

its length, as the visual passages begin to replace dialogue. One of its weaknesses however is its occasional wordiness. One of the signs of a true master is sensing when an image can be used to replace dialogue, or when dialogue is superfluous to the visuals. Damude has yet to learn this. I only have to think of the opening fifteen minutes or so of Melville's *Le samourai*, where the image communicates everything. The scene that offends and jars me most is when Al stumbles across the crash and finds Janet badly injured still inside the car. Here most obviously the spoken word is used to communicate certain information (the fact that she has been abandoned by her husband), the pace of the film slows, and the tension of the scene is allowed to dissipate. But there is a raw sense of cinema about *Sudden Fury*, so even with its lapses it manages to convey its ideas strongly though crudely.

Piers Handling

David Rothberg's

My Friend Vince

A film by: David Rothberg. **Cinematography:** Howard Alk. **Sound:** Peter Rowe. **Performers:** David Rothberg, Vince, Howard Alk. **Producer:** David Rothberg. **Produced in 1975. Running time:** 40 minutes.

David Rothberg, a young Toronto filmmaker, has made a film which reopens the old question of the honesty and involvement of the filmmaker with his subject, and which answers at least one old question for me, to wit:

What does it look like when during the course of his movie the filmmaker does reveal his own involvement and question his own motivation concerning choice of subject and approach in his work?

In the first portion of this forty minute film Rothberg interrogates Vince, a small time con artist and exploiter of human gullibility whose varied activities range from stealing from stores to conning acquaintances, women and even friends. The more we watch Vince talk of himself and his reasons for what he does, and of his relationships and how they matter to him (intercut with excerpted comments from these friends), the more we see him expose

himself as a poor pathetic bastard with minimal appeal.

But when the film suddenly changes tone, a new layer of truths is revealed. "On Sunday we got drunk," the narrative voice of the filmmaker, David Rothberg, confesses, and with that the suddenly swerving camera, the dedicatedly out-of-focus long close-ups and various inept shots of flashing mike and dipping frame keep us amused as we watch the filmmaker shift from an interviewer to an interviewee and Vince change roles and begin to question him. In fact this jagged camera work, the disconcerting appearance of out-of-focus faces and visible mikes give us also the extra awareness of the presence of the crew and of the actual creation of the film, intensifying the sense of veracity.

A rotund hirsute fellow scrunched in a corner asks a lot of pertinent and uncomfortable questions of Rothberg. This man is Howard Alk, himself a filmmaker of perception and reputation, and his questions are good. For a while one wonders uncomfortably if the film is going to degenerate into a collegiate bull-session on truth-in-art etcetera, but after a laggy spot where the audience squirms as much from boredom as the discomfiture of these almost unanswerable questions, the film picks up again.

Under interrogation Rothberg is as vulnerable as Vince, and we begin to see that anyone suffers from this inspection. Rothberg appears however to enjoy this public self-examination, and attempts to discover in front of us just what his real motives were, and understand who is exploiting whom and why. His explanation of his changed attitude toward Vince activates the film again, and keeps the investigation in a crooked lively present tense. Finally, confounded and tired, attacked by Alk and questioned by Vince himself, Rothberg withdraws saying "I've nothing more to say". "That's showbiz," responds Vince, bringing the film to an appropriate ironic close.

Technically adequate, rather overlong but basically full of interesting material, the film undoubtedly is an excellent prod for leading students and groups into worthwhile discussions of motives and integrity in film, of the use and misuse of documentary style, and perhaps of the hidden values in some of these investigations.

"I know now I'm not going to call the film *My Friend Vince*," says Rothberg, and the audience, aware of the title, chuckles happily.

Natalie Edwards

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