stealthily establishes itself in the hub of newsroom activity.

This action leads to a copyboy, older than most, on his itinerant mail run through the newsroom and the shoulder-struggling characterization of a street kid named Malarek by a young actor named Elias Koteas. Where a less talented actor might exaggerate, Koteas never loses character. (This guy has more in common with de Niro than a pretty face.)

No time is lost in convincing the viewer that Malarek is a well-intended kid. He is likeable from the moment you meet him. The impact of one particular scene early in the film drives home just how believable the character becomes. It is a flashback in which the 11-year-old Malarek, played by Ross Hull, timidly approaches his father, who is stone drunk with his head on the kitchen table, and kisses him while the social worker waits impatiently and a sobbing mother lies battered on the floor. Your heart breaks willingly. This is one of the most emotionally powerful moments I have ever seen on the screen.

The flashbacks are a crucial element of this film. They’re used masterfully, not as a crutch for a weak storyline but in order to give the story an added dimension of depth. The story pivots on a flashback that reveals Malarek’s lucky break.

Undefeated with armed robbery, Malarek finds himself facing a judge and certain punishment for his recidivist activities. But Malarek’s father pleads for his son at the risk of contempt; his words trigger sympathy and the judge lets Malarek go. The rest is newspaper history.

Al Waxman, the leering and belted social worker, is at his best and better suited to this sort of villainous role than that of the dumb American cop or the funny fat guy down the street. Kentie Keane, a busy actress and star of Spy’s Obsessed, plays a skittish crime-page editor unsure about whether she wants to be Malarek’s mentor or mistress. Malarek best describes her character in an emotional outburst after the editor and publisher attempt to block his story: “She doesn’t know whether to smoke or sit down” yells Malarek acquisitively. As a straight foil to the impulsive Malarek, Keane is superb.

On the other hand, Daniel Pilon, who plays Banks, the corrupt detention centre administrator, is so straight and void of any personality that he stills. There is more acting than meets the eye and obviously, in this film, Pilon’s good looks exceed his acting ability.

Kahl Karn plays an escaped “jewi” who becomes one of the first lead sources of Malarek’s expose and a liability should the police discover that Malarek is protecting an escapee. He is young and, as the popular street terminology of the day went, “wired.” A handgun or a knife in his hands looks extremely dangerous. Malarek, himself, has trouble communicating with this kid whose life ends abruptly while running from a police revolver. While the 16-year-old Karn puts in a lot of hard work, the casting director should also take a bow.

Malarek is a hero in as much as he is an exemplary human being who has come through a struggle of heroic proportions. He is a Canadian, N’ay’s a Canadian hero, to whose name this film does justice.

Malarek leaves you feeling good about his success and bad about the crooks he had to endure in our own backyard. Houseights and reflection bring the slow dawn that 1971 was not that long ago.

H. Jean Chantale

MALAREK


Paul Cowan's
See No Evil

The story of Terry Ryan, a 25-year-old employee at Westinghouse’s Hamilton plant who was blinded and disfigured following an explosion at the factory in 1979, is not an unusual one in the annals of labour industry. Instead of being convicted of criminal negligence for having allowed unmarked containers of explosive chemicals on the shop floor, Westinghouse pleaded guilty to the reduced charge of improper storage of hazardous goods and was fined $50,000. For his part, Ryan has been making do as best he can on his meagre entitlements from the Workers’ Compensation Board. What is unusual is that he is the one-man crusade launched by Stanley Gray, a one-time worker of Ryan’s at Westinghouse, against the triple pillars of big government, big business and big labour.

Paul Cowan’s new film See No Evil is a docudrama which chronicles Gray’s ongoing struggle from the days following the incident through the court cases of the early 80s to the founding of the Ontario Workers Health Centre. The film begins sensationally with the industrial accident on Nov. 29, 1979. This privatesideshow, however, is really only a launch point for the larger fish in need of tying. Gray’s prime target, and the film’s main focus, becomes the current state of health and safety in the workplace. The case itself is more of a symptom of evil than the root of it.

Gray’s crusade began after inspectors from the Ontario Ministry of Labour filed a one and a half page report in early 1980 (a few weeks following the Westinghouse explosion) which exonerated the company of any blame. In the ensuing months, Gray researched and wrote his own 40-page report which clearly laid the blame for the accident on the company’s lax enforcement of safety procedures and its improper handling of inflammable solvents. Toalos, a highly combustible chemical which is used as a cleaning agent, was stored in a drum marked “soap and water.” It was this drum which exploded and blinded Terry Ryan.

Gray’s report resulted in the ministry filing seven charges against Westinghouse, but it also put the ministry on the spot. If the court action were to proceed, it would render null the findings of the original report filed by the ministry’s own inspectors. Lawyers from the Ministry of Labour and Westinghouse came to an arrangement: six charges were dropped and one was amended. Westinghouse was fined and the judgement implied that the company was not in any way responsible for the explosion.

Shot in grainy black and white, and using a mix of内幕reenactments and interviews, Paul Cowan follows Stanley Gray as he cuts through (and is sometimes overwhelmed by)
legal and bureaucratic red tape. The result is something like an out-of-kilter detective movie. It is both cumbersome and suspenseful, but it is a film without a solution — just a lot of clues which point directly at the culprit, incompetently and intellectually, in a way that maintains the status quo of unsafe conditions in the country's workplaces.

Cowan has also taken some hints from his spiritual mentor at the National Film Board, Donald Brittain, who narrates the film. In his own films, Brittain narrates every sentence as if it were a lead; his authority and conviction never seem to falter at any point. Keeping the audience with the Morgentaler film is that Morgentaler's persona as a crusader for the freedom of choice is more impressive of the two.

Cowan, however, seems to have learned from his past mistakes. Terry Ryan and Stan Gray are not personalities who have been overexposed by the media; for most of us, they are largely unknown. The events portrayed in the film are tragic, yet similar things occur almost daily — a fact that makes the film all the more distressing. Cowan has tried to use the Terry Ryan case as an abomination in the industrial record on health and safety issues. Instead, See No Evil documents events which are all too often the norm.

See No Evil is stylistically similar to Cowan's previous film, Democracy On Trail: the Morgentaler Affair, but the new one is by far the more impressive of the two. The basic problem with the Morgentaler film is that Morgentaler's persona as a crusader for the freedom of choice in matters of abortion, has, over the years, been largely ineffective because the battle lines have already been drawn over the abortion issue itself. Although it is a very competent piece of filmmaking, The Morgentaler Affair doesn't really work as propaganda; it preaches to the converted while containing little that would sway the undecided.

Stan Gray, who launched a national health and safety crusade in the wake of the accident that blinded fellow worker Terry Ryan.

A few goodies distributed by Atlantic Independent Media, P. O. Box 1647, Stn. M, Halifax, N. S. B3J 2Z1 (902) 422-5929 — all of which were the appetizer for more, more, more!

ALBERT

Albert rides the bus home to his apartment and his lodge, Doppie. "I am happy as a little bird," he tells it. "I am the only person in the office who is completely up-to-date." And so this meek and mild accountant awakes another lovely weekend in long and briefer confessions, explanations, and generally good cheer about that he delusions. Among many disclosures, Albert reveals a mad passion for co-worker Miss Bandleathermore, which cannot be told because he lives with a witch who could not get enough love.

Albert's fantasy world is evoked mainly in the first-rate writing, and the monologue is enhanced by hypnagogic long tales of actor Charlie Tomlinson getting right into Albert's skin. Perhaps a bit too unsettling and unsettling for everyone, but it's a dandy TV/half-hour, adventurous, unusual, and with good production values.

THE LAST CHINESE LAUNDRY

A look at Chinese immigrants to St. John's, Nfld., from the 1895 newspaper report of the arrival of "two Celestials" to set up a laundry, to reminiscences by today's community.

William Ping came from his village in south China where he enjoyed a certain status as a schoolteacher. However, urged by his grandmother, he was obliged to leave his uncle's job so that he (the uncle) could return to the village. Ping became a laundry worker, and many more followed him, so that in 1905 a $500 head tax was imposed on all Chinese entering this country. The work was arduous; sometimes there was only half-an-hour's sleep each night: pay was poor. Since Chinese women and children were not allowed into the country, a social club was formed where the men could gather to gossip, play cards and generally relax in the small amount of time available to them.

Today, the community members prosper, but remember their ancestors' early struggles in St. John's, and display pride in the accomplishments of their children who went to university and on to professions, William Ping still runs the last Chinese laundry, but for how long? He says, "If you give up, where will you go? Many times I cry.

SIRENSONG

The band in the susid water are doing the dishes. A woman's voice-over talks about seeing the first moonwalk on TV, when she was a schoolgirl. But the image had already been conjured up in her head...

A series of images then flow on, accompanied by a multisecondound. All the visuals received and stored in memory during life — from magazines, TV commercials, and movies, and so on — merge and get sorted out into real and remembered. A good deal of footage is of Monument Valley, Arizona, seen from a travelling car, which is intensely "familiar" to devotees of Ford's westerns even though most viewers have never been there.

An interesting train-of-thought piece piece pointing up today's "picture-oriented" way of life, perhaps a bit too personal to the artist, but not long enough to bore! A make-it-your-own-train: starring Richard Thomas, of stra Tube Productions, and music by John M. Hard.