

The director's 'pouvoir intime'

by Farid Barsoum

The last day of shooting of a major motion picture is always one of mixed emotions for cast, crew and all those people involved in the production of a film. Relief is compounded by fatigue and the last day of shooting *Pouvoir Intime* was certainly no exception.

On a cool early June night, in the parking lot of an old warehouse in Montreal's Point St-Charles area, the cast and crew of *Pouvoir Intime* were assembled on location for the final night of production of this psychological thriller.

To make the situation even more tense, this was also the last possible day of shooting, with close to 10 shots still to be filmed. The tension was reflected on the faces of all the crew members as, maintaining their professionalism, they fought back their eagerness to "wrap". The pressure was most obvious on the director of photography, Guy Dufaux, and on first assistant director Alain Chartrand, both of whom ran around furiously preparing scenes, camera angles and lightings. In fact, the only person on the set who was, or appeared to be, completely relaxed and in complete control of his emotions was the film's director, Yves Simoneau.

Simoneau, at 29, is considerably experienced for his age. He already has three feature-length films to his credit, a documentary entitled *Pourquoi Monsieur Zolock s'intéressait-il à la bande dessinée?*, and two fiction films, *Les Célébrations* and *Les Yeux rouges*, as well as several television commercials.

His control of the hectic pressure of the busy night of shooting was clearly a

reflection of Simoneau's experience. He understood that, if he panicked, the rest of the crew would soon follow and productivity would falter. So, Simoneau walked steadily from set-up to set-up and from scene to scene maintaining an expression of serenity.

What was very clear from Simoneau's cool was that he had a great deal of confidence in his crew. He would arrive on the scene knowing that everything was ready and waiting for his call of "action." The crew, in return, responded to the director's confidence.

"This was not always the case," Simoneau told Cinema Canada, "I have a very particular way of doing things. I like to have the *mise-en-scène* adapted for the camera and not the camera adapted for the *mise-en-scène*. At first they would always tell me that this was not the way to do things. But when they saw the rushes, they understood what I was striving for."

Control is really the name of the game for Simoneau. His technique of filmmaking requires that everything be perfectly well-planned, prepared and executed. "I don't like to use master shots," says Simoneau, "So nothing can be improvised within a scene, not the camera, not the acting."

Simoneau, however, does not seem to be bothered by taking risks. "Making a film like *Pouvoir Intime*, a psychological thriller, is risky in itself," explains Simoneau, "This is why there are so few thrillers being made in Quebec. The text has to be perfect, the mechanics of the story have to be just right, and it is a very expensive type of film to produce. Very few of the province's producers are willing to invest in such a risky endeavour."

Simoneau, who had originally conceived *Pouvoir Intime* and wrote the

screenplay with the film's leading actor, Pierre Curzi, succeeded in getting the right people interested in the project. Claude Bonin of Les Films Vision 4 inc. and Rober Frappier of the National Film Board accepted to co-produce the film. With the financial assistance of Telefilm Canada's Broadcasting Fund, Radio Canada and the Société Générale du Cinéma, Simoneau was able to put together a \$1.7 million budget.

"It is good to see these organizations getting involved in such a film," explains Simoneau. "Their support has been tremendous. What people don't understand, however, is that \$1.7 million is really very little to make this type of film. We have to make many sacrifices and still make it look like a multi-million dollar production. All this," continues Simoneau, "made the making of *Pouvoir Intime* quite a challenge for all involved."

"The future of the film industry in Quebec and even in Canada as a whole," Simoneau argues, "depends on the taking of risks by filmmakers, producers

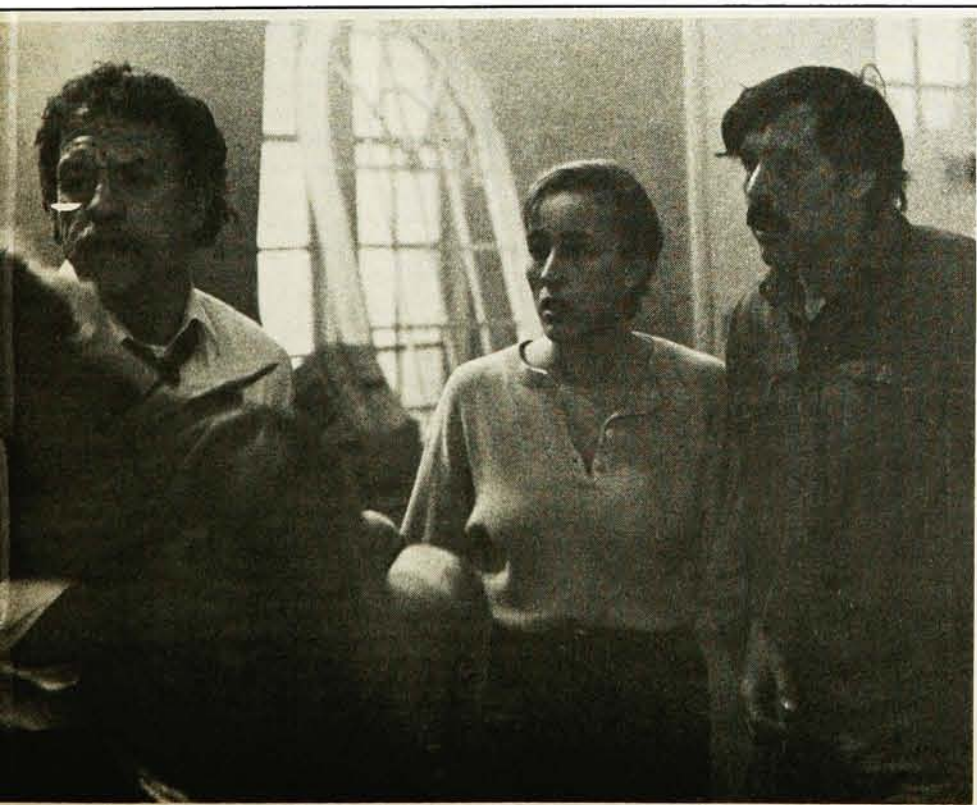
and investors. They have to strive towards creating the best film industry in the world. It is useless to simply let the province's or the country's films wallow in the mass of the international film market."

Simoneau described *Pouvoir Intime* as accessible to a universal audience, not just aimed at Montrealers or Quebecers. "This is the road Quebec's filmmakers will have to take," says Simoneau, "to attain success on an internationally competitive scale. We cannot gain anything with purely nationalistic films any more."

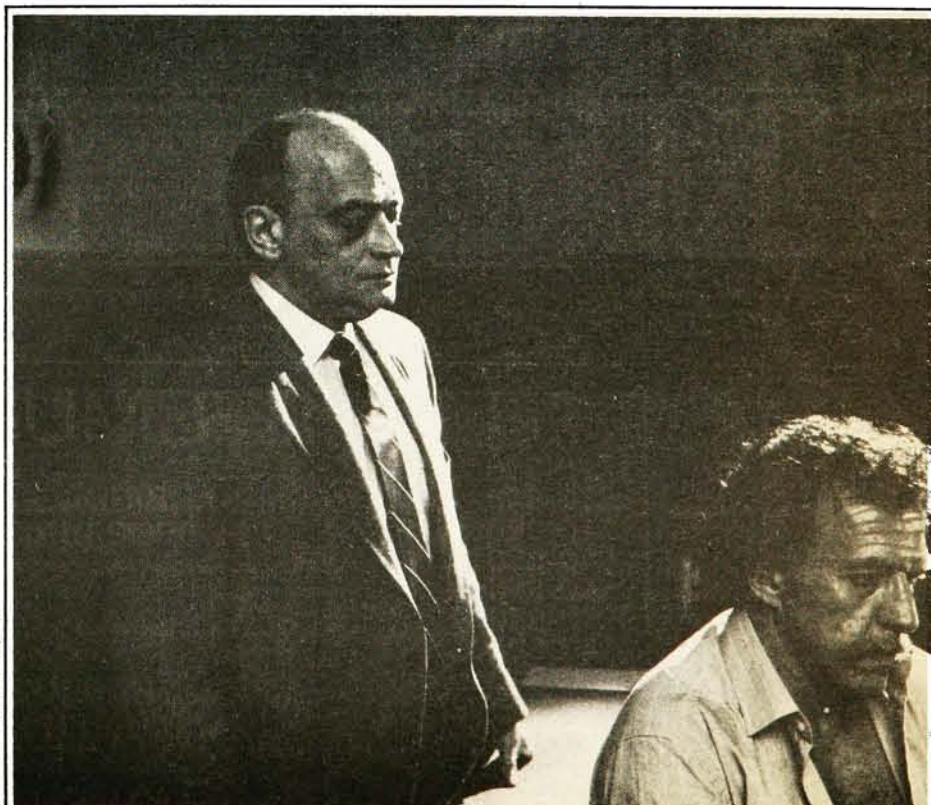
The confidence Simoneau displayed during the last night of shooting of *Pouvoir Intime* is reflective of his attitude towards the film's, as well as his own, future. He clearly anticipates financial as well as critical success with his latest film, now in post-production. If Simoneau can control the fate of *Pouvoir Intime* as well as he did its production, his confidence may prove to be well-founded.



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● After the Brink's robbery, a shoot-out



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