



● **Incubus** love-interest Kerrie Keane gets her share of ludicrous dialogue

chance – thoroughly blown – at depth.

Back in the '60s, when AIP and Hammer were doing this sort of supernatural thriller regularly, elements like context, plot and motivation (even the demon in *Incubus* seems confused about what it's doing: if it's an instrument of revenge, why is it killing all those random teens?) were firmly and plainly in place and, for the most part, they didn't matter; they were only there to provide a springboard for the willing suspension of disbelief that makes the scary stuff work.

About the only virtue that writer George Franklin (working from Ray Russell's novel) has carried over from those dear, dead days is that of conducting the mayhem and serious mutilation off-screen. The plot, of course, necessitates it, but Hough has turned necessity into virtue and the killings are classics of their type.

Which brings us back to facet ii): this picture is making money in the States, and one wonders why. It is possible, though not likely, that there's nothing else out there at the moment to satisfy the teenage lust for blood and gore. But *Incubus* is short on those elements, anyway. It's also possible that the notion

**INCUBUS** Presented by Edward L. Montoro. A Marc Boyman production in assoc. with Mark Films and John M. Eckert Prods. **exec. p.** Stephen J. Friedman **p.** Marc Boyman, John M. Eckert **d.** John Hough **asst. to Mr. Eckert** Philippa King **p. man.** Mary Kahn **p. des.** Edwin Watkins **unit/loc. man.** David Coatsworth **p. sec.** Sue Murdoch **p. acct.** Rosemary McCarty **asst. acct.** Jean MacDougall **sp. efx. d.** Colin Chilvers **asst. d.** David Hood, Louise Casselman, Robert Wertheimer **sc.** George Franklin, based on the novel by Ray Russell **d.o.p.** Albert J. Dunk **cam. op.** Harold Ortenburger **cam. asst.** Neil Seale (1st), Kerry Smart (2nd) **cont.** Lisa Wilder **art d.** Elinor Fairless Hawksley, Tom Doherty, Susan Longmire **set d.** Hilton Rosemarin, Robert James (asst.), Jaro Dick (asst.) **props.** Dan Conley, Doug Shambrook (asst.) **ward.** Erla Lank (head), Mary McLeod (co-ord.), Ann Russell (asst.) **gaffer** Howie Galbraith **best boy** Brian Montague **key grip** Jon Hackett **2nd grip** Jom Kraufer **make-up sup.** Kathy Southern **sp. efx.** Martin Malivoire **Incubus des.** by Les Edwards **Incubus created** by Maureen Sweeney **music** Stanley Myers **sd.** David Lee **sd. ed.** Brian French **stunt co-ord.** Dwayne McLean **ed.** George Appleby, John Schofield (1st asst.), Michael Fury (2nd) **stills** Horst Ehrlich **casting** Claire Walker/Deirdre Bowen **extras** Peter Lavender **p.c.** Incubus Prod., Inc./Guardian Trust Company **dist.** Pan Canadian **colour** 35mm **running time** 90 min. **lp.** John Cassavetes, John Ireland, Kerrie Keane, Helen Hughes, Duncan McIntosh, Erin Flannery, Harvey Atkin, Harry Ditson, Mitch Martin, Matt Birman, Beverley Cooper, Brian Young, Barbara Franklin, Wes Lee, Neil Dainard, Jennifer Leak, Denise Ferguson, Jack Van Evera, Helen Udy, Lisa Bunting, Michele Davros, Jeffery Mappin, James Bearden, Alan Bridle, Jude Benny, Jeremy Hole, Brian Montague, Dirk McLean.

we've been fed for years, that the teenage audience is actively hostile to anything but graphic bloodletting, is false and that they do, in fact, crave a little more in the way of storytelling and cinematic competence. For, however bad *Incubus* is, it is still incalculably better than the utter, flat mindlessness of *Friday the 13th* and its army of clones.

Andrew Dowler ●

## "D.S. Everett's" Running Brave

"D.S. Everett's" *Running Brave*, the story of Billy Mills, the American Indian who won the gold medal in the 10,000 metre run at the Tokyo Olympics, is a film forced to deal with the conventions of three different genres.

First are the time-honoured conventions of the *Bildungsroman*, where the young man goes out into the world to face the encroachments of impending adulthood.

These conventions overlap with the second genre, the alien confronting white society after a life of isolation among his own people. While more literary than cinematic, these conventions then double back onto the *Bildungsroman* aspects of the story, adding the layers of institutional hatred embedded not simply within individuals but within society as well.

The third set of conventions are those of the sports-hero biography, and these are most peculiar of all. In a sports movie, heroes never win because of their skills – indeed, the level of their skills is not relevant. What is important is that they demonstrate character by overcoming adversity. Thus we celebrate *The Stratton Story* (with Jimmy Stewart) because Stratton pitched after losing a leg, Lou Gehrig (*Pride of the Yankees*) for his sudden and unexpected eloquence on his retirement because of illness, and George Gipp not because he was the first Notre Dame runner to gain more than a hundred yards in a game, but because of his famous death-bed speech ("Win for the...").

What is silly about the sports genre, in celebrating people who overcome adversity, is that it loses sight of the fact that sport is about one team having more

talent than the other. I doubt that anyone would be interested in a film about the great superbowl teams of Miami and Pittsburgh, because there, no one had to show character – they had to go out and stomp their enemies, hardly an encouragement for those who like to see underdogs rise up.

*Running Brave*, directed by Don Shebib (who removed his name from the film after it was recut against his wishes), tries to do its best by all three sets of conventions, and actually manages to hit most of the notes it wants.

Young Billy Mills leaves the reservation to attend the University of Kansas on a track scholarship. He is leaving behind the desperate poverty of his early life for a world where natively suited white people thrust business cards at him during suburban garden parties. After winning his first few runs, facing minor prejudice, and getting a white girlfriend (and fiancée) he is forced, after a visit from his brother, to confront the conflicted nature of his Indian roots and white lifestyle, and returns to the reservation. After his brother's suicide, he joins the Marines and makes the Olympic team. The rest, as they say, is history.

Among the picture's merits, improbable as it may seem, is a startling performance by Robby Benson as Billy Mills. Benson, who has managed in the past 10 years to become an all-purpose symbol of sensitive youth, be it WASP (*One on One*), Jewish (*The Chosen*), Chicano (*Walk Proud*) and now Indian. He is usually so sensitive that he is less a character than a quivering mass, less a human than Bambi after sensitivity training. In *Running Brave*, however, Benson gives a performance of startling strength and what looks like authentic feeling. *Running Brave* is far and away the best film he's made and the best performance he's given, and I thought, until I saw it, that it was probably a better film than he deserved.

The film's other virtues include a genuine pictorial sense of how the west looks, and Shebib's patented gift for the depiction of masculine camaraderie in both the university and reservation scenes.

Where *Running Brave* proves somewhat lacking, however, seems to be in the issue of how society's institutionalized racism affects the Indians – and they are the only visible minority in our society that faces what is legitimately institutionalized discrimination, namely, the reservation system. There is no "Bureau of Jewish Affairs" in Canada or the United States, and one can imagine the outcry if there was.

The paternalism displayed toward the Indian seems to result in a programming of failure in the people. The percentage of Indians who succeed in the white world is much lower than that of other minorities, and this has something to do with the impact of white society on Indian culture over the past three hundred years.

It seems to me that the alternatives available to Indians establish a no-win situation. On the one hand, they can stay on or return to the reservation, where even if they become successful and respected, to the outside world they are still just "reservation Indians." On the other, they can leave and confront the prejudices and splendours of white society, the lying promises of middle-class suburbs and TV commercials. In the white world, success and failure seem to be drawn in such absolute terms, that even if an Indian becomes successful – able to support himself and a family in reasonable comfort in the white world – the true success of our world almost invariably is closed to him, in large part because of the denial of educational opportunities. He has the frustrations of failure without the compensating comfort of his ethnically rooted society.

This seems an area that no fiction film

● Robby Benson startles as *Running Brave's* Billy Mills





about Indians has never successfully addressed, and perhaps it was the wish of the Ermineskin Indians of Alberta (who financed the picture out of oil earnings) to depict an Indian Rocky rather than someone defeated by the conflicts inherent in dealing with white society as an alien. It may not even be proper to criticize a reasonably well-made, inspirational film for not being something it was never meant to be. Yet it is a film where the issues are at best slightly fogged, and a clear exposition of these contradictions would seem to be something needed, not by Indians, who understand them all too well, but by whites, who don't understand them at all.

John Harkness ●

**RUNNING BRAVE\*** d. D.S. Everett p. Ira Englander assoc. p. Maurice Wolfe sc. Henry Bean and Shirl Hendryx d.o.p. François Protat music Mike Post p. des. Carol Spier sup. ed. Peter Zinner, A.C.E. p. man. Don Buchsbaum p. exec. Martha Moran 1st a. d. Martin Walters p. co-ord. Angela Heald ed. Tony Lower, Earle Herdan casting Mike Fenton and Jane Feinberg, A.S.C.D., Marci Liroff bus. affairs J. Wilton Littlechild, Douglas McLeod, Dennis Gavin cam. op. Cyrus Block 1st asst. cam. Theo Eleseder 2nd asst. cam. Christopher J. Harris unit man. Nick Gray 2nd a.d. Mac Bradden 3rd a.d. Bill Mizel, Deborah Lefaive, Karen Gruson sc. sup. Christine Wilson p. audit. Shirley J. Gill p. acct. Linda Jeffery-Ludlow art d. acct. Wendy P. Kraft asst. acct. Lyn Lucibello art d. Barbara Dunphy asst. art d. Alfred ward. des. Wendy Hudolin asst. ward. des. Christopher Ryan ward sup. Trish Keating ward. assts. Linda Langdon, Tish Monaghan, Nancy Englander seamstress Joan Olsen set dec. Rose-Marie McSherry, Jim Erickson, Jacques Bradette asst. set dec. Tedd Kuchera, Don Mackenzie, Daniel Bradette prop. master Hilton Rosemarin asst. props. Ian Thomas prop. buyer Shirley Inget head make-up Phyllis Newman make-up Marlen Schneider head hair. James Brown hair Donna Bis sd. mix. Rob Young boom Graham Crowell gaffer John Berrie best boy Randy Tomiuk elect. Don Metz, Martin Wilde gen. op. Rodger Dean key grip Dave Humphreys best boy Brian Kuchera grips Richard M. Allen, Christopher Tate, Clarence Brown const. man. Brian Cockroft head carp. Dee Embree asst. head carp. Bruce Robinson, Martin Shostak carp. Michael Ellsworth, Peter Gerrie, Christopher Good, Cindy Gordon head scenic painter Nick Kosonic, Patricia Mackenzie (asst.) scenic painters James McAteer, Brent Lane, Barbara Becker, Sylvie Bouchard, Laurie Dobbie, Michael Heinrich, Linda Peltari graphic artist John Blackie draftsman Dan Davis sketch art. Nancy Pearce creative cons. Dorothea Moore track seg. const. "Bill" Easton res. Michael Date, Mark Trahan cast. Cda. Deirdre Bowen loc. cast. Bette Chadwick pub. Mahoney/Wasserman & Associates unit rep. Richard Leary loc. pub. Jami Drake stills Joseph Lederer transp. co-ord. Don Retzer driver capt. Nick Kuchera drivers Dennis Fitzgerald, Blake Patterson, Barry Kraft, Alan Wightmore, John Adshead, Avery King, Eddie Washington, George Prabucki, Ann McGaw picture vehicles John McEwan wranglers Norm Edge, Duane Edge loc. man. David McAree, Glenn Ludlow, Brian Ross office p. asst. Norm Fassbender p. sec. Donna Waring art dept. trainee Liz Amsden cast. p. assts. Roseline Richardson, Sandra Cowan p. trainees Milton McDougall, Charlene Pearce, Tracy Galbraith craft service Bill Gawryluk mus. sup. Don Perry mus. ed. Allan K. Rosen for La Da Productions 1st asst. ed. Bev Neal 2nd asst. ed. Robin Leigh post-p. creative sd. Neiman-Tillar Associates sd. re-rec. Ryder Sound Services Inc. re-rec. mixers Gary C. Bourgeois, C.A.S., Neil Brody, C.A.S., Robert L. Harman, C.A.S., T.A. Moore, Jr., C.A.S. titles/opt. efx. Modern Film Effects p.c. Englander Productions in association with the Ermineskin Band running time 105 min. dist. Paramount Pictures l.p. Robby Benson, Pat Hingle, Claudia Cron, Jeff McCracken, August Schellenberg, Denis Lacroix, Graham Greene, Kendall Smith, George Clutesi, Margo Kane, Derek Campbell, Maurice Wolfe, Albert Angus, Barbara Blackhorse, Carmen Wolfe, William Berry, Kaye Corbett, John Littlechild, Tantoo Martin, Gail Omeasoo, Billy Runsabove, Seymour Eaglespeaker, Maurice Wolfe, Merrill Dendoff, the Ermineskin band, Michael J. Reynolds, Chris Judge, Paul Hubbard, Jack Ackroyd, Tommy Banks, Clare Drake, Rob Roy, Graham MacPherson, Francis Damberger, Ray Kelly, Thomas Peacock, Barbara Reese, Douglas Marquardt, Bonar Bain, Donna Devore, Wendell Smith, Daryl Menard, Greg Coyes, Kim Maser, Walter David, Bryan Hall, Greg Rogers, Christopher Gaze, William Fisher, Fred Keating, Brendan Hughes, Will Reese, Harvey Haugen.

\* Not a certified Canadian film.

## David Steinberg's Going Berserk

*Going Berserk* feels like a deliberate throwback to the studio comedies of the Forties, to the later Marx brothers, Abbott and Costello, or the Crosby-Hope *Road* pictures. Two buddies, John Candy as John Bourignon "of the Mellonville Bourignons", the comic, and Joe Flaherty as Chick Leff (a great Forties name), the straightman, find themselves surrounded by a horde of skilled comic actors and propelled forward by a loose thriller plot that's really nothing but a rack to hang gags on - culties want to brainwash John into killing his future father-in-law.

But, if the product is pure '40s, the method is pure '80s. "Candy... used his improvisational knowledge constantly, with virtually every scene altered from the original script," says Universal's press kit, before going on to suggest that virtually every other member of the cast did the same thing.

Now, while it's true that the Marx brothers, Abbot and Costello and Crosby-Hope all improvised to one degree or another, they had one big advantage Candy and company lack; by the time they stepped before the cameras, their comic personae were already in place and fully developed. For the writers, this meant that they had something to write to. Gags could be tailored specifically to, say, Harpo and legitimately thrown out because "the character wouldn't do that." The actors also had, in addition to the writers on the film, the work of all the other writers who, through the years, had contributed to the fund of gags and, thus, to the eventual definition of the comic personae. Finally, through years of performing in character, the actors had a fund of thoroughly proven material and an ingrained knowledge of how to get laughs with simple, character-defining gestures and reactions; think of Groucho's eyebrows. In short, they had a firm base to improvise from.

Candy and Flaherty don't. This is not to denigrate their skills, nor those of co-star Eugene Levy and co-writer-director David Steinberg, all of whom have excellent track records. But, to the best of my knowledge, Candy and Flaherty

have never played John and Chick before and it shows. The details of stance, mannerism and intonation that could have lifted *Going Berserk's* flatter moments simply aren't there, with the result that the characters very often disappear or, worse, turn into somebody else. It breaks the flow and turns the movie into a collection of loosely-related bits, some of which work and some of which don't.

Candy suffers from this far more than Flaherty, but only because he's on screen much more. Though structurally set up as the buddy and straightman, Flaherty disappears early on and only reappears sporadically and in a supporting role, which is a pity, because Flaherty's hustling hipster, had he developed, would have been a great foil to Candy's affable do-gooder.

Nor is there any doubt that Candy and Flaherty could have developed first-rate comic characters. They've proven that on *SCTV* with, respectively, Johnny LaRue and Guy Caballero. *SCTV* fans who recall Johnny LaRue's drunk, dying-in-the-gutter-on-Christmas-Eve scene from a couple of seasons ago have a wonderful example of Candy's ability to improvise from a base, for I have been reliably informed that LaRue's almost-five-minute bathetic tirade was not scripted, but improvised by Candy on the spot.

But to do it, he relied on a character both developed over time and written - and he hasn't got it there. Co-writers Steinberg and Dana Olsen (two seasons on *Laverne & Shirley*, two as-yet unreleased features) repeatedly set up scenes that show Candy as pacifistic and cowardly, then turn around and make him the instigator of deliberate violence. The contrast between Candy delivering a '60s peace-and-love speech to warring bikers and punks, then going out and intentionally trashing their bikes with his car is funny enough in itself. But everybody seems to have forgotten that the two extremes have to co-exist in one character and that even bigger laughs could have been built by letting us see the spirit in which Candy wreaks his havoc and how he reacts to it afterwards. But it's all done without a single reaction shot.

Of course, reaction shots are more the director's province than the writer's, but Steinberg is not a very good director. Though he usually knows where to put the camera for a simple, unobstructed view of the action, his pacing is terrible.

The sequence that begins with Candy

leaving his drums to protect a male stripper from ardent female fans and ends with Candy diving headlong into the now-enraged mob moves like a dirge. Event, pause, event, pause, event, pause. With none of the events seeming to grow from the ones before, one can almost see the actors off-screen, waiting to respond to the director's belated cues.

That sequence at least has a climax. Others don't and, while bad or non-climaxes are an expected and understandable part of live improv comedy, they are unforgivable in a scripted film. The dinner sequence - Candy being introduced to his rich, loony, disapproving future in-laws - could have been a classic and it begins well, with each character brightly introduced, Candy struggling to stay awake and Chick bringing a monumentally tacky hooker as his date. Then it just stops. The promised chaos never materializes and I was left feeling angry and cheated.

All of this is not to say that *Going Berserk* is not funny. At times it's very funny. The *SCTV*-like parodies, "Kung Fu U." and "Father Knows Best", with Flaherty as a whip-wielding Jim Anderson and Candy as the Beaver, are hilarious. So are Pat Hingle as the senator who greets his family with the sort of well-chosen, personalized words he'd use at a fund-raiser full of strangers, Dixie Carter as the cultie who lapses into blank verse in praise of her chief's spirituality only to bump into him stuffing his face and Murphy Dunne as the drug-crazed public defender. In fact, one of the best things about *Going Berserk* is that just about everybody, right down to the extras, gets a crack at being funny.

Candy is fine, too, scene by scene. He's got good timing, a fine line in pudding-faced sincerity and a good physical sense, best displayed when he's being jerked about while handcuffed to a man making love on the other side of a door.

It's just that, lacking a persona, he isn't nearly as funny as he could have been and, lacking better or more writers (comedy writing is the only writing I know where more can equal better), neither is the movie.

It occurs to me that, with just a few changes, this could stand as a review of *Strange Brew*, but I think John and Chick may have more potential than Bob and Doug. So, I'd like to make a suggestion, on the off-chance that producer Claude Héroux reads this: send

● John Candy and Eugene Levy, in appropriate get-up, reminisce about their school days in *Going Berserk*

