While most of us would travel south in search of a Philadelphia slum, or across the sea for a European setting, a film location scout defies geography to find these places in his own backyard. What does he care that Westmount is really nowhere near West Germany, and Os- goode Hall is actually York University's Law School and not the palatial estate of minor royalty? For us, if by magic, a film scout can transform the location, the history, the story into the setting, the atmosphere, the ambiance which even a visual conception of the director's exact look for the city intersection, or a night club interior.

When it comes down to the actual scouting there is one easy way to find locations, and that is through location services which offer catalogue-style shopping for sites. Unfortunately, while take-out locations may be the ultimate in convenience, they rarely meet the gourmet standards of feature film scouts. Ray Kruszynski who owns the company, and has a responsibility to both the client, and the location manager. He says that through spending of money to make the city look like somewhere else, writers are now actually setting scripts in Toronto.

The film Large sought for this summer is a good example of the changing situation. In Misdemeanor, Quadrant's 4.5 million buck thriller about a murdered young couple, Toronto was cast as itself, but large had to find Spanish sites to stand in for Moroccan locations because local authorities were too eager to cooperate in the making of a film about their dope industry. Location scouting involves circumventing balking foreign governments, and simulate locales, the job of tracking down anywhere from a dozen to a hundred sites in a city with literally thousands of potential locations is a challenge few can resist. In fact, the Directors Guild of Canada has only seventeen full-time location managers (also known as unit managers) on its membership list. Considering that there were no registered location managers in Canada fifteen years ago, this figure does signify a healthy growth in the profession.

While this new breed is fast becoming indispensable, many people - even within the film industry - are unaware of the particulars of location management. Like the tip of an iceberg, the conspicuous part of a unit manager's job are only one aspect of a larger, unperceived labour.

Weeks or even months before a film is shot the location manager is brought in to go over the script, to get a sense of what and where the locations will be.大型的电影公司 "is a traumatic situation, even at the best of times." He also points out that the location manager is a liaison between the owner and the film company, the location manager's responsibility to both parties. Large takes that responsibility seriously and tries to deal with owners with the same respect, not to mention the philosophy of a saint-sized golden rules with property owners." he says I treat them the way I would like to be treated. After all, I'm leading an invasion of fifty strangers into their home, their castle.”

Few people realize how big and burdensome the logistics of invasion will be. A small film like Large's cost at $35,000 - less than 1% of the total expenses. That $35,000 is deceptively low because most locations are free; major corporations sometimes can't be bothered with the contract and releases, so let production companies shoot in their offices without charge. Location shooting in Canada is very fortunate, because it only includes Misdemeanor location in an empty carpet factory was used for three weeks of shooting, and only cost $2000.

With an eye for improvisation and an ear for the right price, the location scout goes hunting for the perfect place to shoot.

Some locations can even be had for nothing. Parks and streets are usually free from location fees, some can't be bothered with the contract and releases, so let production companies shoot in their offices without charge. Location shooting in Canada is very fortunate, because it only includes Misdemeanor location in an empty carpet factory was used for three weeks of shooting, and only cost $2000.
other times, the government bureaucracy is strangling. For those godless filmmakers who insist on shooting on Sundays, for example, there's a sticky little law called the Lord's Day Alliance Act that has to be considered. Fortunately, many provincial and municipal governments have set up film liaison offices to help location managers get past the red tape and onto the celluloid. In Toronto, Naish McHugh handles the various film permits through City Hall, while similar duties are performed by Maurice St-Pierre in Montreal and George Madden in Vancouver. British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Ontario also have government film consultants who offer a variety of location services for free.

Despite all the government help, location management is still fraught with its share of occupational hazards. Many of them crop up during shooting because the unit manager is in charge of all problems related to the actual site once the cast and crew move onto it. Exterior locations are especially hard to handle, says Large, "because you do not have the control of four walls."

Out of necessity Large has learned to build his own walls because he, more than most, knows just how thin the line is between disaster and control. Several years ago he was handed the toughest location assignment of his career. The film was *Titleshot*. The scene was a bank robbery and high speed police chase which ended in a spectacular car crash. The setting was the corner of Dundas Street and Spadina Avenue — Toronto's busiest, most frantic intersection.

The logistics of controlling traffic and crowds, not to mention the chase and accident, were staggering and it took Large three months to set up the location. Filming had to be cleared with the transit commission, the police, Metro roads and the city public works department. At first, the request to film there was flatly denied; the authorities thought the stunt promoted dangerous driving and would of itself be dangerous to the public. One by one Large convinced the powers that be, that all possible safety precautions would be taken (including ambulances and firetrucks on standby), and that with the intersection closed, the stunt could be done safely.

At the eleventh hour final permission came through: the streets were to be closed the following day, first for a three-minute rehearsal, and then again for three minutes of filming. Everything that was humanly possible was done to control the shoot. But then, something happened that not even a location manager could prevent: the worst blizzard of the winter paralyzed the city — and control slid into disaster like an avalanche down a mountainside. Luckily, the disaster was of the melting sort, and two weeks later the scene was shot without a hitch.

Like a roller coaster ride without seat belts, the location manager's job is filled with ups and downs — and no guarantees; except perhaps, that nothing ever happens the way it is planned. For some, there are challenges and rewards on the hairpin curves and steepening slopes. For others, there are better rides in the midway of illusions — better and safer rides.

Naish McHugh serves as liaison for cinematographer Michael Molloy and producer George Mendeluk as they pick locations for Kidnapping of the President.