**Jean-Guy Noël's Contrecoeur**

Jean-Guy Noël's Contrecoeur seems full of interesting ideas and totally bereft of some means to pull them together. His tale of three misfits who band together for a trip to a small Quebec town follows a more or less conventional narrative, and then doesn't resolve it: that's by no means a cardinal sin, but Contrecoeur doesn't seem sure of its own intentions and ends up confusing the spectator. That's a flat-out problem.

The story follows Blanche (Monique Mercure) and Fabienne (Anouk Simard) as they make plans to visit the town of Contrecoeur where they've left behind some fairly complex family ties. Theo (Maurice Podbrey) is Fabienne's father and Blanche's ex-husband, while the alcoholic Roger (Gilbert Sicotte) is Fabienne's ex-husband and Blanche's son. The two women take Fabienne's boyfriend Jean-Paul up on his offer to drive them to Contrecoeur in his oil tanker, during a long snowbound night on the highway, the three play power games and uncover some truths - most significant is the fact that Jean-Paul is dying of multiple sclerosis. Blanche has insisted from the outset that she is travelling to meet spring, an ongoing, mid-winter obsession that Fabienne finds rather amusing. But she capitulates to it after their presence in Contrecoeur sets off a chain of emotional events: the two women strike out on the highway again with a sickly Jean-Paul between them.

It's possible that Contrecoeur is intended to work as a somewhat complex mood piece, but it doesn't: finally, there's so much dramatic baggage here that you're trying to piece together the plot most of the time. Noël has enlisted the

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**Lucien Brouillard**

Bruno Carrière's first dramatic feature jumps a fair number of hurdles on sheer energy of intention. This character study cum political thriller is at times both overly ambitious and a little muddled, but that never seems to dull its spirit. Carrière displays an instinct for canny casting and solid film craft, both of which combine to pull him over some tough dramatic terrain. Lucien Brouillard is mostly about the confrontation between personal ambition and self-sacrifice, but it gleans both a kind of gentle grace, and the calibre of performance and the tough dramatic terrain.

Lucien Brouillard is the centre of the movie, and he holds it with absolute conviction. Strong support, at an extraordinary Pierre Mignot measures up, his gentle grace, a pitch for dramatic intrigue at the end. Carrière is a convincing director of both actors and narrative, and he's packaged the movie with clean, unpretentious technique. But there is a sour note here. As to how the camerawork of the extraordinary Pierre Mignot measures up, I'm hard-pressed to say: the distributors opted to meet a tight release date by screening a badly-timed test print for the press. Many of the night exteriors were positively illegible, and that does strike one as being painfully unfair to both Carrière and his really top-notch DOP.

**Anne Reiter**
Peter Raymont’s
Prisoners of Debt: Inside the Global Banking Crisis

It is necessarily part of the business of a banker to maintain appearances and to profess a conventional respectability which taxes less than human. It is so much their stock-in-trade that their position should not be questioned, that they do not even question it themselves until it is too late. Like the honest citizens they are, they feel a proper indignation at the perils of the wicked world in which they live — when the perils mature; but they do not foresee them. A Banker’s Geography: The idea is absurd! I only wish there were one!

John Maynard Keynes

The great virtue of Peter Raymont’s Prisoners of Debt: Inside the Global Banking Crisis, the hour-long National Board CBC documentary co-production which the CBC aired March 28, is that it so thoroughly delivers on the correctness of J.M. Keynes’ observation. The conventional respectability, the lack of questioning, the smugness of proper indignation; it’s all there. Unfortunately, that’s all that there is, and that’s the problem.

In the ’20s and ’30s, the imagery of the previous worldwide banking crisis was, at the very least, dramatic. Bankers leapt from the tops of tall buildings as banks went bankrupt and money literally disappeared. But in today’s planned Depression, with its pockets of social misery effectively contained or transferred to distant, developing lands whose problems are too far removed to be affecting, the imagery of crisis is simply not there.

In the absence of the visually extraordinary, then, the camera eye contents itself with the mundane. The same for this visual blandness must rest with Raymont and co-director/writer, financial editor Robert Collison, tempered by the fact that credit is two for having ticked a highly abstract and incomprehensively complex subject. And with all due respect to Keynes, what may in the ’30s have seemed like the absurd notion of a banker’s conspiracy, has by the ’80s, given the general rise of Absurdity, become far more probable. As Raymont’s film unwittingly proves.

It is the Bank of Montreal’s consider-