

The Man Who Skied Down Everest

He skis the lower slopes, getting in tune, and the film has some exhilarating shots of him leaping over the steep inclines. Furiously he works out, the air is very thin and dulls the mind and body and Miura fights to keep his strength. The run is eight-thousand feet down, often at 45 degrees and at the bottom is a vast, unexplored crevasse called the bergschrund, and if Miura can't stop before reaching it he'll perish. On the brink of taking off he confesses to feeling like Icarus, flying into the sun, and now understands "the pride of the samurai, challenging something huge." Looming overhead is the wind-whipped summit of Everest. Miura begins his historic run, with a parachute flaring out behind him, and within seconds he's skiing at 100 miles per hour, like a dive-bombing kamakaze pilot. He skis for six-thousand feet then collapses and slides, the skis spinning in the air, the crevasse getting closer. A snow bank breaks his fall and Miura is rescued 200 feet above the bergschrund. The whole operation took less than two minutes.

While there is a degree of excitement in the film, it all builds to a finale that amounts to a resounding zero. The mission took months of preparation, \$700,000, six lives, all to allow one man the thrill of skiing down an inaccessible slope for a couple of minutes. It remains to be seen whether this self-indulgent adventure film will find an audience as the skiing season nears.

David McCaughna

Jan Kadar's

Lies My Father Told Me

A film by: Jan Kadar. **Screenplay:** Ted Allan. **Cinematography:** Paul van der Linden. **Music:** Sol Kaplan. **Sound:** Henri Blondeau. **Editing:** Edward Beyer and Richard Marks. **Performers:** Yossi Yadin, Len Birman, Marilyn Lightstone, Jeffrey Lynas. **Producers:** Anthony Bedrich and Harry Gulkin. **Produced in 1972-1975 by** Pentimento and Pentacle VIII Productions. **Colour:** 35 mm. **Running time:** 104 minutes. **Distribution in Canada:** Astral Films.

St-Urbain St., Montreal, take two. This time, the story is about a young boy and his grandfather, a rag collector. It's the father who wants to make it rich, to get out of the ghetto, and it's once again the streets and lanes of the old Jewish neighborhood which make the film work. It's the right time for nostalgia.

It's difficult to write about the film without being aware of the years, the money, and the patience, which have gone into making it. The producers have ordered retakes years after the original shoot and have been on the verge of releasing it only to withdraw it and start reworking again. The beginning and the end, the role of the father, the entire musical score have all been rewritten in an effort to make

Lies My Father Told Me the best possible film. That the final version will not be acclaimed as Canada's best motion picture is no reflection on the energies and devotion of the people involved in its production.

Ted Allan's screenplay is simple. Little David accompanies his grandfather on his rounds every Sunday, and the two of them with horse and wagon collect rags, clothes and bottles, ending up with lunch on Mount Royal. Grandfather talks about himself and life, and David learns to love and to trust. Going out with Grandfather is the pivot of David's week, and caring for Ferdela, the horse, is what enables David to get from Sunday to Sunday.

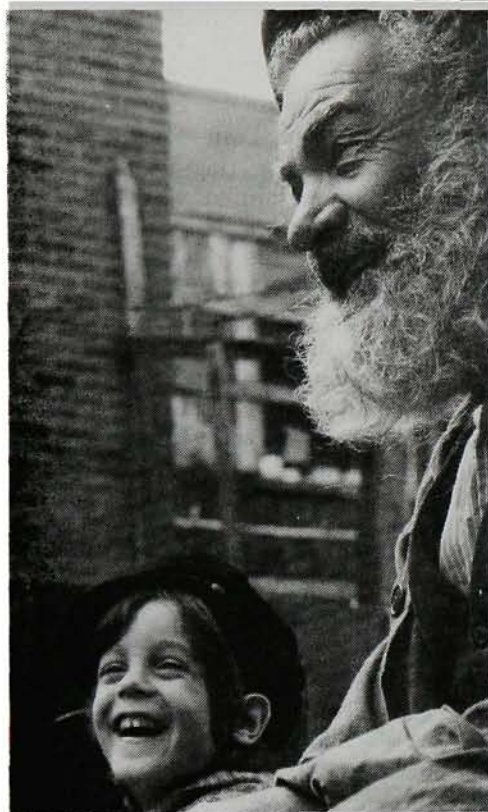
David's father, a "Duddy Kravitz" who can't make it, is increasingly jealous of his father-in-law's influence over the boy. Being a harsh and unloving man, he tries to win David by disrupting the boy's relationship with his grandfather. He talks to the boy but the boy can't understand; his father tells lies. David's mother is protective but ineffectual, and no one can console David once Grandfather is gone.

It's a bitter-sweet story and there are many comic touches, most of them provided by the secondary characters whose apartments surround the courtyard housing the stable. Especially well played are Edna (Carole Lazare), the neighborhood prostitute, Mr. Baumgarten (Ted Allan himself), and little Cleo (Cleo Paskal) who is all of four years old and who runs away with her two scenes.

The principal actors are competent and Marilyn Lightstone is refreshing and gay in her role as Mother. Missing is the psychological depth, the sort of gut feeling which hits home and tells an audience that what they are seeing is all true and not just play-acting.

Academy Award winning Jan Kadar is too important a director to have been responsible for the film.

There is a curious disproportion. **Lies** does not seem as powerful as director Jan Kadar's other films. It is still too long, too slow. The actors are too neat and clean, the colours too bright. And Grandfather is too big. Yossi Yadin who plays the role is tall and strong, a real hero of a man. I couldn't help thinking of that small, frail East European Jew who probably was Ted Allan's grandfather. A smaller man might have communicated the spirituality which was intended; Yadin's physical size seems a barrier to emotional depth. Like the film it-



Lies My Father Told Me

self, the audience is asked to take it on faith, to accept the appearance of feeling.

Yet given these limitations, the film works. Women were in tears at the end, and that's good boxoffice; the maudlin theme song is effective. And this is the sort of film which one is happy to claim as "Canadian". A well produced, thoughtful work with themes which are universal and which will hopefully find a sufficient audience to pay back the faith of the producers.

Connie Tadros

Brian Damude's

Sudden Fury

A film by Brian Damude. **Screenplay:** Brian Damude. **Cinematography:** James B. Kelly. **Music:** Matthew McCauley. **Sound:** Douglas Ganton. **Editing:** David G. Nicholson. **Performers:** Dominic Hogan, Gay Rowan, Dan Hennessey, Hollis McLaren, David Yorston, Eric Clavering, Sean McCann. **Producer:** Ben Caza. **Produced in 1974 by** Films Can. Productions. **Colour:** 16mm. **Running time:** 95 minutes. **Distribution in Canada:** Ambassador Films.

The Canadian Film Development Corp. low-budget programme has allowed a number of highly interesting films to be made; **The Hard Part Begins**, **Montreal Main** and **Bar salon**

immediately spring to mind. While I don't think **Sudden Fury** is as achieved a film as these three, it certainly merits attention and analysis. It is far more of a formula film or a genre film than we have come to expect from the low-budget features, which more often than not have been highly personal statements. Not that Brian Damude's film isn't personal, it's just that it exists more within the conventional commercial framework.

Sudden Fury has a very simple plot and as many probably have not seen it a short summary is worthwhile. The film revolves around a married couple, Fred and Janet, but everything is not well with their relationship. Janet is having an affair and is about to leave her husband, but the two of them are committed to going out of town together one Saturday. Fred, meanwhile, has plans that involve Janet. He wants to build a country hotel cum resort and he needs some of Janet's money as a loan to buy the land. Janet wants no part of it, and in the quarrel that ensues in the car she reveals her infidelity. Fred drives the car off the road in a fit of rage and leaves a seriously injured Janet to die beside this little-travelled country road. A car passes by and its driver, Al, gets out and helps Janet. He has to contend, however, with Fred, who is doing everything possible to obstruct this interloper. Through a series of incidents, three people are eventually left dead, and Al, who only stopped to help, is being accused of the murders, while it looks as if Fred will get off scot-free.

Dealing as it does with one man's madness, and the hideous forces that it can release, **Sudden Fury** bears an uncanny resemblance to John Trent's **Sunday In the Country**. Both films deal with one man attempting to impose his will on a situation and a group of people. Their megalomania is treated in a different way; Adam's in **Sunday** is more fascist than mad, but the forces that they release are just as destructive and violent. Damude's film raises questions concerning justice and its applications, as does Trent's. Al's increasing involvement in the action of the film undergoes significant changes. At first he stops out of humanitarian concern - there has been an accident and he wants to find out who's been hurt. When he discovers an abandoned and badly injured woman he is enraged at the person who has left her. When she dies he vows to kill the hus-

band. Motivated now by revenge and an anger that blinds him, he too turns into a semi-madman. It is only when he kills a farmer's wife (Hollis McLaren) mistaking her for the real villain that the full impact of what he has turned into strikes him. By a gradual process of involvement Al has gradually de-humanised himself to a point where moral attributes of good and evil become blurred.

Sudden Fury is played out on one level as a simple morality play of good versus evil. But evil is seen to be supremely triumphant. As an audience we sympathize with Al and this identification leaves us extremely frustrated. Everything seems to work against his actions and by the end of the film we feel completely impotent. The police assure him that he has nothing to be afraid of if he is telling the truth, but their quizzical incomprehension of what has occurred does nothing to change our secret belief that this is in fact false.

Even more disturbing is the sense I get from **Sudden Fury** (and also from **Sunday In the Country**) that normal people are not equipped to deal with certain violent or uncompromising situations. The farm couple of **Sudden Fury** are continually shown at one step removed from what is going on. They instinctively reach out towards Fred when he appears on their doorstep, bloodied and with his tale of the car crash. They mindlessly accept his interpretation of the accident and treat Al like the real killer. When they gradually realize the truth, it is too late, and both their deaths highlight their inability to deal successfully with what is going on. The tragic thing is whether they could have done anything differently! Even Al is treated in a similar way. By taking up a gun, he confronts violence with violence. Aware of what he is dealing with he is still naive enough to believe that alone he can defeat it.

The other thing I would like to comment on is the role that the farm couple play in the film. They have small roles in comparison to the major characters but this in itself is significant. Theirs is the only 'normal' relationship portrayed in the film. The fact that they are so peripheral, and that they are brutally destroyed says an enormous amount about this film's view of people's relationships.

I started out by saying that **Sudden Fury** was somewhat of a formula film. It is very much an action film and it becomes more and more so throughout