in such absolute terms, that even if an Indian becomes successful – able to support himself and a family in reasonable comfort in the white world – the true success of our world almost invariably is closed to him, in large part because of the denial of educational opportunities. He has the frustrations of failure without the compensating comfort of his ethnically rooted society.

This seems an area that no fiction film

● Robby Benson startles as *Running Brave*'s Billy Mills



about Indians has never successfully addressed, and perhaps it was the wish of the Ermineskin Indians of Alberta (who financed the picture out of oil earnings) to depict an Indian Rocky rather than someone defeated by the conflicts inherent in dealing with white society as an alien. It may not even be proper to criticize a reasonably well-made, inspirational film for not being something it was never meant to be. Yet it is a film where the issues are at best slightly fogged, and a clear exposition of these contradictions would seem to be something needed, not by Indians, who understand them all too well, but by whites, who don't understand them at all.

John Harkness ●

RUNNING BRAVE* d. D.S. Everett p. Ira Englander **assoc. p.** Maurice Wolfe **sc.** Henry Bean and Shirl Hendryx **d.o.p.** François Protat **music** Mike Post **p. des.** Carol Spier **sup. ed.** Peter Zinner, A.C.E. **p. man.** Don Buchsbaum **p. exec.** Martha Moran **1st a. d.** Martin Walters **p. co-ord.** Angela Heald **ed.** Tony Lower, Earle Herdan **casting** Mike Fenton and Jane Feinberg, A.S.C.D., Marci Liroff **bus. affairs** J. Wilton Littlechild, Douglas McLeod, Dennis Gavin **cam. op.** Cyrus Block **1st asst. cam.** Theo Eleseder **2nd asst. cam.** Christopher J. Harris **unit man.** Nick Gray **2nd a.d.** Mac Bradden **3rd a.d.** Bill Mizel, Deborah Lefaive, Karen Gruson **sc. sup.** Christine Wilson **p. audit.** Shirley J. Gill **p. acct.** Linda Jeffery-Ludlow **art d. acct.** Wendy P. Kraft **asst. acct.** Lyn Lucibello **art d.** Barbara Dunphy **asst. art d.** Alfred Ward. **des.** Wendy Hudolin **asst. ward. des.** Christopher Ryan **ward sup.** Trish Keating **ward. assts.** Linda Langdon, Tish Monaghan, Nancy Englander **seamstress** Joan Olsen **set dec.** Rose-Marie McSherry, Jim Erickson, Jacques Bradette **asst. set dec.** Tedd Kuchera, Don Mackenzie, Daniel Bradette **prop. master** Hilton Rosemarin **asst. props.** Ian Thomas **prop. buyer** Shirley Inget **head make-up** Phyllis Newman **make-up** Marlen Schneider **head hair.** James Brown **hair** Donna Bis **sd. mix.** Rob Young **boom** Graham Crowell **gaffer** John Berrie **best boy** Randy Tomiuk **elect.** Don Metz, Martin Wilde **gen. op.** Rodger Dean **key grip** Dave Humphreys **best boy** Brian Kuchera **grips** Richard M. Allen, Christopher Tate, Clarence Brown **const. man.** Brian Cockroft **head carp.** Dee Embree **asst. head carp.** Bruce Robinson, Martin Shostak **carp.** Michael Ellsworth, Peter Gerrie, Christopher Good, Cindy Gordon **head scenic painter** Nick Kosonic, Patricia Mackenzie (asst.) **scenic painters** James McAteer, Brent Lane, Barbara Becker, Sylvie Bouchard, Laurie Dobbie, Michael Heinrich, Linda Peltari **graphic artist** John Blackie **draftsman** Dan Davis **sketch art.** Nancy Pearce **creative cons.** Dorothea Moore **track seg. const.** "Bill" Easton **res.** Michael Date, Mark Trahan **cast. Cda.** Deirdre Bowen **loc. cast.** Bette Chadwick **pub.** Mahoney/Wasserman & Associates **unit rep.** Richard Leary **loc. pub.** Jami Drake **stills** Joseph Lederer **transp. co-ord.** Don Retzer **driver capt.** Nick Kuchera **drivers** Dennis Fitzgerald, Blake Patterson, Barry Kraft, Alan Wightmore, John Adshead, Avery King, Eddie Washington, George Prabucki, Ann McGaw **picture vehicles** John McEwan **wrangers** Norm Edge, Duane Edge **loc. man.** David McAree, Glenn Ludlow, Brian Ross **office p. asst.** Norm Fassbender **p. sec.** Donna Waring **art dept. trainee** Liz Amsden **cast. p. assts.** Roseline Richardson, Sandra Cowan **p. trainees** Milton McDougall, Charlene Pearce, Tracy Galbraith **craft service** Bill Gawryluk **mus. sup.** Don Perry **mus. ed.** Allan K. Rosen for La Da Productions **1st asst. ed.** Bev Neal **2nd asst. ed.** Robin Leigh **post-p. creative sd.** Neiman-Tillar Associates **sd. re-rec.** Ryder Sound Services Inc. **re-rec. mixers** Gary C. Bourgeois, C.A.S., Neil Brody, C.A.S., Robert L. Harman, C.A.S., T.A. Moore, Jr., C.A.S. **titles/opt. efx.** Modern Film Effects p.c. Englander Productions in association with the Ermineskin Band **running time** 105 min. **dist.** Paramount Pictures L.p. Robby Benson, Pat Hingle, Claudia Cron, Jeff McCracken, August Schellenberg, Denis Lacroix, Graham Greene, Kendall Smith, George Clutesi, Margo Kane, Derek Campbell, Maurice Wolfe, Albert Angus, Barbara Blackhorse, Carmen Wolfe, William Berry, Kaye Corbett, John Littlechild, Tantoo Martin, Gail Omeasoo, Billy Runsabove, Seymour Eaglespeaker, Maurice Wolfe, Merrill Dendoff, the Ermineskin band, Michael J. Reynolds, Chris Judge, Paul Hubbard, Jack Ackroyd, Tommy Banks, Clare Drake, Rob Roy, Graham MacPherson, Francis Damberger, Ray Kelly, Thomas Peacock, Barbara Reese, Douglas Marquardt, Bonar Bain, Donna Devore, Wendell Smith, Daryl Menard, Greg Coyes, Kim Maser, Walter David, Bryan Hall, Greg Rogers, Christopher Gaze, William Fisher, Fred Keating, Brendan Hughes, Will Reese, Harvey Haugen.

* Not a certified Canadian film.

David Steinberg's Going Berserk

Going Berserk feels like a deliberate throwback to the studio comedies of the Forties, to the later Marx brothers, Abbott and Costello, or the Crosby-Hope *Road* pictures. Two buddies, John Candy as John Bourignon "of the Mellonville Bourignons", the comic, and Joe Flaherty as Chick Leff (a great Forties name), the straightman, find themselves surrounded by a horde of skilled comic actors and propelled forward by a loose thriller plot that's really nothing but a rack to hang gags on - culties want to brainwash John into killing his future father-in-law.

But, if the product is pure '40s, the method is pure '80s. "Candy... used his improvisational knowledge constantly, with virtually every scene altered from the original script," says Universal's press kit, before going on to suggest that virtually every other member of the cast did the same thing.

Now, while it's true that the Marx brothers, Abbot and Costello and Crosby-Hope all improvised to one degree or another, they had one big advantage Candy and company lack; by the time they stepped before the cameras, their comic personae were already in place and fully developed. For the writers, this meant that they had something to write to. Gags could be tailored specifically to, say, Harpo and legitimately thrown out because "the character wouldn't do that." The actors also had, in addition to the writers on the film, the work of all the other writers who, through the years, had contributed to the fund of gags and, thus, to the eventual definition of the comic personae. Finally, through years of performing in character, the actors had a fund of thoroughly proven material and an ingrained knowledge of how to get laughs with simple, character-defining gestures and reactions; think of Groucho's eyebrows. In short, they had a firm base to improvise from.

Candy and Flaherty don't. This is not to denigrate their skills, nor those of costar Eugene Levy and co-writer-director David Steinberg, all of whom have excellent track records. But, to the best of my knowledge, Candy and Flaherty

have never played John and Chick before and it shows. The details of stance, mannerism and intonation that could have lifted *Going Berserk's* flatter moments simply aren't there, with the result that the characters very often disappear or, worse, turn into somebody else. It breaks the flow and turns the movie into a collection of loosely-related bits, some of which work and some of which don't.

Candy suffers from this far more than Flaherty, but only because he's on screen much more. Though structurally set up as the buddy and straightman, Flaherty disappears early on and only reappears sporadically and in a supporting role, which is a pity, because Flaherty's hustling hipster, had he developed, would have been a great foil to Candy's affable do-gooder.

Nor is there any doubt that Candy and Flaherty could have developed first-rate comic characters. They've proven that on *SCTV* with, respectively, Johnny LaRue and Guy Caballero. *SCTV* fans who recall Johnny LaRue's drunk, dying-in-the-gutter-on-Christmas-Eve scene from a couple of seasons ago have a wonderful example of Candy's ability to improvise from a base, for I have been reliably informed that LaRue's almost-five-minute bathetic tirade was not scripted, but improvised by Candy on the spot.

But to do it, he relied on a character both developed over time and written - and he hasn't got it there. Co-writers Steinberg and Dana Olsen (two seasons on *Laverne & Shirley*, two as-yet unreleased features) repeatedly set up scenes that show Candy as pacifistic and cowardly, then turn around and make him the instigator of deliberate violence. The contrast between Candy delivering a '60s peace-and-love speech to warring bikers and punks, then going out and intentionally trashing their bikes with his car is funny enough in itself. But everybody seems to have forgotten that the two extremes have to co-exist in one character and that even bigger laughs could have been built by letting us see the spirit in which Candy wreaks his havoc and how he reacts to it afterwards. But it's all done without a single reaction shot.

Of course, reaction shots are more the director's province than the writer's, but Steinberg is not a very good director. Though he usually knows where to put the camera for a simple, unobstructed view of the action, his pacing is terrible.

The sequence that begins with Candy

leaving his drums to protect a male stripper from ardent female fans and ends with Candy diving headlong into the now-enraged mob moves like a dirge. Event, pause, event, pause, event, pause. With none of the events seeming to grow from the ones before, one can almost see the actors off-screen, waiting to respond to the director's belated cues.

That sequence at least has a climax. Others don't and, while bad or non-climaxes are an expected and understandable part of live improv comedy, they are unforgivable in a scripted film. The dinner sequence - Candy being introduced to his rich, loony, disapproving future in-laws - could have been a classic and it begins well, with each character brightly introduced, Candy struggling to stay awake and Chick bringing a monumentally tacky hooker as his date. Then it just stops. The promised chaos never materializes and I was left feeling angry and cheated.

All of this is not to say that *Going Berserk* is not funny. At times it's very funny. The *SCTV*-like parodies, "Kung Fu U." and "Father Knows Best", with Flaherty as a whip-wielding Jim Anderson and Candy as the Beaver, are hilarious. So are Pat Hingle as the senator who greets his family with the sort of well-chosen, personalized words he'd use at a fund-raiser full of strangers, Dixie Carter as the cultie who lapses into blank verse in praise of her chief's spirituality only to bump into him stuffing his face and Murphy Dunne as the drug-crazed public defender. In fact, one of the best things about *Going Berserk* is that just about everybody, right down to the extras, gets a crack at being funny.

Candy is fine, too, scene by scene. He's got good timing, a fine line in pudding-faced sincerity and a good physical sense, best displayed when he's being jerked about while handcuffed to a man making love on the other side of a door.

It's just that, lacking a persona, he isn't nearly as funny as he could have been and, lacking better or more writers (comedy writing is the only writing I know where more can equal better), neither is the movie.

It occurs to me that, with just a few changes, this could stand as a review of *Strange Brew*, but I think John and Chick may have more potential than Bob and Doug. So, I'd like to make a suggestion, on the off-chance that producer Claude Héroux reads this: send

● John Candy and Eugene Levy, in appropriate get-up, reminisce about their school days in *Going Berserk*



MINI REVIEWS

MINI-REVIEWS of short films in this issue are from *Mobius International*, 175 King St. East, Toronto M5A 1J4, and were all released during 1983.

GLASSWORKS

A quick look at three artists working in glass, who are more or less given "equal time" throughout this film.

Daniel Crichton engraves on glass, and then conducts a sort of guided tour of his work. He talks about not being so much involved in technique as in trying to bring out the "personal content." His leaning towards the flask form is evident in a number of his pieces shown to advantage outside in relation to nature.

Karl Schantz talks of the cultural and personal background of a glass artist, and his striving for a "harmonious introduction of elements." A lovely gallery display of his work, bathed in golden light, amply illustrates the search for the experimental and its many differing variations.

Peter Keogh produces "sculpture with light." His spare, geometric shapes exude a tactile feeling, while a return to moulding allows him a varied approach to glass. "Water seems to me a visually natural theme for glass," and his exquisitely moulded wave, tipped with spray, surges nobly and naturally.

Crichton also talks about discovering vitrilite, and is seen constructing a cylindrical 'architectural' piece of many layers bonded together. The clear, bright colours and shapes reminiscent of Art Deco emerge forcibly from the screen.

Such beautiful glass and committed artists treated in such a mundane manner! Definitely a film that informs – and useful for that reason – but how much more zingy it could have been with a touch of flair.

p./d. Peter Maynard **cam.** Rene Ohashi **mus.** John Mills-Cockell **colour** 16mm **running time** 24 mins.

LADY IN MOTION

An introduction to "Miss Agness Hammond and Friends" at the Ghost River Ranch, near Calgary.

Agness Hammond talks about her life, but not that of a 'rough it' pioneer by a long shot. One of five sisters, with no brothers, she talks easily of traveling a lot by ship and train – visiting Europe, going to Monte Carlo, being presented at the Court of King George V and Queen Mary. Of wanting to be an artist and having some training in Paris. Of being a championship skier, and of calling Banff her home.

Since 1936 she's lived on one of the oldest ranches in the district, and on which she breeds dogs. And how many on the ranch at the time of filming? "I don't count but probably a

few over a hundred."

There's also a Museum on the ranch containing assorted relics of her own family – her mother's side-saddle, a portrait of her grandfather, Major Burnett – side by side with ancient angora chaps for winter riding, old farm machinery and implements, and other western artifacts.

Agness also welcomes visitors and especially loves the children who have never had a chance to see horses, dogs and other livestock in natural surroundings.

Agness Hammond has obviously lived a long and full life and she's sprightly and interesting to watch. However, the film meanders around, is poorly organized, and interminably stretched out with cute shots of flora and fauna. What a pity to dissipate the obvious value of the central subject.

p./d. Helene White **cam.** Andrew Jaremko **colour** 16mm **running time** 28 1/2 mins

BOOKWRIGHT

A gentle look at a genuine craftsman, Gerard Brender a Brandis, at work at Branstead Press – which is also his home.

Brandis is a gifted wood engraver who feels that he is carrying on a tradition, and his hands creating tiny, exquisite gems confirm this. His all-round dedication leads him to

produce paper by recycling and adding fibres from the ordinary plants growing on the land – bullrushes, irises, golden rod. He sets handmade type; he runs an old letterpress over his textured papers incorporating his own wood engravings. "I usually collaborate with someone for the texts of my books, either a writer or an editor who selects pieces." And that's about the extent of the involvement of outsiders.

To watch Brandis lovingly create the binding for a book, the flow of the hands (using thread he has spun), and the sureness of touch, is to see a master at work. Editions are not large. The smallest was three books and the biggest three hundred, but usually he likes about one hundred.

Brandis admits to being more comfortable working in a tradition than in exploring new grounds, and considers that wood engravings are the central part of the books he produces. These "little vignettes from life" as Brandis describes them, a wheel, a bucket, farm animals and scenes, sprung to life in intricate detail in a truly delightful film of one man's commitment to the preservation of an almost forgotten craft.

d./cam. Scott Barrie **ed.** Paul Fox **mus.** Doug Watson **colour** 16mm **running time** 25 mins.

Pat Thompson ●

Candy and Flaherty on the road as John and Chick with a collection of scenes and a loose plot to improvise from. They'll build the characters and they'll get the laughs locked down. Then make

GOING BERSERK* **d.** David Steinberg **p.** Claude Heroux **sc.** Dana Olsen and David Steinberg **d.o.p.** Bobby Byrne **p. des.** Peter Lansdown Smith **ed.** Donn Cambren, A.C.E. **music** Tom Scott **exec. p.** Pierre David **assoc. p.** Denise Di Novi **p. man.** Art Levinson **1st a.d.** Dan Kolsrud **2nd a.d.** Patrick Cosgrove **set dec.** Marc Meyer **cam. op.** Ted Sugiura **asst. cam.** Eric Engler **2nd asst. cam.** Paul Prince **sc. sup.** Bonnie Prendergast **asst. ed.** Steve Polivka **apprentice ed.** Michael Thau **casting** Mary V. Buck & Associates **asst. to D. Steinberg** Mary Proteau **sd. mix.** Joe Kenworthy **sd. re-rec.** Robert L. Hoyt, John J. Stephens, Stanley H. Polinsky **music rec.** Hank Cicalo **sup. sd. efx. ed.** Gordon Davidson **sd. efx. ed.** John Shouse **asst. sd. efx. ed.** Tony Torres **ADR ed.** Gil Hudson **music ed.** Cliff Kohlweck **property master** Mike Dunn **asst. props.** Ed Villa **costume des.** Harry Curtis **women's costume** Dolores Zuniga **men's costume** Hugo Pena **hair** Barbara Ronci **make-up** Terry Miles, Tom Tuttle **asst. art d.** Jim Shanahan **DGA trainee** Gerry Keener **unit pub.** Rob Hedden **sp. efx.** Fred Z. Gebler **transp. capt.** Robert Wilson **transp. co-capt.** Don Routhieaux **key grip** Rick Borchardt **gaffer** Chuck Holmes **boom** Paul Wolfe, Jr. **p. sec.** Liz Galloway **craft serv.** Christopher Striepeke **sec. to Mr. Steinberg** Ellen Sommers **sec. to Mr. David** Nancy Skiba **prod. liaison** Judy Steinberg **title des.** Nina Saxon, Dan Quarnstrom **opt. efx.** Universal Title, Pacific Title **running time** 85 min. **dist.** Universal Pictures **lp.** John Candy, Joe Flaherty, Eugene Levy, Alley Mills, Pat Hingle, Ann Bronston, Eve Brent Ashe, Elizabeth Kerr, Richard Libertini, Dixie Carter, Paul Dooley, Ronald E. House, Kurtwood Smith, Ernie Hudson, Gloria Gifford, Frantz Turner, Murphy Dunne, Dan Barrows, Julius Harris, Bill Saluga, Kathy Bendett, Brenda Currin, Hope Hayes, Natasha Ryan, Mark Bringelson, Tino Insana, Mike Moroff, John Paragon, Mimi Seton, Lynn Hallowell, Larry Poindexter, Marianne Muellerleile, Ken Letner, Mark Yerkes, Rosalind Chao, Jeff Imada, George Cheung, James Lew, Eric Lee, Danny Wong, Karen Leigh Hopkins, Sioux Marcelli, Margie Deneke, Jennifer Perito, Ade Small, Patricia Ann Douglas, Ercelle Johnson, Kathleen White, Elaine Bolton, Sarah M. Miles, Judy Pierce, Leeyan Granger, Denise McKenna, Lainie Manning, Helene Phillips, Sara Jane Gould, Pete Willcox, Aaron King, Sharon Peters, Archie Lang, Don Sherman, Robert Bakanic, Jeff Viola, Elinor Donahue.

*Not a certified Canadian film.

the movie. It worked for the Marx brothers in *A Night At The Opera*, it can work now and with results just as good.

Andrew Dowler ●

David Harel's

Raoul Wallenberg: Buried Alive

This documentary is quite an accomplishment, carefully piecing together the story of the Swede who personally managed to save the lives of at least 100,000 Jews during the Holocaust, but who himself disappeared into the unfathomable labyrinths of the Soviet carceral system. For those who are not familiar with the name Raoul Wallenberg, this film is a must. And those who already know much about this remarkable man will also gain new information and insights into his character and fate.

The first two-thirds of the film concentrate on Wallenberg's growing involvement with the Jews of Hungary. The filmmakers have painstakingly created a very personalized portrait of a man who, born into a wealthy Swedish banking family, chose to place his lot with the persecuted of another country. Having already committed himself to the Jewish cause, Wallenberg agreed to assist the War Refugee Board established by U.S. President Roosevelt. In 1944 Wallenberg, a Swedish citizen, went into Hungary to help save the remaining 200,000 Jews still in Budapest. By creating "safe-houses" under Swedish protection and by issuing thousands of documents called "the schutz-pass" to Jews under arrest, he managed to "slow

Eichmann down with paperwork." These legal-looking Swedish visas were Wallenberg's grand bluff, one which showed his thorough understanding of the Nazi mind and which became the means for, quite literally, snatching people from the jaws of death.

Raoul Wallenberg: Buried Alive includes a wealth of archival footage that graphically shows us the rise of Nazism during the late 1930s, especially the "Arrowcross Nazis" of Hungary. This material, which includes the pogroms carried out in the ghettos as well as the forced seven-day "death marches" ending at the death camps, is quite astounding footage carefully interwoven with the theme of Wallenberg's diplomatic efforts within the upper echelons of the Nazi hierarchy. The contrasts are jarring, emphasizing the emotional strengths of a man who tried to mediate between such starkly differing worlds.

A key strength of the film is its numerous interviews with survivors who personally owe their lives directly to Wallenberg's intervention. Whatever incredible efforts the filmmakers must have made to locate these people, the result is a series of moving, personal anecdotes which together compose a vivid portrait of Wallenberg in action.

The film also reveals the on-going personal battle between Wallenberg and Adolf Eichmann. In a visual sense, the film seems to be structured around two recurring photographs of these men, each so different in the look of their eyes. We also learn of a strange dinner party at which the two men meet: with Wallenberg offering Eichmann Swedish protection if the latter would stop the deportations of Jews. Furthering this parallel, the film traces the fate of Eichmann, who escaped to Argentina for sixteen years of relative luxury before being executed as a war criminal. At the same time, Wallenberg

disappeared into the post-war labyrinths of the Soviet bureaucracy. Through its subtle but effective structure, the film leaves the viewer with a heightened sense of irony, injustice and outrage.

The last third of the documentary focuses on the frustrating suppression of information about Wallenberg's fate. Seemingly arrested by the Soviets as a spy for the United States, Raoul Wallenberg is still rumoured to be alive. The filmmakers follow every lead, tracing the equally strange, ineffectual workings of Swedish diplomacy, and interviewing ex-prisoners from the Soviet Gulag who claim, as recently as 1978, to have known of "an old Swede" still there. Again, the information is personalized through interviews with Wallenberg's sister, Nina Lagergren, whose search for her brother goes on after nearly forty years. Her unshakeable faith in his survival has taken her through the frustrations of dealing with inactive Swedish authorities, unresponsive Soviet bureaucrats, and an often disinterested public.

Raoul Wallenberg: Buried Alive is an extremely well-researched piece of work, highly informative and emotionally galvanizing. It has been shown by PBS in the United States, but to date has not been aired by Canadian television. The film probably works best on the TV medium because of its many interviews and its strikingly intimate appeal. This is a fine documentary, one obviously made straight from the heart. See it any way you can.

Joyce Nelson ●

RAOUL WALLENBERG: BURIED ALIVE **d.** David Harel **exec. p.** David J. Yorke **p.** Wayne Arron and David Harel **sc.** Peter Lauterman, David Harel **cam.** David J. Yorke **ed.** Roushelli Goldstein **mus.** Tony Kosinec and Jack Lenz **loc. sd.** John P. Megill **sd. ed.** Chris Pinder **sd. mix.** Joe Grimaldi **res.** Claire Weissman, **colour.** 16 mm, 78 minutes. 1983 **dist.** Astral Films Ltd., 720 King St. West, Apt. 600, Toronto, (416) 364-3894.