

## Harry Sutherland's Track Two

The making of documentary films seems to be something that we English-speaking Canadians have always done well. Perhaps it is the intrinsic order of the genre that has appealed to our well-regimented, non-revolutionary minds. In any case, the early years of the National Film Board laid the ground work and the wealth of talent that sprung up from it was remarkable. Of course, that venerable institution isn't what it used to be but the best of the CBC and the feature film industry can thank it for much of the talent it deployed. Feature length documentaries are uncommon these days and independent feature length documentaries more uncommon still. It is a pleasure to see that rare bird come home to roost in the film *Track Two* which premiered July 1 in Toronto at the "Doing It" conference offered by the city's gay community.

*Track Two* is a chronicle of the raid executed by Toronto's police on the city's homosexual bath houses in which over three hundred men were booked on the rather quaint charges of being 'found-ins of a bawdy house'. It being the second largest mass arrest in Canadian history, right-minded liberals will, of course, cluck in approval that a film has been made to document the event. The subject matter, it would appear, is ideal for the documentary format and so one can comfortably sit back and appreciate *Track Two* for what it's worth. Generally speaking, the work is a well-conceived and executed piece of film-

making. In it the famous are comfortably intermingled with the not-so-famous. We have the ever-raunchy Carol Pope on the sound track to give the film its much needed sense of rhythm. The camera-work by Leo Zourdoumis is first-class, as is the sound-work by Karin Michael and Gordon Keith's editing is downright superb. Yes, a very nice film indeed.

Nice, however, is not the word to appropriately describe what this film has, in reality, achieved. To begin, ask yourself: how often has the film industry, or anyone else for that matter, confronted this city's well-entrenched police department and demanded that that it be held accountable for its behavior. It is, indeed, a very telling point about the vibrancy of filmmaking that no sooner had the ink dried on our newly signed constitution than its first test should have been made on the issue of film censorship. All of which brings us back to *Track Two*. The fact that this film was even made is remarkable. The fact that anyone had the vision and the courage to make it is downright astounding. For that feat alone KLS Communications must be thanked. Editor Gordon Keith, writer/researcher Jack Lemmon, and above all director Harry Sutherland must take the credit. What they have achieved is more than a good film that deserves our respect simply because it got made. *Track Two* is a piece of raunchy filmmaking. It sweats, it curses, and most importantly, it lives.

The talking-head syndrome is, perhaps, the most deceptively simple way to make this sort of film. And *Track Two* does have some stellar talking heads. We get former mayor John Sewell, who was, himself, burned by the police, the usually grim Margaret Atwood in a surprisingly light-hearted frame of mind,

the ever-present June Callwood, and that old curmudgeon, Laurier LaPierre. Lesser filmmakers would have been satisfied with that lineup but not so Harry Sutherland. What makes *Track Two* so vital is its remarkable sense of immediacy. Every frame of this film fairly reeks of the "you are there" intimacy that hallmarked the emergence of *cinéma vérité*. No sooner had the raids taken place than Harry Sutherland's crew was on the streets. In *Track Two* one is treated to the awesome spectacle of complacent, well-meaning Torontonians yelling and screaming their fool heads off. The film's focal point is the angry mass rally held at Yonge and Wellesley in which many thousands of homosexuals and, certainly, heterosexuals stood up and demanded that the right to privacy and self-determination of all people be respected.

This is documentary filmmaking at its most powerful. Like it or not you are at the centre of this demonstration and you better take a stand. When was the last time a Canadian film evoked that kind of response from you? *Not a Love Story - A Film About Pornography* did - and *Track Two* does. No wishy-washy notions of giving due attention to everyone's point of view here. This is a film that has - gasp! - a most decided point of view. Says Harry Sutherland in the press release, "Gays have been making films about straights for a long time. It's time they made one about themselves." This is a minority film that attacks its subject matter so confrontationally that you really don't get a chance to complain - until it's all over. For that very reason some people will see *Track Two* and condemn it for being a recruitment film. In reality, however, it does something even more precarious than that. It goes to the very heart and soul of demo-

cracy and asks to put its money where its mouth is. A remarkable achievement for any film.

The difficulties that the Toronto police have had with all minorities has always been a sore point that no one really has ever wanted to talk about. *Track Two* does. It is to this film's credit that such diverse members of the black community as school board trustee Fran Endicott and the wife of Albert Johnson, killed by Toronto's police, are on hand to hit home the issue of civil liberties. Thankfully, this film doesn't smack of the smug, self-congratulatory, "aren't you lucky you're not one of them," subversiveness expressed by the Kastners in *Sharing The Secret*. Actually, the CBC has seen *Track Two* and, of course, rejected it with the disclaimer, "The CBC has done gays to death." Truer words have never been spoken.

Is *Track Two* a good film? Perhaps. Is it a great film? Most definitely. Are there difficulties? Decidedly. One wonders why the police were not interviewed in this film. Their short appearance, via a television talk-show, is, curiously enough, one of this film's funniest and more telling moments. The makers of *Track Two* didn't need to worry about gunning down the police. As this segment proved, all they needed to do was give them a shovel and let them dig their own grave. More of this self-assurance would certainly have been in order in this film. Was a re-enactment of the bath house raids really necessary? It is an awkwardly directed moment in the film that comes across feeling manipulative and self-serving - a veritable sore thumb amidst all of this film's beautiful, ugly truth. The very essence of *cinéma vérité* is certainly the unguarded moment. No such moment appears in *Track Two*. There is a fair amount of talking and expostulating but curiously enough no one individual ever bares his heart and soul.

What is truly remarkable is the collective anger of this film. What *Track Two* does achieve is capturing the response of a whole community that wasn't, before the raids, much of a community at all. As that community took shape so too did this film. That, in itself, must be a documentary filmmaker's dream come true. Toronto-the-Good has gone bad and someone was there to click the shutter. *Track Two* has given this town its first black eye. The feature film industry has spent the better part of the last few years pretending that Toronto was really New York or Dallas. For anyone who cares, *Track Two* lets it be known that Toronto is Toronto and has portrayed it, warts and all, through the eyes of one of its most underground minorities. Yes indeed, this is courageous filmmaking. *Track Two* offers to film audiences a much needed lesson in life that is scarcely to be found anywhere else. Canadian filmmakers, please take note.

David Eames ●

● *Track Two* producers Jack Lemmon, Harry Sutherland and Gordon Keith



**TRACK TWO** p. Gordon Keith, Jack Lemmon. Harry Sutherland assoc. p. Karin Michael & Harry Sutherland d. of re-enactment Jack Lemmon ed. Gordon Keith cam. Leo Zourdoumis sd. Karin Michael mus. Carole Pope, Kevan Staples ac/research Jack Lemmon add. ph. Martin Duckworth, Ron Greaves, Nadine Humenick add. sd. Ian Blackburn, Gordon Keith assist. cam. Nadine Humenick, Albert Lee sd. trans. Larry Johnson, Sound Techniques Ltd. narr. Susan Huycke neg. cutter May Bishop sd. mix Film House dancer Lim add. tech. assist. Kelly Pykerman, Paul Boyde pub. Patricia Michael stills Norman Hatton, Ted Hebbes, The Body Politic Collective, The Toronto Sun, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Rick Amis p.c. K.L.S. running time 90 min. colour, 35mm.