In PROGRESS... Train To Terror

d. Roger Spottiswoode asst. d. Ray Sage: David Macleod, Paul Gravel sc. Tom Drak ph. John Alcott cam. op. Jimmy Davis, Jor athan Goodwill ed. Ann Henderson key gri Don Caufield cont. Brigitte Germain un man. Paul Wisenthal sd. rec. Bo Harwoo boom op. Jean-Marc Magnan gaf. Lou Bogu p. designer Glenn Bydwell a.d. Guy Comto set dress./props Jenepher Hooper make-u Joan Isaacson stills photog. Alan Carruthe cost. design. Penny Hadfield ward. Suse Hall I.p. Ben Johnson, Jamie Lee Curtis, Ha Bochner, David Copperfield, Derek Ma Kinnon, Howard Busgang, Sandee L. Currie Timothy Webber, Anthony Sherwood exec. Sandy Howard, Lamar Card p. Harold Gree berg p. sec. Cathy Flynn p. manager Willia Zborowsky p.c. Triple-T Productions Astr Ltd. (1980).

"Rock !"

"Rock more slowly !"

On-set choreography for the late disco-rock slock?

Don't bet your Travolta poster! The are the instructions to grip, Jerome South, who is on the command end of a 15 ft, 4x8 wooden lever. He's rocking a vintage rail car containing one Academy Award winning actor, Ben Johnson (**The Last Picture Show**), and one Academy Award winning Director of Photography, John Alcott (**Barry Lyndon**).

It's somewhat ironic that the success of Harold Greenberg's latest, **Train To Terror**, budgeted at \$2.7 million, could hinge, so to speak, on such primitive technology.

"But we tried hydraulic devices and they just didn't work," explains veteran executive producer, Lamar Card. A potentially big production problem was solved by inexpensive ingenuity. But there were others requiring more than resourcefulness. For instance, where do you find heated, inside parking for a 6-car, 425 ft. train, complete with steam locomotive and 1948 CPR tender?

How about the mammoth All-Pak warehouse in the Montreal suburb of Ville St. Pierre — a sprawling industrial area of factories, warehouses and acres of unpaved parking lots that rate five stars for urban blight. Even then the rail spur had to be upgraded and the space between the rails dug out.

Next problem, the warehouse sounded



imothy Webber and Joy Boushel in a ticklish scene from Train to Terror

like it was accomodating several steel foundries. The solution? To shoot offhours, roughly 6 p.m. to 4 a.m., when noise was reduced. Even then many sound takes were found unusable. So, on one rail car a completely soundproofed recording studio was installed, where noiseruined lines can be immediately rerecorded while the actors "... still have the mood and intonation in mind."

The train was leased for \$100,000 from Steamtown, Vermont, and brought to Montreal with much fanfare — and many Customs problems — by its 80-year-old engineer.

The interiors, found to be too shabby, called for a complete re-decoration in what's billed as 1930's "Art Deco," complete with Wurlitzer, DC-3 standing ashtrays, walls painted muted Bauhaus blues and maroons, and a parquet floor. Cost: \$100,000.

"We're giving it back to them in better shape than we got it," says Card. (The sleeping car has been fondly dubbed "The Zoo," where, we're told, sex will only "be alluded to." Perhaps in the guise of a bunch of furry little animals?). Shooting inside the train is cramped, calling for small, well-disciplined crews and few visitors. Lighting posed a major problem, so, under the f-stop sharp eyes of John Alcott, the train was completely re-wired. All lights are rheostat controlled to achieve the right kind of shadowy, expressionistic images needed for a suspense-horror flick, which this purportedly will be: "... in the tradition of Hitchcock," claims unit PR girl, Holly Levine, whose eyes could easily rate her a spot in the cast, which includes many young rising stars.

Besides veteran Johnson, who got his 1947 start with John Ford, the cast most notably includes Jamie Lee Curtis (Halloween, The Fog, Prom Night), Hart Bochner (Islands in the Stream, Breaking Away) and David Copperfield, who has had three TV specials.

From a script by Canadian Tom Drake, Train To Terror is the tale of a group of contemporary pre-med students who book an excursion train for a New Year's Eve masquerade outing. One of the group, who has become deranged following an initiation joke several year is fore.

[&]quot;Cut !"

begins to kill the four responsible, one-bysuspenseful-one. In a potentially effective psychological touch, he successively dons the costume of each victim.

It is the proverbial, patriarchal male figure, Johnson, who figures out what's going on, but not until a few severed hands and a head are found. (The head, specially constructed in Hollywood for a mere \$3,000, will only be flashed on screen for a "tasteful" second or two.) Being pre-med students, ample opportunities will arise for other macabre jokes, and a skeleton is part of the decor.

Interior shooting began Nov. 22 and is due to wrap Dec. 22: a rapid pace calling for a shooting ratio of anywhere from 3:1 to 5:1. Outdoor sequences will be filmed in January at an un-disclosed location north of Montreal. Train To Terror is director Roger Spottiswoode's first feature, although he has had extensive experience as editor of Straw Dogs, The Get Away and Pat Garret and Billy the Kid. Is this a risk on Greenberg's part? It would seem not, since Ben Johnson, whose opinion must be respected, only agreed to work on Train when he heard Spottiswoode was directing.

When the venerable actor is asked where things are going, Johnson replies, referring to the late hours to which all the actors have had to adjust, "Work all night, sleep all day." Then with a grin that creases his weathered, wrinkled face even more, he dons his conductor's cap, and mounts the baggage car ladder. Cut...

Doug Isaac

Anatomy of a Horror

p.c. The Horror Picture Film Production Inc. p. Harry Less assist. to p. Victor Gamble p. man. Chris Bird d. Mario Azzopardi a.d. Robert Apelbe sc. Dick Olyxiak, Mario Azzopardi art. d. Peter Kanter cast. Karen Hazard Ltd. d.o.p. Fred Guthe.

A decapitated mannequin dressed in monk's garb rests in one corner of the crowded set. Director Mario Azzopardi playfully squeezes the end of a rubber tube protruding from the mannequin's neck, causing the headless form to bob and weave. A bucket of 'blood' sits nearby. Someone has been playing with that too, as a trail of red smudges leads from the floor of the set to the carpeted reception area of these production offices belonging to Henry Less and Associates. Add some flesh-devouring nuns, a little old lady who gets nailed to a cross, and you have the classical "non-horror" film — according to Azzopardi.

Despite his candid admission that the film is loaded with gore, that its tentative title is **Anatomy of a Horror** and that it's a production of The Horror Picture Film Production Inc., Azzopardi adamantly defends **Anatomy of a Horror** against



Anatomy of a Horror screenwriter Dick Olyxiak (left), conferring with star Stephen Young, and director/co-writer Mario Azzopardi (right)

being labelled just another crass, commercial chiller.

The story centers on Steven Lessey (played by Stephen Young), a grade B screenwriter who's pet topic is — you guessed it — horror.

In a slump, but under pressure from his editor and his wife, Elizabeth (played by Sharon Masters) to produce, Lessey embarks on a search for the ultimate horror to write about. "What Steven Lessev doesn't realize until it's too late is that he's living it," says Azzopardi. "That is the horror, not the obvious blood and guts spread throughout the film." First, one of Lessey's scripts is critically mangled by students during a lecture presentation of it. Marital discord is fast on the heels of professional strife, rapidly followed by entire family disharmony. Lessey's son takes to swearing at him and, with his brother, decides to reenact a scene from one of his father's horror movies. Unfortunately, the attempted restaging is all too successful and, unlike in the movies, very real and irreversible. As if death as a writer, at the hands of his critics, isn't enough torment for Lessey, his work literally comes back to haunt him.

Azzopardi is making a conscious effort to down-play the film's gorier aspects, because he finds society's preference for blatant horror "nonsensical." For him, the film's real horrors are the subtle atrocities of marriage breakdown, family disintegration and career crisis. Still, he is realistic enough to recognize the need for conventional, horror film techniques: their money-making potential. Understandably, he wants to be in the financial position to "make good films."

He believes that the audience won't find the *real* horror in **Anatomy** until they see Lessey discover that he no longer believes in what he is doing.

A brief pause is followed by a thump on the table. "Yes, that is the real horror. Doing what we hate," Azzopardi declares.

Anatomy of a Horror began production November 21, and wrapped December 22. It is scheduled for an April release. The film, shot entirely in Toronto, boasts an all-Canadian cast and crew, and absolutely no financing from the CFDC. The \$491,000 budget was raised through private investors and Henry Less & Associates Production Company. It is Azzopardi's first feature film. His most recent work was the "Gino Vannelli Special," aired on the CBC in December.

He calls his crew "phenomenal," but is more than a little ruffled by the general "unprofessionalism" in the Canadian filmmaking industry. While I'm on the set, Azzopardi is told that one of the actresses won't attend an upcoming shoot because she has accepted another assignment



No ordinary bun in the oven, in this scene from Anatomy of a Horror

scheduled for the same time. However, he is quickly soothed when he sees Jeannie Elias and Marvin Goldhar, both of whom appear in the film, smiling at him, understanding his frustration. They, like most of the cast and crew, are attentive and reliable. Finishing their lunch, Elias, Goldhar and the others prepare for the afternoon's work and I suddenly find myself alone. Soon Victor Gamble, assistant to the producer, comes to my rescue and sees me off the set with a bundle of production stills and cast and crew lists. Preoccupied with his warmth and cheerfulness, I don't notice if the poor, headless monk is still bobbing and weaving in front of the bucket of blood.

Connie Filletti

Atlantic City, U.S.A.

p.c. International Cinema Corporation (Canada)/Selta Films (France) exec. p. John Kemeny, Gabriel Boustany p. Denis Héroux assoc. p. Justine Héroux, Larry Nessis p. co-ord. Vincent Malle p. man. Justine Héroux (Can.), Ken Golden (USA) unit man. Micheline Garant (Can.), Carl Zuker (USA) loc. man. Robert Wertheimer assist. unit man. Peter R. Morrison (USA) p. office co-ord. Barbara Shrier p. sec. Anne-Marie Gélinas d. Louis Malle a.d. John Board 2nd a.d. Robert McCart (Can.), Jim Chory (USA) 3rd a.d. Louis Goyer sc. John Guare (based on Laird Koenig's novel) art. d. Anne Pritchard sd. mix Jean-Claude Laureaux mus. & lyrics Paul Anka boom Gilles Ortion gaf. John Berrie best boys Walter Klymkiw, Jean Courteau, Alex Amyot Key grip Jacob Rolling cam. grip Jean-Baptiste Dutreix grips Jean-Paul Houle (Can.), John Oravetz (USA) p. design. Anne Pritchard, Dominique Ricard (assist.) art dept. co-ord. Marie-Claude Tetrault (Can.), Csaba Kertesz (USA) prop. master Gretchen Rau set props Jacques Fournier, Jean Vincent (assist.) set dress. Wendell Dennis, Myles Clarke (assist.) prop buyers Daniel Larose, Violette Daneau art dept. apprentice Taylor Pattison construction man. Marcel Desrochers (Can.), Raymond M. Samitz (USA) ed. Suzanne Baron, Federico Salzmann (assist.) ed. apprentice James Bruce unit. pub. Jill De

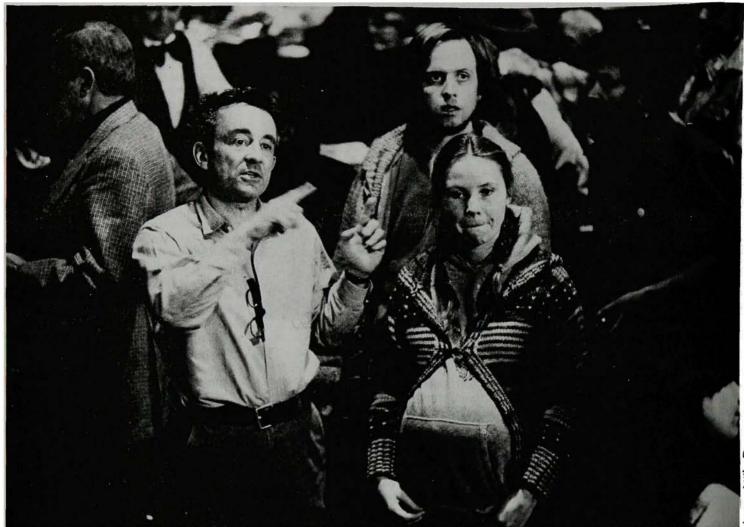
Wolfe James cost. design François Barbeau ward. master Marie-Helene Gascon (Can.), Jeffrey Ullman (USA) dressers Diane Paquet (Can.), Carla Froeberg (USA) ward. apprentice Denis Proulx make-up & hair Rita Ogden wig specialist Donna Gliddon cast. Stuart Aikins, Clare Walker extra cast. Joy Todd/Venetia Rickerby p. account. Pierre Guevremont assist. p. account. Luc Bouthillier, Carole Legace spec. effects Steve Kirshoff video sequences Patrick Burns teamster captain Leonard Luizzi I.p. Burt Lancaster, Susan Sarandon, Kate Reid, Robert Joy, Hollis Mc-Laren, Michel Piccoli, Moses Znaimer, Angus MacInnes, Robert Goulet, Al Waxman, Norma Dell'Agnese, John McCurry, Sean Sullivan, Louis Del Grande, Eleanor Beecroft, Cec Linder, Sean McCaan, Harvey Atkin, Leslie Carlson. col. 35 mm year 1979 dist. Ciné 360 (Can.), ICM (world sales).

Soon, when the smoke starts to clear, the film industry will have to field a lot of questions. And when it's looking for some way to justify all this noise, energy and expenditure, the answer may very well be found at Sonolab's Studio "G" in Montreal, where the cast and crew of Atlantic City, U.S.A. are racing to bring the picture in under the December 31 tax deadline. These people are into their eleventh week of shooting, and you'd think the novelty would have worn off by now. But the air is on fire. A reverential silence reigns, broken only by the murmuring of lowered voices, and the occasional "thwack" of a hammer somewhere in the back of the studio. Camera assistant Andy Chmura, using a break in filming as an opportunity for a cup of coffee and a cigarette, exhales and shakes his head.

"One thing about this shoot," he remarks, "it's calm. Everyone has their private little tensions, but the overall ambiance is relaxed. It's absolutely marvellous." Noticing a resumption of activity around the camera, he grinds out the cigarette under his shoe and heads back to one of the mock-up apartments that constitute the stunningly elaborate set. Halfway there, he turns back to offer an addendum : "This," he pronounces, "is real cinema." And there is no one in this vast, cavern-like studio who nurtures the least inclination to disagree.

This Franco-Canadian co-production has offered some of Canada's best tech-

EDITING ROOMS FOR RENT Description of the service of the servic



Director Louis Malle 'conducting' Canadian actors Hollis McLaren, Robert Joy and company in Atlantic City, U.S.A.

nicians the opportunity to work with a real cinematic superstar, and the excitement shows. It's sometimes hard to discern the slight, dark figure of director Louis Malle amid all those lights, cables and props, but his presence permeates that studio from the floorboards to the lighting grids. As a grip moves out of a doorway, Malle is suddenly visible, standing between a kitchen counter and the camera, cigarette gripped between his fingers. He paces the floor, smoking compulsively, then stops in front of actress Susan Sarandon to discuss a movement. Confident that they have understood one another, he turns to assistant director John Board to request a rehearsal. Sarandon takes her position behind the counter, but director of photography Richard Ciupka, peering through the camera's viewfinder, is frowning. He slides from his seat and walks to Malle's side, conferring with him in lowered tones; dissatisfied with the position of the actress in the frame, he is looking for a compromise. Within a moment, they have it, and Ciupka resumes his seat.

"Alors, ça va, Richard?"

"Oui."

"O.K. Susan, remember to step forward when you hit him." Fluently bilingual, Malle switches to English as Canadian actor Robert Joy prepares to step into frame on cue. Outrageous,! star Hollis McLaren stands watching the activity from a corner, convincingly pregnant for her role as Sarandon's 'flower child' younger sister. The rehearsal is underway, and the two performers exchange sharp words, Sarandon angry at the unexpected reappearance in her life of her estranged husband (Joy), and her sister, whom he has made pregnant. She finally concludes the discussion with a swift left hook to his stomach. Both camera and sound department are confident, and Malle gives the order to shoot.

The shot is slated, and the elements fall into place like clockwork. While the actors perform, the three men on camera integrate their movements, a complicated ballet of zooms, dollies and focus-pulling that demands split-second co-ordination. As Sarandon lands her punch, the Panaflex rushes forward to reframe the shot. When Malle calls "Cut," Ciupka's hand drops from the tilt wheel.

"Impeccable !" he declares.

Which may very well turn out to be a prognosis for the film itself. A study of people who live on the edge of a crumbling society, Atlantic City, U.S.A. is set against the unique combination of decay and vitality that characterize the title town. Using the subplot of a sleazy drug deal, the film focuses on the lives of five people who have run away, or are in the process of doing so. The three younger characters are joined by the figures of Kate Reid as a gangster's widow, and Burt Lancaster as her late husband's ex-bodyguard — who hides from the world with Reid inside a decaying apartment building. In setting and tone, the movie is onehundred percent American, but Malle believes the subject is being perused through "an alien eye".

"I find myself in an interesting position at this point," he reflects during the lunch break. "Before I came to America for **Pretty Baby**, I had been coming every year since '56. It was only in '76 that I came and decided to stay for a while. I lived in Los Angeles for a bit, and then I moved to New York. I've been half there and half in France for the last two years. Now, I'm in this sort of edgy position. where I'm almost part of it; there's a lot of things I understand and share, but I'm still an outsider." Atlantic City, U.S.A. represents the first contemporary picture he has shot in the last ten years, a particular challenge for Malle, who states that he needs to find "a distance from a subject that's happening right now," and believes he may have worked toward it this time by means of stylization. "Here, it's stylized in the sense that it's making fun of something that's basically serious. It has the plot of a thriller, and it's describing social and economic changes in Atlantic City, but it's done as a comedy, the same way Murmur Of The Heart was a comedy about something that's considered immensely serious.

He has been drawn to American subject matter before, and returns to it now because he finds the States "much more interesting than Europe at this point. Europe is just reproducing what's going on in America five or ten years later. Culturally, it's very dead. The impetus for change, the patterns for culture in the Western World; they're all coming from the U.S." Malle readily admits that Atlan-

tic City, U.S.A. is "only accidentally a Canadian film. I'm using a number of Canadian actors, whom I'm very pleased with, and a Canadian crew, which is excellent. Our exteriors were shot in Atlantic City, and we're shooting interiors in this studio, but I feel good about this picture - my integrity's not in question. If this type of project enables you to end up with films about Canada, made by Canadians, then the experience will have been justified. The mistake is to make too many commercial compromises - to turn out imitation American pictures. The French did that too, and it didn't work, mostly because the Americans do them better. We did films with American stars. American subject matter, and called it 'Le Cinéma Mid-Atlantic.' Ultimately, it was 'nulle part' — nowhere." He adds emphatically: "But there's nothing worse than stagnation. The technicians and creative people are working here, and that's very important. Hopefully, within the framework of this commercial industry, a really indigenous film business will develop. As a 'guest director' in this country, that's what I'd like to see; then the whole exercise will have been worthwhile."

Barbara Samuels

Babe!

d. Rafal Zielinski asst. d. Yvon Arsenault, René Chenier sc. Edith Rey ph. Peter Czerski ed. Avde Chiriaeff sd. Richard Nichol a. d. Real Ouellette m. Gino Soccio cost. Denis Sperdouklis choreo. Lynn Taylor-Corbett I.p. Buddy Hackett, Yasmine Bleeth exec. p. Morden Lazarus p. Arthur Voronka, Rafal Zielinski p. manager. Gilbert Dinel p.c. Rafal Productions Inc.

The most unexpected thing about **Babe!** is how smoothly the shoot seems to be running. While filming an orphanage scene in a condemned university building, the crew members bitch at each other, shots are altered, half the actors are kids and the producers still haven't rounded up all the funds. Yet, the only real setback that has put the film three shots behind schedule has been the exterior shooting, delayed by the weather.

Polish-born Rafal Zielinski, at 25 years of age, is directing his first professional feature. Rafal (he prefers) runs his set in an open and easy going manner. The shot is a simple dolly and pan of a cafeteria kitchen, where 12-year-old Yasmine Bleeth, scrubs a stone with steel wool, doing penance for an unsuccessful orphanage



Susan Sarandon giving Burt Lancaster a hand in Atlantic City, U.S.A.



escape. She sneaks a glance at the script as Rafal directs her in repeated dry runs. Changes in the shot are attempted, pros and cons pondered until Rafal takes the final decision. "You have to accept everyone's contribution, mold them together into one viewpoint and put it on the screen," Zielinski says later.

An interview is difficult with this man as he runs around the set, handling the details large and small. He is apologetic, but he has to get the job done. One is impressed by his humility, and his ability to treat everyone on the set in a courteous and affable manner. Though at times he must raise his voice to instruct the notalways-receptive children, generally he is calm and genial. "The first A.D. does the yelling for me," he quips.

Babe!, co-authored by Zielinski and Edith Rey, describes streetwise 11-yearold orphan (Yasmine Bleeth) who wants to become a disco star. She meets Sammy (Buddy Hackett) who teaches her the ins and outs of 'show biz'. "It's a very colourful and rich film," Zielinski says of the musical, which is structured on the theme of A Star is Born.



3, Draper St., Woburn, Mass. 01801 USA (617) 935-3920 The film, scheduled for completion at the end of December, is aimed at a teenage audience, although a wider appeal is expected. According to assistant producer Gilbert Dinel, the 1.25 million dollar project may give birth to a TV spin off, a disco special using segments and characters from the film. But this is still a 'maybe'.

All but two of the musical numbers have already been shot. "Music is integral to the film," says Dinel. The final edit is planned for March and there are hopes of taking the film to Cannes. Generally, everyone is happy with Zielinski's methods. According to sound engineer Richard Nichol, Rafal is understanding. "He takes feedback from the crew." But not everyone is pleased with the producers. There are complaints that the film suffers from costcutting in the wrong places, that the set is understaffed. "They're trying to save nickels and dimes" observed one crewmember.

Co-Producer, Arthur Voronka denies this. It's a low budget film and some crew members are spoiled by over-crewed, expensive productions. Voronka, whose past films include Loving and Laughing and Fortune in Men's Eyes feels that he can make a film on a low budget. "I'm out to make a commercial, viable film," he says. Does this mean sacrificing the quality of the film? "I think it can have all the artistic elements and still be commercially viable," he states.

Voronka feels that films aimed at Amer-

ican audiences and dependent on big budgets and big stars, are going in the wrong direction. "We should do what we can. We have to take advantage of what we have around us." He concedes that he's taking a chance by using a director new to the commercial feature industry — although Zielinski did walk off with Best Documentary award for **Michel Pellus** at this year's Moscow film festival — and the equally new Peter Czerski, Rafal's laconic cameraman, the bulk of whose experience has been with Zielinski.

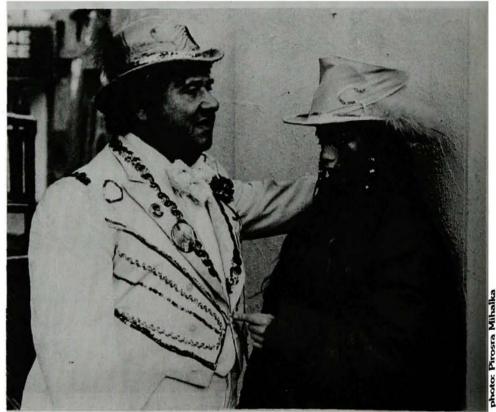


The shot is in a makeshift boardroom. Rafal draws his camera plan on a piece of scrap-paper and, alternating between English and Polish, discusses the shot with the cameraman.

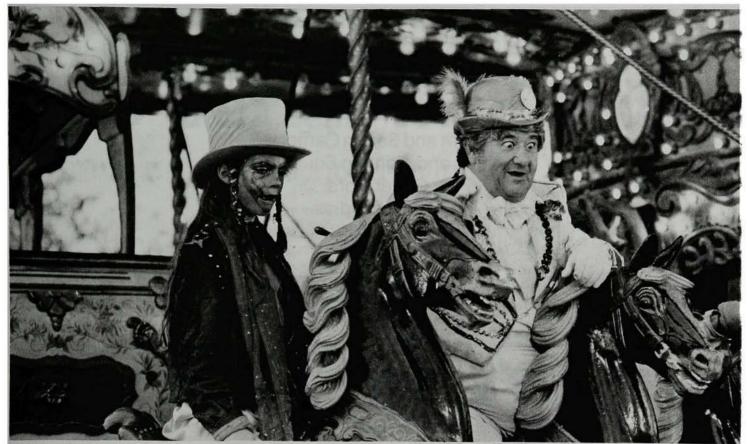
There are the usual problems. It's daytime in the script but it's dark outside. The sound man says there's too much echo, the camera can be heard grinding. Rafal consults with his crew, the solution is found.

In a free moment I ask him how he feels about his first feature, and whether he is worried about its success. "All you worry about is keeping on schedule and on budget." Then, excusing himself, he rushes off to solve another problem on the set.

David Arrayet



Babe's Theresa (Yasmine Bleeth) - envious of Sammy's (Buddy Hackett) jacket?



With the help of her friend and mentor, this rebellious orphan surmounts a multitude of hardships

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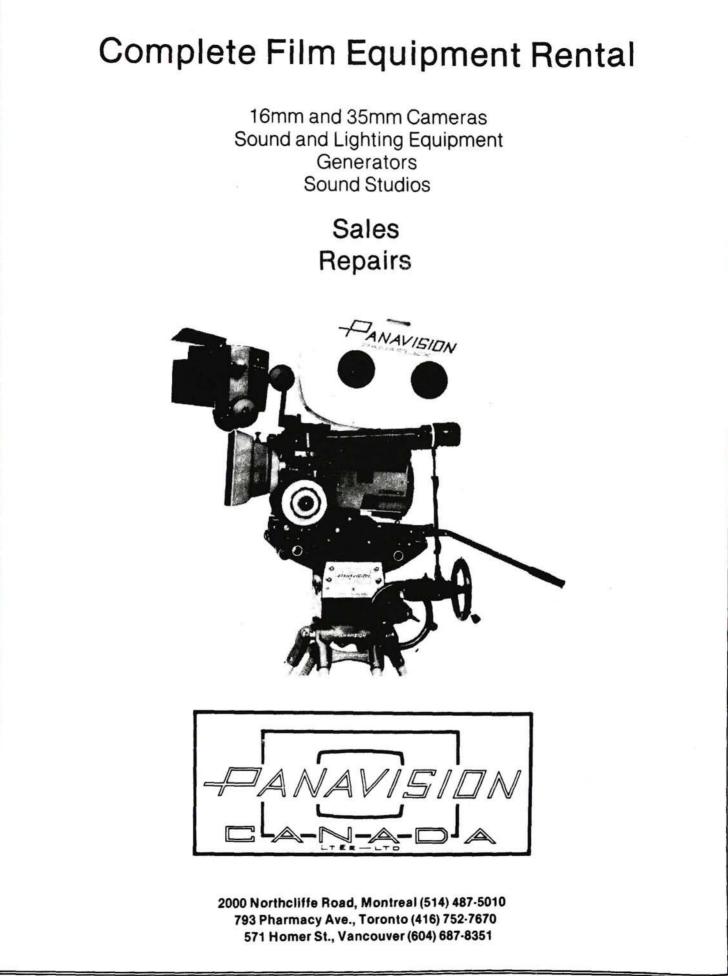
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