**Jacques Godbout's**

**En Dernier Recours**

When Quebec labour minister Pierre Laperite was kidnapped and murdered in 1970, news spread quickly across the country. Overnight, the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) and the issue of Quebec's independence were thrust to the forefront. Newspapers labeled FLQ members terrorists and the public branded them murderers.

But was it really murder and terrorism? Was the FLQ not fighting, perhaps, for a legitimate cause? Quebec filmmaker Jacques Godbout grapples with these questions in his latest documentary *En Dernier recours*. In it, he explores terrorism in Canadian society, analyzing events like the FLQ years, the Denis Lortie affair on Quebec's National Assembly and the actions of the 'Vancouver Five'.

In choosing Canadian terrorism as a subject, Godbout opens the door on a complex issue. He rises to the challenge by presenting views from a wide range of personalities: former FLQ activist François Schirm, Quebec writer Pierre Vallières, an ex-Red Brigade militant and a Montreal police officer. Throughout the 70-minute documentary, Godbout deftly juxtaposes their views to present the film's main themes.

The on-camera interviews form the structure of *En Dernier recours*. To complement them, Godbout relies on archival footage of the 1970 October crisis, the Denis Lortie affair, the Brigham bomb aimed at Pope John Paul II and the Cruise missile tests in Northern Alberta. In fact, there are very few scenes in the film shot by Godbout (the opening and closing scenes in which a bomb explodes on a barren airstrip are probably the best examples).

In the interviews Vallières and Schirm draw distinctions about terrorism. Schirm claims violence is justifiable if used for a popular cause. "Terrorism," he says, "becomes more than just an attack on innocent victims." Vallières adds to this view, asserting that armed struggles in South America, Northern Ireland and Central America are not terrorism, although opposing governments and the media label them as such.

In defining terrorism, Godbout fails to distinguish between democratic and...
Don Shebib's

The Climb

Don Shebib has come a long way since his triumphs with Goin' Down the Road and Between Friends in the early '70s. Since that time, Goin' Down the Road has consistently been listed as one of the 10 great Canadian films, and Shebib carries it around with him rather like Orson Welles used to carry Citizen Kane. It has become both a blessing and a curse. A source of pride for those committed to the notion of a distinctive Canadian cinema. Goin' Down the Road languishes as a reminder of a great talent gone to waste.

In over a decade, Shebib has directed only four features, the last one being Running Brave with Robbie Benson in 1983. Disputes with the producers caused Shebib to withdraw his name from that film, which had only limited theatrical release. Since then, he has been active in TV, mostly directing episodes of The Edison Twins, Night Heat, and Danger Bay. Shebib's struggles with the Canadian industry and the CDFF (now Telefilm) have become as famous as his earlier successes.

The Climb, his latest foray into feature filmmaking, is an old-fashioned piece of macho action-drama. It stars Canadian-born Bruce Greenwood from TV's St. Elsewhere, with a Canadian supporting cast that includes Kenneth Welsh, Ken Pogue and Tom Butler. However, there is nothing Canadian about The Climb subject matter, and in many ways it harks back to the bad old tax shelter release days when the deal was more important than the film. It has none of the freshness and vitality of recent English-language Canadian productions, and suffers from a thin, one-dimensional script.

The film is based on the true story of a 1953 German expedition to conquer Nanga Parbat, a treacherous Himalayan peak, described in the film as "the most beautiful mountain in the world", although not as high as Everest, Nanga Parbat became an obsession with the Germans after it claimed the lives of 31 members of a German climbing party in 1932. The script concentrates on Hermann Buhl (Greenwood), a famed mountaineer whose reckless and determined ambition leads him into conflict with the team's bureaucratic leader, Dr. Karl Herrligkoffer (James Hurdle). Whereas Herrligkoffer is climbing for the glory of the German nation, Buhl climbs for himself and the mystical challenge of the mountain.

As they proceed slowly up the icefields, news arrives of Hillary's conquest of Everest. Disappointed and confronted with rebellious porters and dwindling supplies, Herrligkoffer decides to retreat before making it to the top. Buhl disobeys orders to return to base camp and makes the final assault alone, without oxygen or support. After a full day's climb, exhausted and hallucinating, he makes it to the top. Unable to climb down in the dark, he has to spend the night there, keeping himself awake in freezing temperatures. His survival is a credit to his fierce determination, and in the context of the film, miraculous. The ghost of one of the dead climbers helps him down the mountain the next day!

The Climb was produced by Wendy Wacko, an emerging, Alberta-based independent who has become an adept director of corrals. The film was originally financed by CTV, the BBC and Telefilm as a 60-minute drama. By stretching things, Shebib, Wacko and Leiterman produced a feature, but the material and direction still suggest a 60-minute drama.

Wyndham Paul Wise

Marie s'en va-t-en ville

Marie s'en va-t-en ville sounds like the title of a fable or a folk tale. And indeed it is the story of a country innocent who comes to the city.

In the folk tale, the youngest son or, in this case, daughter leaves home and goes to seek her fortune. After many trials and tribulations she wins out and obtains her heart's desire. In this case by Marquise Lepage, we have the story complete with wicked sibling - a brother who sexually harasses our heroine - and a mother who is too busy with the other children to give her youngest adequate love and protection.

In Quebec culture, the country usually represents simpler and more wholesome values than the city. But in this film some sort of reversal of this traditional structure is taking place. Maybe it is because Marie only comes from the suburbs. For, as in the folk tale, the innocent finds true love and happiness when she leaves home. There is none of the misadventures of the Quebecois films of the '70s here; everything is up-tempo.

In some ways, Marie s'en va-t-en ville is a gagne. It has tight scripting, good acting, nice visuals and music. For a first feature, this is quite an achievement. And yet the film disappointed me. Even though I believed in the two main characters, the situation itself seemed incredible and robbed the film as a whole of credibility. Maybe I'm too cynical, but it's hard to believe in the old stereotype of the whore with the heart of gold; would a prostitute (Sarah) really take on the responsibility of caring for a 13-year-old runaway (Marie)?

Once one gets past this incredible situation one can see that the film is dealing with themes that are preoccupying many women filmmakers at present. The relationship between the two girls and younger woman is recurrent in many of these films. In High Tide, an Australian film by Gillian Armstrong, a nightclub singer comes across the daughter she abandoned 14 years before. Painfully she comes to a realization of the sterility of her present existence and decides to...