He skis the lower slopes, getting in tune, and the film has some exhilarating shots of him leaping over the steep inclines. Furiously he works out, the air is very thin and dulls the mind and body and Miura fights to keep his strength. The run is eight-thousand feet down, often at 45 degrees and at the bottom is a vast, unexplored crevasse called the bergschrund, and if Miura can't stop before reaching it he'll perish. On the brink of taking off he confesses to feeling like Icarus, flying into the sun, and now understands "the pride of the samurai, challenging something huge." Looming overhead is the wind-whipped summit of Everest. Miura begins his historic run, with a parachute flaring out behind him, and within seconds he's skiing at 100 miles per hour, like a dive-bombing kamakaze pilot. He skis for six-thousand feet then collapses and slides, the skis spinning in the air, the crevasse getting closer. A snow bank breaks his fall and Miura is rescued 200 feet above the bergschrund. The whole operation took less than two minutes.

While there is a degree of excitement in the film, it all builds to a finale that amounts to a resounding zero. The mission took months of preparation, $700,000, six lives, all to allow one man the thrill of skiing down an inaccessible slope for a couple of minutes. It remains to be seen whether this self-indulgent adventure film will find an audience as the skiing season nears.

David McCaughna
The Canadian Film Development Corp. low-budget programme has allowed a number of highly interesting films to be made; The Hard Part Begins, Montreal Main and Bar salon simultaneously rise to mind. While I don’t think Sudden Fury is as achieved a film as these three, it certainly merits attention and analysis. It is far more of a formula film or a genre film than we have come to expect from the low-budget features, which more often than not have been highly personal statements. Not that Brian Damude’s film isn’t personal, it’s just that it exists more within the conventional commercial framework.

Sudden Fury has a very simple plot and as many probably have not seen it, a short summary is worthwhile. The film revolves around a married couple, Fred and Janet, but everything is not well with their relationship. Janet is having an affair and is about to leave her husband, but the two of them are committed to going out of town together one Saturday. Fred, meanwhile, has plans that involve Janet. He wants to build a country hotel cum resort and he needs some of Janet’s money as a loan to buy the land. Janet wants no part of it, and in the quarrel that ensues in the car she reveals her infidelity. Fred drives the car off the road in a fit of rage and leaves a seriously injured Janet to die beside this little-travelled country road. A car passes by and its driver, Al, gets out and helps Janet. He has to contend, however, with Fred, who is doing everything possible to obstruct this interloper. Through a series of incidents, three people are eventually left dead, and Al, who only stopped to help, is being accused of the murders, while Fred will get off scot-free.

Dealing as it does with one man’s madness, and the hideous forces that it can release, Sudden Fury bears an uncanny resemblance to John Trent’s Sunday In the Country. Both films deal with one man attempting to impose his will on a situation and a group of people. Their megalomania is treated in a different way; Adam’s in Sunday is more fascistic than mad, but the forces that they release are just as destructive and violent. Damude’s film raises questions concerning justice and its applications, as does Trent’s. Al’s increasing involvement in the action of the film undergoes significant changes. At first he stops out of humanitarian concern – there has been an accident and he wants to find out who’s been hurt. When he discovers an abandoned and badly injured woman he is enraged at the person who has left her. When she dies he vows to kill the husband. Motivated now by revenge and an anger that blinds him, he too turns into a semi-madman. It is only when he kills a farmer’s wife (Hollis McLaren) mistaking her for the real villain that the full impact of what he has turned into strikes him. By a gradual process of involvement Al has gradually de-humanised himself to a point where moral attributes of good and evil become blurred.

Sudden Fury is played out on one level as a simple morality play of good versus evil. But evil is seen to be supremely triumphant. As an audience we sympathize with Al and this identification leaves us extremely frustrated. Everything seems to work against his actions and by the end of the film we feel completely impotent. The police assure him that he has nothing to be afraid of if he is telling the truth, but their quizzical incomprehension of what has occurred does nothing to change our secret belief that this is in fact false.

Even more disturbing is the sense I get from Sudden Fury (and also from Sunday In the Country) that normal people are not equipped to deal with certain violent or uncompromising situations. The farm couple of Sudden Fury are continually shown at one step removed from what is going on. They instinctively reach out towards Fred when he appears on their doorstep, bloodied and with his tale of the car crash. They mindlessly accept his interpretation of the accident and treat Al like the real killer. When they gradually realize the truth, it is too late, and both their deaths highlight their inability to deal successfully with what is going on. The tragic thing is whether they could have done anything differently? Even Al is treated in a similar way. By taking up a gun, he confronts violence with violence. Aware of what he is dealing with he is still naïve enough to believe that alone he can defeat it.

The other thing I would like to comment on is the role that the farm couple play in the film. They have small roles in comparison to the major characters but this in itself is significant. Theirs is the only ‘normal’ relationship portrayed in the film. The fact that they are so peripheral, and that they are brutally destroyed says an enormous amount about this film’s view of people’s relationships.

I started out by saying that Sudden Fury was somewhat of a formula film. It is very much an action film and it becomes more and more so throughout