Jackie Burroughs: No, I haven't. Really.

I really love, apart from the fact that it I was a childbeater, a really good childbeater. Beat the shit out of those kids.

What Jackie really is is one of the half-dozen nearest people on the planet. She is more fun to interview than anyone I know, because she honestly does not seem to care what people think about her and will say anything. And there is no one I would rather be with at a dull industry function.

After I made Note for a Dove, I immediately sank into obscurity. There's those two, then I disappeared, so those years in between don't count.

Then I made Conflict Comedy, in 1972, which you may never have heard of. It cost the NFB a great deal of money. It's been very dull – I didn't do anything until The Grey Fox.

For people my age. I don't know. Mostly, I've always doing things, even when that actor has won an award for her various appearances on stage, television and screen.

Despite her stellar work under Robin Phillips at Stratford in the mid-'70s, Burroughs did little film work during the tax shelter production boom, emerging only in the early '80s in Phillip Borso's The Grey Fox (for which she won a Genie to go with her early '70s Etrogs), and a second Genie-winning performance in Robin Phillips' The Wars. She was most recently been seen in Gordon Pinsent's John and the Missus (as ...and the Missus), for which she was again nominated for a Genie, losing to her Stratford colleague Martha Henry. However imposing her recent credits, Burroughs doesn't allow a reverential response. Self-consciously outrageous, willfully profane, and a respected performer who has very few qualms about doing bit parts in sleazy pictures like The Surrogate (in which she is the only memorable element), Jackie does not inspire incense-burning at the altar of her art.

by John Harkness

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Cinema Canada: Are there, right now, better roles and opportunities for women of a certain age in Canadian films?

Jackie Burroughs: I think that's a sucky question. I don't think, I have no idea what opportunities there are. I don't read the paper. I don't like being a part of the "aging actresses." It's like, "How many foodstuffs have raisins in them?" I don't think about my career. If I did, I'd probably be doing something else. I've never sat back and thought if there were roles for people my age. I don't know. Fuck, there've never been roles.

I've been playing fucking 80-year-olds for the last 20 years. It's so bizarre to me, 'cause I don't see any kind of rhyme or reason. Mostly, I've been always doing the same thing. Right now it's getting your own project together.

Jackie Burroughs: I dream of being asked this question because there are lots of people I admire. Maggie Smith, Gena Rowlands to me is a great, great actress. I think she's fantastic. I like her husband, Cassavettes. I have a crush on Mickey Rourke. That disappearing thing of his is very attractive. Gene Hackman.

Then I have crushes on major movies, like Last Tango. I would love to work with Cassavettes, Peter Brook, at one point, but I got over it.

Jackie Burroughs: I adore Martha Henry. It's so funny that she's from Pittsburgh. Robin used to say to me, "She comes on like such a lady, and she's from Pittsburgh." Martha and I can pass for Rosedale types.

Jackie Burroughs: I like Don Owen, because he's a nice, bumbling guy. I want him to come up with something excellent for himself, because I've had fun working for him. He was sort of an easy guy, but opinionated.

Jackie Burroughs: I have an endless crush on Robin Phillips, because he's entirely naughty. Those are the people I love. Chris Walken has that. The fun of being outrageous is part of the major fun of my life. Robin is just like that. If he just met you, he would want you to impress you, so he'd say something profound. That doesn't mean he is profound, but he wants you to think he's profound, so he just came up with a profound thing I love that kind of energy and I think my major friends are like that.

John Harkness is a Toronto-based film critic, writing for Now.
some, and he's very kind, and he's very good to work for, but I wouldn't have acting spasms over him. Of course, I don't know that I want to have acting spasms, so I liked being with him. He's very controlled man, and he sails a very smooth ship. I don't feel intimate with him.

I liked being in his movies, and I liked Videodrome as spectacular, but it's not stuff that's second nature to me. We're involved in OFAVAS (Ontario Film and Video Appreciation Society — Ed.) together, so I see him quite often.

Jackie Burroughs: Witnesses to my Videodrome as a spectacular, but it's an audience. I'm involved in Film and Video Appreciation Society — Ed. together, so I see him quite often.

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For a quarter of a century, the Directors Guild has fostered the craft of film making across Canada, playing a vital part in the development of one of the world's fastest-growing film industries.