

Christmas), carries more disturbing overtones. While in a sense he receives a gift of time, he is given it because he, as his father jokingly tells him, is now mature enough to assume responsibility for it. Bobby Lee is on the verge of being thrust into the role of family patriarch and into the next generation.

If his birthday and his wife's constant reassurances about how great he is for forty have made the hero restless, his son's graduation makes him reflective. The valedictorian enthuses on about the future, but Bobby Lee, a once-promising architect turned designer-contractor of Senor Abe's taco stands, counters her optimism with what he, in self-pity, considers the truth of his life. Live for the present, he would warn, for the future is only "fat butts, TV and beer."

Thus middle-aged and dissatisfied with both his past and his present, Bobby Lee is totally unprepared to accept his own future when his father dies. As his mother, his wife, his neurotic sister, and his troubled son all turn to him for help, he cries out, "I don't want to be the daddy!" Words get translated into actions. He sheds his Olds for a Porsche, his three-piece suit for cowboy gear, and his responsibilities for the irresponsibilities of a boy in a Halloween costume. He, who has always built, decides to renovate both his life and Senor Abe's private suite in the Dallas stadium. His choice of a partner with whom to be irresponsible is alarmingly suitable. The moist-eyed, sensuous Dallas Cowgirl (Deborah Wakeham) fits his new image, and, since his first love was a cheerleader and professional virgin, Nancy obviously fulfills his fantasies about the past as well as the present. Clearly, Bobby Lee is regressing. By refusing his proper role, he begins to destroy everything that is important in his life — his family, his work, and his own values. Not until his world is in ruins and he turns to "no strings" Nancy for comfort does he recognize the magnitude of his losses. Only then can he throw over the tawdry joys of the red and tinsel heart-shaped balloon tied to a white Porsche, for the comforts of an Olds in the driveway and a warm life in that ever-simmering hot tub.

It is not surprising that **Middle Age Crazy** is finding its audience, for it mirrors the concerns of 1980. Superficially, it feeds the modern preoccupation with "lifestyles" and catches the details of each with beautiful telling economy: mother's bouffant hairdo and

pastel mink stole; father's Winnebago; sister's dramatically stylish, hard-edge hat (contradicted by her pigtail); the earnest shining face of the born-again Christian; the vulgarity of Senor Abe, whose foul language unfortunately pervades the film; the groping inarticulateness of the young; Nancy's clinging, red, pseudo-gym clothes; and the split-level bedroom with raised hearth of the affluent middle class. Yet, while these often provoke laughter, the effect is more generous than satirical. The focus is on Bobby Lee, not on his society.

More fundamentally, the times are ready for the film's comedy and its

moral. Deftly directed by John Trent, the scenes end on good lines and cut swiftly to good visual laughs, and the movie paces itself to the hero's life reflecting his own sense of time. Moreover, in a year when the popular press has dropped R.D. Laing's notion of family-as-destructive, for articles on family-as-life-enhancing, **Middle Age Crazy** hits the right note. Today, facing up to middle-class responsibilities is once again respectable. (Did anyone else notice that abortion is never considered when Greg Burnett's girl becomes pregnant?)

Anna Carlsdottir

Claude Fournier's Les Chiens Chauds

(Hot Dogs)

d. Claude Fournier p. Marie-José Raymond sc. Claude Fournier, Marie-José Raymond p. Claude Fournier mus. Paul Baillargeon ed. Claude Fournier sd. Richard Nichol l.p. Harry Reems, Nicole Morin, Daniel Pilon, Geoffrey Bowes, Gilles Latulippe, Fione Reid p.c. Squad Film Ltd. (1979) col. 35mm running time 96 min. distrib. Cinépix Inc.

After playing leading man (the hood) to Linda Lovelace in **Deep Throat** and Georgina Spelvin in **The Devil in Miss Jones**, Harry Reems has decided to let it all hang inside as he makes his Canadian acting debut in Claude Fournier's **Hot Dogs** (formerly **The Clean Up Squad**).

This farcical whimsy is Fournier and Marie-Josée Raymond's two-dimensional kiddie story for adults about the misadventures of a police vice squad and its attempts to clean up prostitution. Fournier's warm colour cinematography makes the film appear to cost more than 1.8 million dollars.

In this ridiculous story there are no bad guys. In fact, everyone is likable; cute, luscious hookers, and just-a-job cops alike. Mr. Clean (Reems), the new head of the vice squad, is out to maintain his reputation as an efficient purveyor of correct social morality. "I'm not known as Mr. Clean for nothing," he boasts as he shows his vice squad slides of a deserted Yonge Street, his last conquest. The vice squad hot shots then proceed to entrap prostitutes and pimps, in scene after mindless scene — often fumbling their lures and arrests.

One masseuse-hooker, upon discovering her client's badge, turns the sun lamp on his vitals for revenge. Cute? Perhaps. Funny? Snicker.

Chiens Chauds's first-week gross of \$130,000, in Montreal and Quebec City, has set a new record for Famous Players Canada. Fournier, ever-popular since he made **Deux femmes en or** a decade ago, may explain the good box office — as may the presence of a host of Quebec film stars. Perhaps willing audiences want inflated funniness in these inflation-filled times.

The story: a cop, Morris (Geoffrey Bowes), loses his wife Lilli (Denise Naples), when she learns that her husband is dressing as a woman to entrap prostitutes. She in turn is swept up in a raid when visiting a masseuse friend and is booked as a hooker. A furious Morris vows to get rid of Mr. Clean. He hires Stella Moon (Nicole Morin) — who is to prostitution, what Mickey Mantle is to baseball — to seduce Clean, then take compromising photos.

But this is the new Harry Reems. He's all innocence, a boy scout leader and bird watcher, who's seemingly uninterested in sex, and impossible to compromise. Stella finally lures him to dinner but fails to entice him. Mr. Clean reveals his depth, when he explains that he likes his job because that's what he's paid for. They accidentally trigger the automatic sprinkler system and are drenched. Stella's pert breasts are now wholly visible through her wet see-through dress. Reaching still further for character depth, Clean, back at his apartment, explains how he has modeled himself after his father, a martinet inspector.

Stella's alluring bosom fails to make Clean think of anything but a hot bath and his rubber duckie. Stella soaps him



Looking for **Hot Dogs**? Monique Lepage checking out Gilles Latulippe's pocket

up but he resists. It's all very clean. Then, movie magic! They fall for each other. And while consummating their burning passion in the back seat of his car, Clean develops a crook in his back, only to get stuck in an uncomfortable missionary position. His car is towed to the police garage, where a welder must cut away the roof so he can be lifted out, and finally, straightened out at the hospital. At the same time, a group of transvestites and weight lifters are being herded through after vice squad entrapment at the Fire Island beach party. A reporter photographs the hapless Mr. Clean and when the photo hits the papers, he resigns. At the hospital, Stella visits Clean and swears her love. He will make her an honest woman with marriage.

The new vice squad chief is Benito (Paul Berval), one of the hot shot cops who is a pawn of the local godfather, Don Parchesi — amusingly burlesqued by Jean Lapointe. Morris and his wife Lilli are reunited as Stella and Mr. Clean are about to take their wedding vows. End of 100% Canadian feature film, financed by tax dollars, the CFDC, the Institute québécois du cinéma and Famous Players Limited.

This nonsense does at least poke fun at the whole vice squad concept, and the all-too-frequent entrapment techniques that police use to put pressure on

prostitutes. Pity that Fournier and Raymond's screenplay missed the chance to comment on how vice squads seem to habitually rear their heads when city administrations wish to divert attention from municipal corruption.

There is a recurring, running gag involving Harry the Exhibitionist who, either in disguise as an armless cripple or package-laden consumer, lures women to reach into his bottomless trenchcoat pocket for change. He gets a free feel while the hapless do-gooders are grossed out. Harry the Exhibitionist's identity is the only surprise in the film.

A final word about Harry Reem's metamorphosis from prurience to purity. Seeing him stand on two legs instead of three, one can't help but conclude that he's as wooden as Howdy Doody's wooden...(ahem) head. While shooting in Montreal in 1979 he claimed that he wanted to be taken for a serious (?) actor. Who would have guessed that born-again Harry, with or without clothes, decent or indecent script, had it in him? It's lucky his colleagues sustain the film. With **Hot Dogs** executive producers Dunning and Link (of **Meatballs** money fame) may have found more gravy.

Gary Evans

George Mendeluk's The Kidnapping Of The President

d. George Mendeluk p. George Mendeluk, John Ryan exec. p. Joseph Sefel sc. Richard Murphy, based on the novel "The Kidnapping of the President" by Charles Templeton story consult. Barry Pearson d.o.p. Michael Malloy, b.s.c. creative consult. Henry Richardson ed. Michael McLaverty art d. Douglas Higgins orig. film score Paul Zaza p. man. Tony Thatcher, Angela Heald (asst.) a.d. Gerry Arbeid (1st), Don Brough (2nd), Maureen Fitzgerald (2nd), Goff Martin (3rd), Mark Johnston (3rd) sec. unit d. Larry Paul, Barry Pearson loc. man. Brian Ross, Marc Dasso (asst.) cam. op. Bob New, Paul Mitchnick (1st asst.), Marvin Midwicki (2nd asst.) sd. mix. Douglas Ganton boom Tom Hilderley cont. Pauline Harlow ward. Angie Vastagh (mistress), Sherry McMorran (asst.), Mary Ann Wilson (asst.) hair Victoria Truscott (design), Jocelyn McDonald (stylist) make-up Lee Kruse, Helen Crocker asst. art d. Lee Kruse, Helen Crocker asst. art d. Elinor Fairless Barg, Christine Mooney (trainee), Birgit Siber (trainee) props. mas Michael Stockton, Laird McMurray (asst.) set dress. Henry Ciolczynski, Lindsey Goddard (asst.) spec. efx. Peter Hutchinson, Richard Albain, Ron Pampu (asst.), Greg Cannon (make-up) gaf. Roger Bate best boy Richard Allen elec. Bill Brown key grip Norman Smith grip Mark Manchester (2nd), Brian Potts (3rd) asst. ed. Elaine Foreman, Michael Dandy sd. ed. John Kelly, Kevin Townshend, Elaine Foreman (asst.), Richard Kelly (asst.) re-rec. Nolan Roberts, Mike Hoogenboom elec. music Nash The Slash carp. Mark Molin p. co-ord. Janina White, Janefer Wyman Rosenthal p. account. Irene Phelps, Doreen Davis (asst.), Susie Lore (asst.), Roma Panczysyn (asst.) p.sec. Lynette McPeake asst. to p. Robert McEwan asst. do d. Andreas Blackwell driver capt. Don Baldassarra p.a./drivers Curtis Brown, Michael Curran, Gail Heaslip, John James Houston, Izidore Musallon, Dilip Mirchandani, Tom Pinteric, Richard Spiegelman l.p. William Shatner Hal Holbrook, Van Johnson, Ava Gardner, Miguel Fernandes, Cindy Girling, Elizabeth Shepherd, Michael J. Reynolds, Gary Reineke, Maury Chaykin, Ken Anderson, Sully Boyar, Patrick Brymer, Jackie Burroughs, David Cadiente, Bob Collins, Michael Fairman, Buddy Ferrens, Mike Fortman, Frederick Franklyn, Chappelle Jaffe, Michael Kane, Michael Kirby, Paul Larson, William Marquez, Lynda Mason Green, William McDonald, Mina Mina, Myron Natwick, Aubert Pallascio, Steve Pernie, Virginia Podesser, Joseph Ragno, George Robertson, John Romain, Michael Ross, Richard Sargeant, Sandra Seacat, John Stocker, Angus McInnes, Wally Bondarenko, Richard Fitzpatrick, Paul Hubbard, Irving Link, Jay Nelson, Dini Petty, Walker Boone, Elias Zarou, Larry Duran, Bob Hannah, Joanne Lang-Hannah, Terry Martin, Karl Miller, Rick Parker pub. Stephenson Ramsay O'Donnell unit pub. Patricia Whittingham casting Canadian Casting Associates, Peter Laven-