



Twenty-year old stunt girl, Karen Pike of Toronto, plunges to her nine-year-old "death" in *Prom Night*

interesting shooting. After directing *The Hard Part Begins* and more recently *Blood and Guts*, it has given him the opportunity to approach a story with the challenge of unusual angle compositions in order to build a significant amount of terror for his audience. Sections of the film have been directed with a broad slash

of colour and violence, reminiscent of gruesome headlines splashed across national tabloids. What Lynch hopes to come up with is a terror picture that is sheer entertainment. A firm believer that people go to the theatres to experience a wide range of purging emotion, he has constructed a thriller that will be immensely entertaining as well as a box office success. The director feels that time is the most important element that you could buy on any shoot. "The script is relatively complex (seventeen principle performers) and requires a lot of sensitivity during the filming." With a budget of 1.5 million dollars, and only a 28 day shooting schedule, I don't think that he had quite the time he would have liked. None the less, he was very satisfied with the special effects and impressed with the performances of his actors. "Usually

there is at least one weak performance, but from what I've seen in the rushes all our characters are strong."

Finally, the bullhorn pierces through the darkness and a hush falls over the crew. The van has been thoroughly checked to avoid mishap. It has been about an hour and a half since the last attempt at this very tricky effect. When Steve Wright is satisfied that his crew and equipment are ready he again calls for action. A small jeep propels the van over the cliff at about 30 miles per hour. For a brief moment the van is airborne, a graceful free fall, then it bursts into an incredible corollary of colour and sound. The dark cliffside is suddenly aflame as the twisted wreck tumbles into the black lake. Bob New was so close, I think he singed his eyebrows.

Larry Mooré

Final Assignment

d. Paul Almond **asst. d.** Pedro Ganbol, Pierre Poirier **sc.** Mark Rosen **ph.** John Coquillon **p. designer** Harry Pottle **a.d.** René Petit **cost.** Nicoletta Massoni **cast.** Danny Haussman **l.p.** Burgess Meredith, Geneviève Bujold, Michael York, Brooke Adams, Colline Dewhurst **exec. p.** James Shavik, Arnold Kopelson **p.** Larry Hertzog **co-p.** Gail Thomson **loc. man.** Cary Ross **p. man.** Monique Mercier **asst. p. man.** Daniel Louis **p. sec.** Jacqueline Wanner **p.c.** Cinema One, 1979 **unit pub.** Denise DiNovi **pub.** David Novek, Berger and Asso. **world sales:** Inter Ocean Films (L.A.), Ann Feinberg.

"Has anybody here seen Geneviève?"
 "Where's our Brezhnev? We need him on the set!"
 "We already have a Russian advisor."
 "She's in her trailer."
 "What? Who cast a woman as Party Secretary?"
 "No, not Brezhnev: Geneviève! Geneviève is in her trailer!"
 "Brezhnev, Geneviève, what's the difference? A tyrant's a tyrant."
 "Brezhnev is on the phone, he's been waylaid at the Saydie Bronfman Center."
 "What, is he defecting to Israel?"
 "No, he got lost."
 "I'll say he got lost."
 "Where's Geneviève?"
 "Who cares? Send a driver to pick up Brezhnev, and also ten boxes of croissants and two dozen bananas and uh... oh yes, and today's script."
 "Which one?"
 "Draft number 14478.0092"

"..."

"Well, get on it!"

"We don't have any goffers left."

"Paul wants Geneviève!"

"Tell him to take a taxi."

"But her trailer's just around the back."

"Tell her to take a walk."

"Hey, you, with the baby face."

"Me?"

"Yea, you. Here take my car and go get Brezhnev at the Saydie Bronfman."

"I'm sorry, but I can't."

"A refusenik, eh? Well, take a walk."

"You can't fire me, I'm James Shavik, the executive producer!"

"Weren't you fired last week?"

"No, that was Narizzano."

"Where's Geneviève?"

"Quiet, please, we're rehearsing."

"Well, James, old buddy, heh-heh-heh, did you hear the one about the juicer, the grip and the scriptgirl?"

"Shhh!!!"

"Where's Geneviève?"

So began another day on the set of *Final Assignment*, a \$6.5 million political thriller produced by Cinema One of Montreal. For a change, the crew began the day well-rested, fresh from two days of R&R following a hectic weekend of shooting in Mont Tremblant, north of Montreal. But it was not only the last weekend that had been hectic for the cast and crew of *Final Assignment*. The film had been beset with problems since its



An arch Geneviève Bujold listens to Burgess Meredith on their **Final Assignment**

inception: like a reportedly ill-prepared and talky script, coupled with a shooting schedule involving several distant locations that would blow the budget through the roof and imperil the film's certification as a Canadian feature (since most of the costs of the original shooting plan would have been incurred — and paid for — abroad). These problems, hampering the production's smooth sailing, eventually culminated in the ill-mannered dismissal of director Silvio Narizzano, a week into the shooting. The producers became embroiled with the Directors Guild of Canada over the affair, eventually resolving it with a cash settlement to Narizzano.

Amid all this brouhaha, Paul Almond was parachuted in, presumably behind enemy lines, with forty-eight hour's notice. Rising to the occasion with characteristic style, Almond has, by all accounts, turned a patchwork flick into something approaching cinema. "If it weren't for him," one crew member was heard to say, "this production would be flat on its ass. He's really the only one holding it together." On this particular morning, Almond alternated between conducting rehearsals, setting up the afternoon's work, calling his agent, directing shots, and re-writing the script from start to finish.

The day's work — with the oak panelled interiors of Montreal's neoclassical city hall doubling as a Kremlin annex — involved a scene in which a Russian press attaché lectures foreign journalists — Geneviève Bujold, Michael York and

Richard Gabourie -- on the virtues of abiding by Soviet rules of press decorum. Renowned D.O.P. John Coquillon bemusedly watched over a crew of grips and assistants as they tried to keep up with a constantly-revised shooting schedule. For many **Final Assignment** is their baptism of fire; with the present proliferation of productions, Montreal's pool of experienced technicians has been seriously depleted and many positions have been filled by first-timers. While not a bad thing in itself, it does make for a certain amount of confusion on the set. Nevertheless, things were readied on time, with the principals being called for rehearsals.

Michael York, one of the more congenial and self-contained persons on the set, paced about snapping his fingers and going over his lines. Geneviève Bujold, in marked contrast, displayed an inordinate interest in her fingernails and a propensity for taking refuge behind the nearest closed door. These mannerisms aside, the rehearsals went smoothly and the scene was ready for the camera. But, sensing that the cast of extras had stiffened in their seats, Almond suddenly called a time-out and instructed his charges to walk around the room and relax. This exercise evidently paid off with the next scene being shot in three takes.

The general impression from the day's shoot was that the production has been able to keep its head above the water in spite of the constant script changes. Explained one of the crew, "The script's

been changed so much, who knows what we're doing today." This is substantiated by the fact that on one occasion the crew scouted a location for a Soviet detention center scene at ten o'clock one morning and, by two o'clock in the afternoon were already shooting the scene. In all fairness, such an incident also reflects the crew's efficiency and ability to work quickly. Nevertheless, most of the work is still ahead. One can only hope that Almond and his crew will pull it off. So far, the prognosis is encouraging. Meanwhile...

"I'm ready for the staircase shot."

"That's great, but we're only doing that this afternoon."

"Hey, I've got today's script."

"It's okay, we rewrote it while you were gone."

"They didn't have ten boxes of croissants."

"So where's Brezhnev?"

"I thought he took a taxi."

"Think again."

René Balcer



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