

Robyn Wilson's
Moving Day

Ever since she played the small town kid swallowed up by a heartless Chicago in 1971's *T.R. Baskin*, I can't help but feel responsible for Candice Bergen. A consistently underrated performer, she is so achingly vulnerable in *Baskin* that late-show screenings still find me shamelessly blurting: "Why don't you try someplace nice, like Vancouver?"

With her latest role in the locally shot *Moving Day* - a sweet and oddly touching story of a family's refusal to fall apart - it's almost as if that same girl took my telepathic advice only to find that, even in the best of places, life can offer more than a few curves.

As benefits a co-operative effort between the CBC, PBS and Vancouver's Zorah Productions, the setting is nebulously bi-coastal. For the purposes of PBS, where *Moving Day* is scheduled to air this fall, Bergen's Barbara Hartman could easily be the kind of wife and mother bred on the tennis courts of Beverly Hills - a gracefully aging blonde who can still afford to look hip in leather bomber jackets and cashmere sweaters tastefully edged with frolicking lambs.

Vancouver natives tuned in to the CBC's *Lies From Lotus Land* on March 14 would immediately have recognized the character as indigenous to the tranquil streets of Kerrisdale or Shaunessey. But, as the series title so aptly suggests, paradise has its own particular deceptions.

After living in the same house for over 20 years, the divorced Barbara is packing up to head for Albuquerque. It is a tribute to Bergen's skills that, even though Barbara is well-off and destined for a place that magazines like *Vanity Fair* consider rustically chic, she immediately garners our sympathy.

In fact, *Moving Day*, which Barbara dryly labels "two of the most chilling words in the English language," is graced with one of the most appealing casts I've ever seen in 30 minutes of television.

Bruno Gerussi's performance as Harry Picardo, a wheezy moving man who has trouble negotiating half a dozen stairs, is nothing less than a comic gem. After 15 years of watching Gerussi be supremely capable on the *Beachcombers*, it's sheer pleasure to hear those Stratford tones puffing: "I always get nervous we won't find the house."

Vancouver's Ted Stidder, blessed with a face that has all the folds of a

favourite pillow, turns in a moving performance as Barbara's live-in father. Facing an approaching senility, foreshadowed by the habit of watering a plastic plant, Stidder's Fred Sapstead somehow manages to be both dignified and undeniably charming. The scene where Fred explains to Barbara that his sanity doesn't stand a chance outside the familiar surroundings of home quietly cuts through the heart, a feat two-hour features don't often achieve.

We even understand the return of Barbara's ex-husband Charlie, played with admirable restraint by Jackson Davies. Like Bergen, Davies speaks with his eyes. One look at the two of them on the porch swing and we know Charlie realizes he's been a jerk.

Much of the credit must go to director Sandy Wilson who brings the same subtlety to *Moving Day* that made *My American Cousin* such an evocative experience. This, despite the fact that Bernard Slade's script is littered with the standard trappings of sitcom - crashing pianos, pregnant daughters and brawny sons who long to join the ballet.

While Slade has a wonderful way with dialogue, he still hasn't managed to forget he cut his teeth on shows like *Bewitched* and the *Flying Nun*. Play his work as broadly as it dictates, and you're asking for easy laughs and even easier solutions. Not even performers as skilled as Jack Lemmon and Dudley Moore have been able to avoid milking his lines.

In the hands of a lesser director, *Moving Day* could've been little more than an unusually loud game of musical chairs. Instead, Wilson opts for the gentle truth. In half an hour, we get what Slade has always wanted in previous work and never quite managed to achieve. People we care about going through enough sweet pain to make us all long for a happy ending.

As Harry Picardo says, "Don't tell me there's a season for everything... I happen to like spring." Spring is the season everyone who worked on *Moving Day* deserves.

John Lekich •

MOVING DAY sc. Bernard Slade d. Sandy Wilson lp. Candice Bergen, Bruno Gerussi, Jackson Davies, Ted Stidder, Kitty Lester, Laura White, K.C. Reaves, Janne Mortil, Alex Bruhanski d.o.p. David Geddes cast. d. Sid Kozak art d. Lawrence Collett cost. design Brigitte Schweickardt a.d. Peter Dashkewych cont. Sally Gardner cam. David Geddes sd. Hans Fousek graph. design Steve Osborne gaffer Amir Mohammed key grip Pat Paterson props. Bert Hilkman sp. fx. John Sleep make-up Imelda Bain-Parlin m. Brian Tate story ed. Karen Peterson ed. Ron Ireland sd. ed. Marc Benoit colourists George Vipond, Achim Kapitzka prod. sec. T.C. Trowsdale co-ord. Holly, Fitzhardinge-Aviles, Joyce Tinnion loc. man. Liz Dichmont prod. man. Garth Fowlie, Joe Battista assoc. p. Crawford Hawkins prod. acc. Norman Farrell post prod. Post Haste Video post. prod. p. David Dewar p. Ed Richardson line p. Derek Gardner exec. p. for CBC Philip Keatley produced by Zorah Productions Inc. in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (KCET), Los Angeles. Colour, 30 min.

• Candice Bergen, Jackson Davies



• Chloé Sainte Marie - Skybolt

Gilles Carle's
Skybolt

Skybolt, the English version of *La Guêpe*, focusses on Chloé Richard (Chloé Sainte-Marie), a young career woman working as a pilot, who avenges the death of her two children following the acquittal of an unscrupulous billionaire charged with manslaughter and drunk driving. Despite its dramatic potential, it is one of the most banal, simple-minded and incoherent films ever produced in Québec.

Structurally, the film is a hodge-podge. Combining escapist, Hollywood-style fiction with social commentary on the contradictions of modern life, *Skybolt* falls short on all counts. In lines such as "Hm, is this Montreal or Quebec City?" and "Welcome to America, Mrs. Cook," it fails to clarify whether it is national or continental. There is nothing to indicate that it was shot in the Eastern Townships, let alone in Canada. In a desperate attempt to generalize, *Skybolt* succeeds in trivializing career women, drunk drivers, pedophiles and the plight of aboriginal people. (Although Carle's previous films address the contradictory nature of Québécois society, there is no evidence in this film that he has set up an ironic or critical distance from his characters.)

Whatever intrigue the film might have had, is destroyed by its maddening, shallow-minded obviousness: billionaire Steven Cook commenting on business ethics ("To get ahead, you gotta have a crooked lawyer"); Louis on Cook's acquittal ("You know what that means? In America, billionaires never go to prison"); and, finally, Cook on cheating the legal system ("That's what money is all about. But that doesn't mean that I did it all on purpose"). This is social commentary?

Perhaps the most dangerous example of this infantile reasoning is Chloé's acceptance of her own culpability in the death of her two children: "You know why they're not with us anymore? Because I was busy with exams when I should have been watching them... Such a fool, a mother who wants to become a pilot. You should have stopped me, tied me up, not let me out - put me in chains." (And this, from a director concerned with the right of individuals to free themselves from the dominant ideology!)

Melodrama notwithstanding, the implications behind such words must be addressed. It appears that the destruction of the Richard family is due more to the parents' separation, and specifically to Chloé's selfishness, than to the drunk driver. When Chloé decides to escape to the rural milieu of Louis' strawberry farm, there is no indication of whether or not she will find personal happiness. The plot shifts from loose ends to dead ends...

Unfortunately, Carle tries to be all things to all people. The result is confusion and contradiction. Had it not been for his track record, *Skybolt* might have been grounded before it got into the theatres.

Ed Matthews •

SKYBOLT (English version: La Guêpe) d./sc. Gilles Carle sc. Camille Coudari, Catherine Hermaty-Vieille d.o.p. Guy Dufaux sd. Patrick Rousseau art d. Jocelyn Joly asst. art. d. Raymond Dupuis costumes Nicole Pelletier ed. Michel Arcand sd. ed. Marie Hamelin, Alain Belhumeur or. m. Osvaldo Montes prod. man. Lorraine Richard 1st a.d. Carle Delaroché-Vernet 2nd a.d. Louis Philippe Rochon 1st asst. cam. Yves Drapeau 2nd asst. cam. Nicolas Marion trainee Louise Pepin cont. Marie La Haye dec. Diane Gauthier asst. Francois Gaston, Simon Fauteux props Ronald Fauteux ext. props Simon La Haye set props Patrice Bengle asst. props. Ian Lavoie make-up Nicole Lapierre asst. make-up Lucille Demers, Christiane Fattori, Viviane Marchand hair Alain Thiboutot asst. Robert Leblanc, Alain Moreau loc. man. Luc Martineau asst. Bernard Vincent prod. co-ord. Nicole Hilareguy or. mus. Osvaldo Montes mus. dir Jimmy Tanaka bandoneon Arturo Penon orchestration Richard Gregoire "Partons" composed and interpreted by Francois Guy gaffer Daniel Chretien c. Normand Viau, Andre Sheridan, Manal Hassib key grip Yvon Boudrias grip Jean-Pierre Lamarche, Sylvain Bergevin boom Veronique Gabillaud, Claude La Haye 1st asst. ed. Marie Hamelin 2nd asst. Florence Moureaux 1st asst. sd. ed. Patricia Tassinari art depts. co-ord Francois Paille construction co-ord Claude Gingras carpenters Adrien Lachance, Andre Ratelle, Bertrand Rousseau asst. ward. Sylvie Rochon dresser Sophie Beasse seamstress Enrica Ponzini prod. asst. Marc Beaulieu, Pierre Guillard, Claude Laflamme, Martine Carle, Bernard Rodrigue, Christiane Lacroix trainee Carole Demers double Manon Dessertine pilots Denis Bernier co-ord. car crash J.J. Makaro stunts. Gaston Perrault, David Rigby acc. Hélène Aubin, Louise Deslauriers, Louise Dupre vehicle man. Fernand Boudrias Challenger (Canadair) sup. shoot Gordon Tottle sp.fx. Bureau de la Magie enr. ext. spfx. David Hinks assts. Charles-Henri Duclos, Pierre Rivard front screen proj. National Film Board of Canada, Roger Martin, Eric Chamberlain SECOND UNIT d.o.p. Jean-Charles Tremblay 1st asst. Pierre Dupeppe video Francois Floquet add. shots Louis de Ernsted assts. Yvan Brunet, Philippe Martel neg. ed. Negbec sd. fx. Ken Page mix Michel Descombes, So-nolab Inc. asst. Andre Gagnon stills Lyne Charlebois pub. Pierre Brosseau cam. Panavision Canada lab Bellevue-Pathé Quebec Inc post. synch. Cinelume l.p. Chloé Sainte-Marie, Warren Peace, Donald Pilon, Ethne Grimes, Claude Gauthier, Gilbert Turp, Paul Buissonneau, Guy Godin, Louis Spritzer, Alain Villeneuve, Gabrielle Mathieu, Xavier Panaccio, Gabriel Panaccio, Len Watt, Jacques Tourangeau, Reynald Bouchard, Jean-Pierre Cartier, Coarlie Davidson, Yvon Sarrazin, Bruno Arseneault, Maxime Vanasse, Richard Lemire, Yves Dubreuil, Paule Ducharme colour 35mm running time 93 min. A Via Le Monde François Floquet Inc. production in association with Les Film Gilles Carle Inc. with participation from Telefilm Canada, La Société Générale du Cinéma du Québec, La Société Radio-Canada and Les Productions Karim Inc.