



● Carole Laure as *The Surrogate*: more deeds than words

things rolling. It comes when Frank says Lee doesn't like to be touched. So Anouk starts touching her, sexually. How will Lee react to her first sexual touch from another woman? How will Frank react to seeing the woman he cannot arouse being turned on by another? How will Lee react when Frank's hands replace Anouk's? How will she react when the caresses get genital, when tongue replaces finger? What will Frank's attraction to Anouk do to the current situation and to later developments? Can either of them cope with this while it's happening? How will they be changed when it's over? These are dramatic questions central to the development of character and plot and their presence generates a level of tension not often found in sex scenes.

Anouk's next appearance carries the sexual drama forward. She shows up at the apartment with a sample-case in hand, explaining that the surrogate business doesn't pay the rent and wondering if Lee would like to buy some sexy lingerie. Lee isn't home, but Frank is and he's getting hot, hotter still when Anouk shows him the panties she's wearing. The action starts as a cross between a seduction and a tease, then turns violent. Frank rapes Anouk. Or does he? There is equal indication that he has been manipulated into fulfilling a violent fantasy. But Frank is terrified of his own rage. He's left weeping and huddled, not knowing what's happened (and we're not supposed to know either) and wondering what he's turning into. And what will this do to Lee when she finds out?

All this occurs against, and is given weight by, a series of murders, first of random men, then of the couple's friends and associates. We know from the structure that the killer is one of the three principals and that it will be the effects of increasingly experimental sex that

will precipitate the climax and unmasking.

Unfortunately, any but the most naive viewer will guess the killer long before the halfway mark, thanks to Carmody's hamfisted handling of verbal and visual clues and thanks, more importantly, to his rigid adherence to genre cliché. More unfortunately still, Carmody has no idea of how to make his movie move. His dialogue is banal and obvious, his camera placement tries, at best, for the functional, and sometimes misses. Trivial and irrelevant scenes are played out in full, while important ones move by too quickly. The suspense scenes, in particular, are so flat that one suspects Carmody, whose previous experience was as producer on *Porkys I and II* and *Spacehunter*, is only interested in his sexual material.

Which brings us to the most unfortunate thing of all: Carmody can't handle his sex. It's not only that his directorial ineptitude denies us the eroticism that cinema can create, but that his kindergarten-level sexuality just doesn't understand or sympathize with the more non-conformist sexual expressions his script demands. After the standard porno fantasy of Anouk as the horny Avon lady, she next shows up as a dominatrix and, sexually, the picture collapses. What happens is this: Frank arrives home to find Lee bound and gagged in a chair. Anouk, in full leather gear, rushes out and belts him with some kind of ritual baton. He grabs it and breaks it. She puts a knife to Lee's throat and demands a little bootlicking from Frank. He complies to save his wife, but Anouk comes too close. He disarms her and chucks her out. Lee, freed, reveals Anouk was waiting for her when she came home. They conclude she's gone off the deep end. Despite the wardrobe and dialogue, this is not a sex scene; it is straight melodrama from beginning to end and,

as such, a betrayal of the content and direction of the drama that has gone before. It would have taken little to fix the scene: begin with Lee, hands bound and gagged, involved with some kind of apparently consensual SM caresses with Anouk. Bring on Frank; involve him in the scene by way of seduction. Let Lee work the gag out of her mouth and holler for help. Then bring out the knife and run the melodrama. Played that way, the scene would have held the dramatic tension and raised the questions of the earlier scenes, but to do so would have required some understanding of SM as practised by real people and some sympathy for non-conforming sex. Carmody seems to possess neither.

Indeed, he seems inclined to laugh at the sexually different. Jackie Burroughs' cameo, as a middle-aged woman all dressed and ready to play a fantasy as a little girl with a policeman and some ice cream, seems structured for laughs at her expense (we know Hindle is the wrong man, she doesn't). But Burroughs plays the scene with such delight and an utter lack of condescension that the shabbiness of its intentions is at once eclipsed and highlighted.

Much the same occurs with the character of Eric (Jim Bailey), Lee's best friend. He needs to be sexually non-threatening for her, but he's written as a mincing flutney queen with a wholly unnecessary fondness for at-home drag — a typical gay caricature — so that when the script demands he develop a sexual interest in Anouk, the result is total unbelievability. Despite this, Bailey manages to inject some sympathy and real human feeling into the role, as does every other major cast member. Laure and Hindle are competent pros and they give it their all, to good effect. Newcomer Shannon Tweed handles Lee's brittleness and low-key hysteria well enough to suggest that she may grow into a good actress. Watching them work provides the main pleasure, sexual or otherwise, of the movie.

Co-producer, with André Link, John Dunning, is quoted in the press kit to the effect that what interested them in *The Surrogate* was the originality of the idea. If they'd allowed themselves at the same time to become attracted to a talented writer and director, *The Surrogate* could have been a fine addition to a badly neglected genre.

Andrew Dowler ●

THE SURROGATE d./p. Don Carnody exec. p. John Dunning, André Link p. Jim Hanley asst. to p. Oriana Bielawski p. man. Josette Perrotta p. office coord. Irene Litinsky loc. man. François Sylvestre craft serv. George Calamatas loc. scout Jacques Laberge p. acct. Rejane Boudreau bookkeeper Barbara Pecs 1st a.d. Jim Kaufman 2nd a.d. Elizabeth Halko script Marie Theberge sc. Carmody, Robert Geoffrion mus. Daniel Lanois cast. Elite Productions, Vera Miller, Nadia Rona, Rosina Bucci d.o.p. François Protat 1st asst. cam. Yves Drapeau 2nd asst. cam. Michel Bernier stills Piroshka Mihalka sd. man. Stuart French boom Michael Berrie best boy Jean Courteau rigging Jean-Paul Houle elect. Alex Amyot key grip Serge Grenier best boy Robert Grenier trainee Borek Sedivec 3rd grip Gregoire Schmidt art. d. Charles Dunlop asst. art d. Jean Bourret set dresser Normand Sarrazin asst. art dept. Michel Boyer ward. mistress Nicoletta Massone asst. ward. Francesca Chamberland dresser Catarina Chamberland make-up Jillian Chandler daily make-up Micheline Foissy, Kathryn Casault hair Bob Pritchett hair (daily) Christianne Bleau p. assts. Harold Trepanier, Michel Chauvin transp. coord. Neil Allan Bibby drivers Joe Sanchez, Mark Hindle, Philip Stilman ed. Rit Wallis asst. ed. Susan Schneir p.c. Cinepix Inc., Telemetropole Int'l dist. (int'l) Inter-Ocean Film Sales running time: 100 mins. l.p. Art Hindle, Carole Laure, Shannon Tweed, Michael Ironside, Marilyn Lightstone, Jim Bailey.

Ronald Wilson's

Sam Hughes's War

Early in this two-part historical drama, telecast by CBC Nov. 21-22, an aide rushes into Canadian minister of Defence Sam Hughes's office and announces: "Gentleman, we are at war." "Thank God!" says Hughes heartily, "let us pray."

From there on, World War I, the Great War, becomes Sam Hughes's abiding passion, his *raison d'être* as the drama carefully examines the complex personality of this military hero. *Sam Hughes's War* is an excellent vehicle for Gordon Pinsent's talents. His Sam Hughes is a fully realized creation: by turns blustering and pompous, vulnerable and whimpering with martyred self-pity, courageous and stubbornly nationalistic, paranoid and even pathetic. Pinsent's range here is remarkable and the role must be a landmark in his career. But what makes this production work is the subtle edge of irony, even cynicism, that runs right through the drama, carefully, quietly undercutting any simplistic notion of official heroism that such Great Wars give rise to.

Partly, this ironic edge is the result of focussing on the bureaucrats, the officers and politicians working safely behind the scenes of war's grim theatre, rather than detailing the drama of soldiers at the front. Staying mainly inside the boardrooms and offices and Cabinet meetings and Parliamentary arena and private luncheons of these war-time, male bureaucrats is both a fascinating decision and a problematic one. On the one hand, it makes the production very dependent on dialogue and rather visually static and claustrophobic. On the other hand, it is the means for depicting the personal intrigues, the political wheeling and dealing, the infighting of officers, Cabinet ministers, and Honourable Members on-the-make. To a degree, *Sam Hughes's War* becomes somewhat mired in the slough of these interrelationships. It is hard to keep track of all the players, hard to follow all the career-intrigues being advanced, especially when the British contingent of bureaucrats, officers, and politicians becomes included. But the primary relationship is that between Sam Hughes and the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden. Pinsent's volatile Hughes and Douglas Rain's patient Sir Robert play off each other very interestingly, leading up to a crisis of opposing wills that threatens the friendship, their political party, and the Canadian war effort.

But the essentially refined politesse of these personal/political intrigues is contrasted by the occasional, brief scene at the front: scenes that quietly reveal the inferior equipment, the misery and mud of the trenches, the arrogance of the officers, the terrible anonymity of the foot-soldier. One scene stands out: a half-dozen corpses lie caught in the barbed-wire while two commanding officers stroll past the dead soldiers, talking about some abstract matter. In another brief scene, Prime Minister Borden visits the wounded at the front. He stoops down to comfort a soldier whose eyes are bandaged, saying: "Your noble sacrifice will not have been in vain." The nurse replies tersely that the



● Gordon Pinsent as Gen. Sam Hughes: Tory businessman finds war a raison d'être

man can't hear him - his hearing is gone as well.

Through the use of such brief moments from the front, the production subtly but effectively punctures the pomposity of bureaucrats using the war to advance their own political or military careers. This ironic edge keeps an interesting tension at work in the drama, a tension that is especially effective in the portrayal of Sam Hughes. For example, in a shot clearly alluding to the movie *Patton*, Hughes stands in front of the British/Canadian flag, giving a rousing speech about making the Canadian army "500,000 strong." After a slight delay, there is a polite sprinkle of applause for his rousing words. Such non-verbal signifiers recur throughout - a pause, a glance, a bit of music that subtly undercuts Hughes's world-view. At the same time, he emerges as almost larger-than-life: the hero with the tragic flaw. The achievement of *Sam Hughes's War* is that it is able to maintain the creative tension among its various levels of meaning.

I would have liked the role of Max Aitken (James Rankin) to have been more expanded, more clearly defined. As Canada's first press publicist for the war effort, Aitken's political manoeuvrings and insights into the use of film and print for propaganda purposes were clearly pivotal not only for the mobiliza-

tion of the home front, but also for the future directions in which government propaganda would be taken. In this production, Aitken (later, Lord Beaverbrook) remains a somewhat mysterious figure: clearly central to the intrigues, but rather nebulous and undefined in terms of exactly what he does. Had his press role been explored, the dimensions of war-time bureaucracy would have been even more fascinatingly illuminated.

Joyce Nelson ●

SAM HUGHES'S WAR d. Ronald Wilson exec. p. Peter Kelly p. Martin Kinch sc. Jim Burt cam. David Doherty. Ross Menzies, Tom Farquharson co-p. John Delmage, assoc. p. Sharon Keogh, p. asst. Stacey Curtis sc. asst. Jeanette Solomcoe unit man. Jacques Simard cast. Christine Shipton, Tina Neal cost. Hilary Corbett make-up Mario Cacioppo des. Ray Kellar hair. Sandra Petelko p. sec. Dana Mason ed. Peter Evans mus. Richard Bronskill l.p. Gordon Pinsent, Douglas Rain, Rony Van Bridge, Christopher Newton, Richard Donat, Peter Elliott, Mary Charlotte Wilcox, James Rankin, Marigold Charlesworth, Douglas Campbell, Rodger Barton, Raymond Clarke, Desmond Scott, Maurice Evans, Mervyn Blake, Claude Bede, David Gardner, Gillie Fenwick, John Innes, David Fox, David Main, Michel Lefebvre, Mary Charlotte Wilcox, Philip Craig, Herb Rolland, Darcy Dunlop, Leslie Yeo, David Clement, Brendan McKane, Ted Follows, Lewis Gordon, Howard Jerome, Reg Dreger, Herb Field, Anthony Bekenn, George Buza, William Colgate, Sam Malkin, Andrew Lewarne, Tom Rickert, Alan Katz running time: (Part I) 86'32", (Part II) 87'.

Tom Shandel's Walls

Ought one to give a violent sociopath an even break?

The question remains very much open as the humanitarian social worker Joan Tremblay (Andrée Pelletier) slumps to her inevitable, bloody, stop-action death at the end of *Walls*, a low-budget 16mm film based on the famous 1975 hostage-taking by Andy Bruce at the now defunct B.C. Penitentiary. The socio-path in this case is Danny Baker (Winston Rekert), who has been doing stretches of time in "the hole" (solitary confinement) and who, after a brief reprieve to ordinary cell life, possible only because of the exertions of Joan and a humanitarian lawyer (Alan Scarfe), becomes fighting mad when returned there. It is then that he plots and executes his escape attempt, with three other prisoners holding Joan and five other prison staff hostage.

Rekert turns in a good performance as Danny, an intelligent (we are impressed by his reading "The Waste Land" in solitary - not easy with a berserker in the next cell) and, we suspect, misguidedly sincere if brutal drug addict. He is at Western Penitentiary because he slit a guard's belly back East in order to be transferred to this maximum-security institution near his mother, who is hospitalized nearby. Can we say that his heart was in the right place? Danny tells Joan that it is inhumane treatment that has forced him to use violence to get what he wants. This is not hard to believe; scenes of life in the hole show it to be what it no doubt is: psychic torture. Given the horror of his surroundings and the soul-destroying treatment he receives from his guards, it is no wonder that Danny is violent. The question is, how far can he be trusted with more freedom?

- *Walls* can provide no answer, only the suggestion that the solution lies far beyond the penitentiary precincts, in reform of our notions of crime and punishment; the question of what the true function of prison is, whether to punish, detain, or correct, has always been in debate. In the meantime prisons

remain an uneasy mixture of the three, a *pis aller* until we make up our minds, and they are controlled in practice by the wardens and guards who operate them. Just how cruel the guards are is known only to the prisoners, and it is on this point that the effectiveness of *Walls* depends. Unfortunately, some of the film's drama is dissipated in the uncertainty of a single issue: whether the guards did in fact plant drugs in the prisoners' cells in order to have a pretext to send them back to the hole.

The question is important because the answer would tell us whether it is the guards' cruelty or Danny's inability to cooperate that sends him back to solitary and galvanizes him to plot a desperate escape. We hear only in passing, as a throwaway when Joan is talking to another prison official, that the drugs were planted, and there is doubt that she may have been deceived by Danny, to whom she has been growing more attached as the focus of her cause. And so, just whose fault is Danny's final catastrophic eruption? We don't know, and our lack of knowledge prevents us from taking sides, from participating fully.

Christian Bruyere has written a competent screenplay here, wisely steering clear of an improbable love story (although classification officer Mary Steinhäuser was supposed to have been in love with Andy Bruce) and concentrating on a hardhitting, just-the-facts presentation (this viewer had to avert his face from wrist-slashings and countless hypodermic syringes being discharged into elbows). Tom Shandel's direction also has played up the documentary feel of the film, consciously minimizing any glamor that might attach to the lead players as would have done a 1940s Warner Bros. movie of this type. *Walls* is blemished, however, by an aggressively insipid and pervasive musical score by J. Douglas Dodds and Michael Oczko, which makes the film seem needlessly cheap and made-for-TV, and also a reverberant soundtrack in which some of the dialogue is lost. Cinematographer Douglas McKay has done well making the B.C. Pen look almost as dismal as it really was.

In their effort to expose a social problem through a personal drama the makers of *Walls* have been careful, but for this viewer they have in their fastidiousness made a few errors of emphasis. By leaving vague the precise degree of responsibility of Danny and



● Moral dilemmas in *Walls* as Winston Reckert holds Andréée Pelletier hostage