

is blind. He talks about seeing, and people ask him to come and look at things, which he considers to be as great a compliment as he can be paid — although it is he who makes it possible.

Remarkable too, is the discovery that R.H. Thompson has a natural flair for comedy. Says Gillard, "Sly's a key character, very funny. Everyone knows what a fine, serious actor R.H. is, but very few serious actors can be funny. Eric had worked with him on *American Christmas Carol*, and just felt that he could do it."

Funded through Newhouse, the Winnipeg investment corporation, the film is co-exec-produced by Gene Corman (F.I.S.T. and 50 other major movies over the last twenty years) and Dale Falconer, one of the moves behind TOFCO, independent distribution consortium in the U.S.A.

After two weeks exterior shooting in Nova Scotia, the film continues for another five in Toronto.

Martin Harbury

The Fright

p.c. Filmpian International Inc. (1980) exec. p. Pierre David, Victor Solnicki assist. to exec. p. Denise Ponton, Elaine Roy p. Claude Héroux sec. to p. Monique Legaré script co-ord. Denise DiNovi receipt. Mei Chan, Christine Moore comptroller Serge Major, Gilles Léonard (asst.) legal counsel Sander Gibson d. Jean-Claude Lord script Brian Taggart p. man. Gwen Iveson, Janet Cuddy (asst.) p. sec. Denyse Forget unit man. Michel Wachniuc a.d. Julian Marks (1st), Blair Roth (2nd), David Bailey (3rd) cont. France Boudreau p.a. Jerry Potashnick (1st), Louis Gascon (2nd), Peter Serapiglia (3rd) craftservice Michael Egyes p. account. Yvette Duguet books Joanne Goselin, Diane Williamson, Linda Duguet art. d. Michel Proulx, Dominique L'Abbé (asst.), Sylvie Dagenais (trainee) art dept. admin. Maurice Tremblay draftsperson Renée Tardif set dress. François Seguin, Jean Gauthier (asst.), Simon Lahaye (temp. asst.) construc. man. Claude Simard head props Jean-Baptiste Tard prop. buyer Frances Calder propsman Daniel Huysmans bird handler Marc Conway dog handler Gilles Chartier cost. design. Delphine White, Ginette Magny-Aird (asst.) head dresser Suzanne Canuel, Mario D'Avignon (asst.) seamstress/cutter Momelle LeBlanc (temp.) daily help Sylvie Bellemare make-up Inge Klaudi, Kathryn Casault (asst.) efx. make-up Stephan Dupuis, Michele Burke (asst.) hair Constant Natale hair (Miss Grant's) Pierre David d.o.p./cam. op. René Verzier 1st asst./focus Denis Gingras 2nd asst./clapper/loader Jean-Jacques Gervais cam. dept. trainee Barbara Samuels stills Pierre Dury Steadicam Louis De Ersted loc. mixer Don Cohen boom op. Gabor Vadnay gaf. Don Caulfield best boy Richer Francoeur elec. Marc Charlebois key grip Jacob Rolling asst. key grip/dolly Norman Guy grip Michel St-Pierre transport man. Charles Toupin talent driver (grant) Richard Marsan t.d. (Shatner) Réal Baril t.d. (Purl) Jean-Claude Cloutier drivers Glen Light, Michel Martin, Michel Sarao, Maurice Dubois, Vincente Di Clemente, Bernard Kirschner stunt co-ord. Jim Arnett spec. efx. Gary Zeller (superv.), Don Berry (co-ord.), Renée Rousseau (assist.), Yves Dubrieul (tech.), François Beaugard (tech.) casting (T.O.) Walker-Bowan, (Mtl.) Ginette D'Amico, Flo Gallant (assist.), Rosina Bucci (assist.) l.p. Lee Grant, Linda Purl, William Shatner, Michael Ironside, Lenore Zann, Helen Hugues, Sylvia

Lennick, Mary Rathbone, Harvey Atkin, Lenn Watt, Kirsten Bishopric, Tali Fisher, Elizabeth Mylle, Dabra Kirschenbaum, Jérôme Tiberghien, Dustin Waln, Maureen MacRae, Danny Silverman, Dorothy Barker, France March, Danièle Schneider, Victor Knight, Angela Gallagher, Dora Dainton, Sheena Lardin.

"*The Fright*", Quebec filmmaker Jean-Claude Lord's sixth feature is being shot entirely in Montreal. The interior and exterior sequences require a 40-

day shooting schedule, and, into their fourth week, crew and cast are confident the film will be finished on schedule.

American screenwriter, Brian Taggart, is available on the set for any consultation necessary. Two other Americans are also members of the cast: Lee Grant, in the starring role of Deborah Ballin, television broadcaster (with Montreal-born William Shatner as her friend and studio news director, Gary Ball); and Linda Purl, a relative newcomer on the Hollywood scene, who plays Sheila Monroe, a caring nurse who refuses to let herself become calloused. The conflict in the movie revolves around the character of Colt Hawker, a deranged man who has a fixation about the Ballin TV personality and wants to kill her. Portrayed by Michael Ironside, Colt focuses his attention on the woman who is a mother figure to him — an embarrassment which simultaneously pains and terrifies him.

Ironside says the film reminds him of a quote by Paul Schroeder, which contrasts the classical methods of suicide in Eastern and Western society. In the former, they isolate themselves, discreetly pulling down the blinds and quietly doing away with themselves; in the latter, it's a matter of going out publicly, with a loud bang. "The most



Awaiting *The Fright*? Here Lee Grant with William Shatner.

difficult part for me is making Colt believable, giving him the proper organic roots — a background to come from. But he's an interesting analysis, as there's a sensuality, a tactileness, about him. I want the audience not to sympathize with him, but to be able to empathize with his character."

Originally budgeted at \$4.8 million, **The Fright** is a Filmplan International production whose budget has currently shot up to \$5.5 million; the result of a production decision to boost the quality of the feature. No international or television pre-release distribution deals

have been made by the producers, who claim this is not a part of their policy. The feature is slated for release in October, 1981, and while some interim financing was generated by the Canadian Film Development Corporation, \$3 million came from Corporation Civitas Ltée (of which Filmplan is a subsidiary). The film is part of a public offering currently being circulated by Filmplan International.

An imposing eight-inch silver switchblade is one major prop in the film, while a second, more harmless, is the TV personality's pet — a four-year-old

macaw. This colourful, South American, long-tailed parrot was born and bred in captivity in Florida, until he was bought by Filmplan. In the film he will fly across a room to perch on someone's shoulder. Although the script does not require him to talk, his handler, Torontonion Marc Conway, says that he has taught the bird to say, "Don't kill that man," among a few other choice lines. Whether or not the director chooses to exploit the parrot's verbal talents remains to be seen.

One of the more interesting locations is the tenth floor of an abandoned warehouse on St. Lawrence Street. Affording a fine view of the city of Montreal (including spectacular sunsets and rising moons), its isolation makes it an ideal temporary studio. Unit manager Michel Wachniuc was responsible for the discovery. In return for use of the premises, production carpenters have built up the previously uncompleted floor to include Armstrong ceilings, floors, walls and doors. Fortunately for the building's owner, this has already led to a prospective new tenant.

In the film, most of the tenth floor will appear as the hallways and wards of — as the sign at the elevator states — the County General Hospital, in small-town Massachusetts. However, Colt Hawker's two-and-a-half room apartment is also set on the premises. The crew has had to contend with the only other tenant of the building by asking his plumbers to cease drilling while one of the main scenes was being shot. One of the film's several locations has included a fascinating one-day shoot at Montreal's Institute of Cardiology where bona fide surgeons were "shot" at work in their operating room. Plans for other interesting locations are in the works.

One cast member described the story as being halfway between **Wait Until Dark** and **Taxi Driver**, emphasizing that the actors are striving for the same level of quality. Several crew members felt that they were working with an excellent film based on a healthy script. Moreover, most of the seventy-plus workers are earnestly going about their duties despite a schedule that frequently results in their finishing work at three and four a.m.

Energy and dedication aside, Jean-Claude Lord's first English feature may, or may not, prove to be a fresh variation on the psychodrama theme. Mere entertainment, or entertainment with depth? In time, its artistic quality and box office receipts will tell the tale.

Anna Fudakowska



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