

## Claude Pinoteau's Jigsaw

p.c. Cinévidéo (Mtl.), Les Films Ariane - F.R. 3 (Paris) exec. p. Joseph F. Beaubien p. Alexander Mnouchkine, Georges Dancigers, Denis Héroux d. Claude Pinoteau sc. Jean-Claude Carrière, Claude Pinoteau adapt. Charles Israel art.d. Earl Preston d.ph. Jean Boffety sd. Richard Lightstone mus. Claude Bolling ed. Marie-Joseph Yoyotte l.p. Lino Ventura, Angie Dickinson, Laurent Malet, Chris Wiggins, Hollis McLaren, R.H. Thompson, Donald Pleasence, Lisa Pelikan, Murray Westgate, Olivier Guespin, Peter Hicks col. Eastman colour, 35mm length 105 min. year 1979 dist. Ciné 360 Inc. (Fr.-version), Creswin Films (Eng.-version)

As the English title suggests, **Jigsaw** is supposed to be a film of puzzles. As the French title, **L'homme en colère** (The Angry Man) implies, it is supposed to be an action-adventure story. The Canadian-French co-production has some impressive persons associated with it; director Claude Pinoteau and star Lino Ventura previously collaborated on a taut, low-key drama called **The Silent One**. Co-writer Jean-Claude Carrière has worked with the legendary Luis Bunuel on **The Discrete Charm of the Bourgeoisie**, **The Phantom of Liberty**, and **That Obscure Object of Desire**. But, sad to say, that talent is largely wasted here.

The film begins promisingly enough. A mysterious courier, smuggling himself across the border from New York to Quebec is killed by the man who meets him. Shortly thereafter, the murderer himself dies in a shoot-out with Provincial Police near Mirabel Airport. Soon, retired Air France pilot Romain Duprey (Ventura) arrives in Montreal to claim the body, whom the Mounted Police have told him is his son Julien. But when Duprey and the stolid Colonel McKenzie (Chris Wiggins) view the corpse, it turns out not be Julien at all. So the puzzle begins. For McKenzie, it is to find an illegal immigrant and break a smuggling ring with links to the Mafia. For Duprey, the situation is more elemental: it is his opportunity to find his son — with whom he has been at odds since his wife's tragic death — and be reconciled with him.

Decent films have been made from worse dross than this, and, to his credit, Lino Ventura tries hard to make something out of his role, much as he did in Jack Gold's misbegotten **The Medusa Touch**. But Pinoteau gives him little help. Instead, he throws him from situation to situation

in a somewhat frantic attempt to keep the plot moving. Thus, Duprey is beaten up outside a disco for two reasons — so that composer Claude Bolling can throw in a 'number,' and so that Duprey can be introduced to the romantic interest, a rather inept waitress named Karen (Angie Dickinson), into whose car he is dumped.

That Pinoteau does not really know how to keep the story on course is clear from this, and he continues to lead characters off and on at random. McKenzie and his men pop up from time to time, as does a sleazy character named Rumpelmeyer (a perfect name for Donald Pleasence), who is also looking for the younger Duprey. Meanwhile, Romain's search for Julien leads him to the surly weightlifter/pinball arcade clerk Keefer Bork, and his pregnant girlfriend Nancy. After some perfunctory fisticuffs are exchanged, Romain's off to the Montreal Forum, where he finds Julien's girlfriend, Anne, working a concession in the stands.

The film might have been salvaged from its lack of focus if the actors had been given some guidance in their characters; but except for Ventura, Wiggins and Pleasence, everyone in the cast seems at a loss. R.H. Thompson looks incongruous as the muscleman Bork, while Hollis McLaren as Nancy, and Angie Dickinson as Karen, are out of place and embarrassed. American actress Lisa Pel-

kan, who was impressive in **Julia** as Vanessa Redgrave's teenage self, finds the part of Anne a straitjacket — not the least helped by the quirky dubbing, from which Dickinson also suffers. To make matters worse, when Julien does appear, he is played with exceptional woodiness by Laurent Malet, who helped sink **Blood Relatives** as Lisa Langlois' incestuous cousin.

In **Jigsaw**, Claude Pinoteau has been unable to reconcile the conflicts between the film's thriller format and his own inclination to deal with characterization. Like other French directors who have recently come to North America — Le-louch, Malle, Chabrol, Gessner, Matalon — he has had trouble adapting his personal style to the formats which are expected in the commercial world of North America. The problems of illegal immigrants in Canada, and the influence of organized crime in a city like Montreal are themes which beg for telling on the screen. Anyone, however, who wants to find out about the underworld fringes that Pinoteau deals with, would be better advised to try and catch the Vitale-Moyle-Lack trilogy of **Montreal Main**, **East End Hustle** and **The Rubber Gun**, rather than **Jigsaw**. Here, the pieces do not fit together.

Paul Costabile



Romain (Lino Ventura) roughing up Kevin (R.H. Thompson) for concealing information in **Jigsaw**