



PHOTO: MICHEL DUBREUIL

Émile, a character in *Le Grand monde*

—and it not being so easy... Or when the camera picks out the aging man with the missing teeth, the greasy hair and the life-beaten face—the kind of man you would certainly avoid looking at on the street—dancing with Pierrette at the community supper with more grace and pride in his carriage, and joy in his eyes, than anyone you've ever seen.

These are moments of magic. It is movie magic, but it is the magic of truth. And that is what makes this movie work so well. A documentary approach would have given us

LE GRAND MONDE p. *Iscl'd.* Marcel Simard assoc. p. Renée Gosselin sc. consultants Michel Langlois, Luc Blanchet a. d. Sylvie Roy continuity Françoise Dugré ed. Liette Aubin, Annie Jean sd. ed. Diane Boucher d. o. p. Philippe Lavallette key grip Marcel Breton mus. Robert Leger mix. Hans-Peter Strobl sd. rec. Gilles Corbeil, Gilbert Lachapelle, Serge Beauchemin, Daniel Masse, Marcel Fraser l. p. *Members of Action-Santé:* Ovíla Ouellet, André Massicotte, Kenny Ryan, Jeanne Lalumière, Michel Lussier, Michel Fyfe, Léa Dubois, Micheline Roy, Marie-Thérèse Dufresne, Antal Hajdu, Joseph Jean, Lise Cartier, Micheline Fontaine, André Béchard w. participation of Pierrette Savard, Cynthia McLean, Philippe Collin. Produced by Les Productions Virage in collaboratin with SRC. With financial participation by: SOGIC, NFB, U. of M., Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux du Québec, la Confédération de syndicats nationaux (CSN), Secretary of State, CEGEPS André Laurendeau, Rosemont, l'Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, the Douglas Hospital, CSSST-Montreal.

more facts, but less truth. The people of Action-Santé would have been ever-distanced and reserved subjects. But here, they are participants in making the film. Instead of the distance of documentary, we find ourselves in complicity with a fiction we nevertheless know is very real.

As we watch the participants play their roles we not only learn of their concerns, but we also see these people in full self-expression, often dealing with deep emotional issues, and that is what is so fascinating: we are getting to know them—or, at least, to want to know them. We are getting to love them. And that is the mark and the means of the film's success. After fitting itself into our everyday reality and getting us to care, how can we possibly take these people, and others in the same situation, for granted? Philippe Isler •

Peter Gerretsen's **Night Friend**

There is no doubt that Peter Gerretsen made *Night Friend* with the best of intentions. His docudrama of the attempts of a Catholic priest to help a young prostitute on the streets of Toronto was to be, as the original title stated, "A Cry From the Heart". He also must have hoped that it could stand with *Drying Up The Streets* and *Ticket To Heaven* as achievements in the style. Considering that teen prostitution in films has been used primarily as cheap exploitation (*Angel*), conventional melodrama (*Little Ladies of the Night*), or just another example of urban sordidness (*Taxi Driver*), it was a noble aspiration. But such aspiration counts for nothing, if the execution fails to convince.

Father Jack Donnell (Chuck Shamata) is the recently appointed director of vocations for the Archdiocese of Toronto. Returning home one night from a fundraiser, he stops at a downtown corner and honks his horn at the car ahead. Suddenly he finds a young girl beside him, asking him what we'd like and how much. Although Jack is shocked, he determines to try and help the girl (Heather Kjollesdal) who calls herself Lindsay.

Jack takes to visiting Lindsay's corner each night, dressed in civvies, and offers to pay her \$350-a-night quota for no services required. He gradually discovers that Lindsay, whose real name is Carol, is from Woodstock Ontario, whence she fled her incestuous father with her boyfriend Lenny (Daniel MacIvor). Lenny wants to be a rock guitarist in Los Angeles, but is hampered by the fact that he has neither money nor talent. So both Lindsay and Lenny sell themselves to Myles (Real Andrews), a smooth-talking pimp.

Peter Gerretsen presents all this with utmost seriousness and directs quite straightforwardly. With his background in advertising, this is something of a surprise, since it is usually the habit of directors from this milieu (Ridley and Tony Scott, Alan Parker, Hugh Hudson et al.) to emphasize style at the expense of content. But unfortunately, Gerretsen misses an essential point necessary for the success of a docudrama. There has to be some *drama*, and the documentary has to reflect the truth. *Night Friend* is deficient in both these areas.

Since the producers go to great length in their production notes to express their concern for the plight of the young prostitutes in the city, the greatest disappointment in *Night Friend* is that they seem so squeamish in their approach. Neither Lindsay nor any of the other girls are ever seen doing anything beyond getting into and out of cars. Twenty or 25 years ago, such "delicacy" might have been accepted, but in the wake of *Hookers On Davie* and especially *Streetwise*, candor is the only way to honestly address this issue.

The film's credibility is also further strained by, among other things, the complete absence of the police from the streets—in spite of the fact that the location for the girls' hangout is less than a block from a stationhouse. Nor is the treatment of the priest's role that realistic, although it was supposedly inspired by Father Bruce Ritter, the founder of the Covenant House youth shelters. No religious technical advisor is to be seen in the credits.

Chuck Shamata is properly earnest as Jack, but has little depth. Art Carney is the "big" guest star, and handles his role as the crusty Monsignor O'Brien with competence, although the part is a clerical cliché that goes back to Barry

Fitzgerald. Jayne Eastwood has the thankless role of the mute bag lady who seems to serve no purpose until the end, where she becomes a literal *deus ex machina*.

Heather Kjollesdal's portrayal of Lindsay should not be judged too harshly, since it is her first professional role. Her passing physical resemblance to Jodie Foster seems to have been a factor in her casting. In making the pimp Myles a Superfly black, and the abusive father an unshaven backroads slug, Peter Gerretsen perpetuates two unfortunate stereotypes.

For filmwise viewers, there is one other howler in *Night Friend*. At one point, Jack takes Lindsay to the movies. The film they see is *Vagabond*. Peter Gerretsen intends this to be symbolic, but how many 14-year-old runaways are Agnès Varda fans?

J. Paul Costabile •

NIGHT FRIEND exec. p. Don Haig p. Patricia Gerretsen d. *sc.* Peter Gerretsen d. o. p. Doug Koch cam. op. Attila Azalay, Brad Creaser ed. Michael Todd asst. ed. Darryl Cornford 1st. a. d. Roman Buchok 2nd a. d. Brian Dennis 3rd. a. d. Linda Pope p. *man.* Patricia Gerretsen p. *coord.* Barbara Bell p. *account.* Madeleine Meredith cam. *trainee* Akira Nishihata *stills photog.* Leslie MacKeen *cont.* Benu Bhandari *gaffer* David Owen *best boy* Edward Mikolic *electricians* John Bakker, Neil Saito *key grip* David Zimmerman *best boy grip* Ron Paulauskas *grip* Ruth Lyons sd. op. Urmas John Rosin *boom* Don Grunsten sd. ed. Michael Todd, Darryl Cornford, Anita St. Dennis *re-rec.* Tony Van Den Akker *foley* Reid James Atherton *asst.* *foley* Maureen Wetteland *mus.* Heather Conkie, Rory Commings *mus. rec.* Steve Ibelshauer *mus. arr.* Ralph De Jonge *Song "Walking the Streets"* by Yohanna Vanderkley *set dec.* Alexa Buchanan, *sung by* Yohanna Vanderkley *set dec.* Alexa Anthony *props* Alex Kuishera *makeup* Marlene Aarons *asst.* Pip Ayotte, Judy Murdoch *ward.* Tina Livingston, Jacqueline C. Barley *asst.* Kim Kozolanka p. a. Anne Fotheringham, Marie Vapenikova *craft service* John Allen *catering* Amazing Food Service *casting* Richard Conkie l. p. Chuck Shamata, Jayne Eastwood, Art Carney, Heather Kjollesdal. A Cry From the Heart production.



Chuck Shamata and Heather Kjollesdal in *Night Friend*