

Christopher Chapman's
Kelly

Exclusive of horror films that follow their own formula, the movies of English Canada observe certain clichés. Exploit the landscape: fly over, around, up and down the mountains; linger on the prairies; shoot the sunset; look for possibilities in snow, water and trees. If the action flags, make use of rapids, blizzards or dust storms. If you must specify the location, call it Alaska, Long Island, Montana, Texas or Bear Island; otherwise, keep mum. Include among the characters a wise old Indian or a philosopher-sage rooted in an earlier, simpler time. Growing up should be the theme, generally plotted around the search for a father, dead or alive. Whether, in the end, his values are accepted or rejected, the finding of that father is necessary to future fulfillment, because mother, when she appears at all, is ineffectual. Show the seeker as troubled or disruptive, but establish from the beginning a sensitivity that indicates a basic natural goodness. Gather a chorus of quaint rustics or ethnics to comment wryly on the action, to add colour and to define the community. Furthermore, don't forget to display a confusing ambivalence toward nature. It must be beautiful or sublime in the best eighteenth-century aesthetic tradition, with the power to heal the wounded psyche. On the other hand, it must be genuinely threatening and capable of nurturing mad trappers and killers.

Above all, remember that animals respond instinctively to good people. Relationships with animals, in fact, be they birds, dogs, horses, wolves or Kodiak bears, provide the window into the human soul. To guarantee a General rating, a touch of Walt Disney's sentimentalism is not amiss, although surely not to the point where seven Trappist

monks play the Seven Dwarfs in *Kelly's* Alberta-as-Alaska forest. But perhaps that's just an in-joke, not a model to emulate. Indeed *Kelly* is not a model to be emulated.

Kelly provides a study in why the rules that it so faithfully observes prove no substitute for a sound dramatic screenplay. The landscape, as photographed by Paul Van Der Linden, is marvelous; the rapids are dangerous. George Clutesi, as Clute, overcomes the banality of his role as wise-man-who-talks-with-foxes to give the most interesting performance. But the script sinks everyone.

Kelly pretends to be the story of a young girl, frustrated by dyslexia, who has become a problem for her mother. Equally frustrated, her mother ships her to Alaska, to a bush-pilot father whom she has never met, since her parents divorced when she was born. In nature, she will learn to accept animals, her father, her mother and, most importantly, herself.

The first weakness in this screenplay concerns the characters. Aside from the fact that their dialogue is excruciatingly predictable, the story itself doesn't give them any scope. Susan, Kelly's mother, well-played by Elaine Nalee, has to be incurably urban. Her father, Dave (Robert Logan, also the author of all this simple-mindedness), can only be competent and warm; he smiles, showing even white teeth. The villain, who doesn't fit comprehensively into the main story, is the mad trapper, Beechum (Doug Lennox); he snarls, revealing horrid black teeth. The young heroine (Twyla-Dawn Vokins), because she changes, should be interesting, but the script snatches the opportunity away from her. Engaging as a defiant problem-child, game for every gesture including bank robbery, once she reaches the mountains, her resourcefulness is not allowed to function.

The primary device for establishing character in *Kelly* is the animal. Father and Clute are introduced rescuing a wolf caught in the mad trapper's snare;



● In the bowels of the mine Helene Udy meets her Valentine.

George Mihalka's
My Bloody Valentine

My Bloody Valentine is yet another in the seemingly endless stream of murdering-masked-maniac movies and it's a typical example of the genre. Which is to say, terrible. The writing, acting and photography range from flat to embarrassingly amateurish. One example will suffice: some young miners and their girlfriends are holding a secret party in the mine company's cafeteria (the official party having been shut down because the masked maniac has delivered some hacked-out hearts to the police chief, with a warning that he will continue to kill unless the townspeople remember a 20-year-old cave-in and honour it by never holding another Valentine's Day dance). In the middle of the party, in the middle of the dancing and making out, one of the girls says, in her cutest itsy-bitsy voice, "Oh, let's go down in the mine!" And the men agree. Ridiculous: they work long, hard, dirty, dangerous hours in that mine and they're willing to party in it? No way! In any real, or even plausible world, a mine is a hated and feared place. Nobody parties in mines. Ever!

As bad as this movie is, there are three pluses: for Canadian nationalists there are characters that say, "Eh?"; there are unmistakable Nova Scotian locations, and there is a Canadian flag flying in one shot. That flag means nothing to the story, but it is nice to find a producer who realizes that American audiences for this sort of thing don't need to see an American flag on the screen. They don't care where the action is set, so long as there's plenty of it.

For genre fans, there is the ending. The killer is neither captured nor killed. Instead, he runs away babbling for his mentor (the original mad killer of the 20-year-old cave-in). Like the Canadian setting this too is meaningless, but genre fans often take great delight in variations on a theme. Often there is precious little else for them to delight in.

The third plus is for folklore fans. The killer's motives are not sex or revenge, the two genre standbys. Instead, they seem to be based on the admonitory and punitive. Those familiar with the little-

known legend of the Foolkiller—the man possessed by a god and made into an instrument of divine vengeance—or the madman who imagines himself as such, can view *My Bloody Valentine* as an unconscious retelling of the myth.

Unfortunately, none of these things manage to push *My Bloody Valentine* beyond the level of trite hackwork.

Andrew Dowler ●

MY BLOODY VALENTINE d. George Mihalka p. John Dunning, Andre Link, Stephen Miller sc. John Beard story concept Stephen Miller assoc. p. Lawrence Nesis p. superv. Bob Presner d.o.p. Rodney Gibbons superv. ed. Jean Lafleur mus. Paul Zaza — Songs by Lee Bach art. d. Penny Hadfield exec. asst. to p. Irene Litinsky p. compt. Leo M. Gregory p. man. Danny Rossner unit/loc. man. John Desormeaux a.d. Ray Sager (1st), Julian Marks (1st), Anne Murphy (2nd), Richard Stanford (3rd) cast. Baly Casting cast. consult. Daniel Hausmann, Arden Ryshpan cont. Joanne Harwood sd. Bo Harwood boom Jean-Claude Matte cam. op. Louis De Ernsted asst. cam. Daniel Jobin (1st), Paul Hurteau (1st), Richard Montpetit (2nd), Jean-Pierre Plouffe (2nd) keygrip Marc De Ernsted grip Jean-Maurice De Ernsted, Antonio Vidosa, Jacques Girard, Chuck Lapp gaf. Walter Klymkiw best boy Jean Courteau electr. Mike Ruggles, Denis Ménard, Alex Amyot gen. op. Alex Dawes asst. art. d. Raymond Larose, Tina Boden props buyer John Walsh set dress. Maurice Lebland set props David Phillips, Ryal Cosgrove (asst.) construc. superv. Harold Thrasher head carp. Marsha Hardy, Tom Daly carp. Bruce Jackson, Mario Mecuri scenic painters Larry Demedash, Kari Hagness art. d. asst. Keith Currie, Patrick Dunne, Anne Currie cost. des. Susan Hall ward. mistresses Lise Pharand, Carol Wood, Renee April ward. asst. Benjamin Robin make-up Louise Rundell, Carolyn Van Gorp (asst.) hair Huguette Roy stunt co-ord. Dwayne McLean stunts Brent Meyer, Sandy Webb, Jayne Rutter, Peter Cowper stills Piroška Mihalka ed. Rit Wallis, Gerald Vansier, Chantal Bowen (asst.) animal trainers Mark Conway, Danny Johnston p. acct. Lucie Drolet, Trudi Link, Donna Young (asst.) p. co-ord. Marcelle Gibson (N.S.), Yaniko Palis (Montreal) p. sec. Nicole Webster, Kathy Wolf craft serv. Hank Labelle, Arlie MacLennan driver capt. Robert Imeson p.a. Victoria Frodsham, Steve Wilkins, Bill Drake, Mike Stubbart, Gary Vermier 2nd unit d. Ray Sager 2nd unit a.d. John Desormeaux, Victoria Frodsham 2nd unit cam. Peter Benison, Frank Lenk sp. make-up efx. The Burman Studio, Tom Burman, Ken Diaz, Tom Hoerber sp. mechan. devices Cosmekinetics (Northridge, California) post-p. superv. Rit Wallis dialog. ed. Gerald Vansier sd. efx. Jeff Bushelman, Pat Somerset, Burbank Editorial Service Inc. sd. re-rec. Joe Grimaldi l.p. Paul Kelman, Lori Hallier, Neil Affleck, Keith Knight, Alf Humphreys, Cynthia Dale, Helene Udy, Rob Stein, Tom Kovacs, Terry Waterland, Carl Marotte, Jim Murchison, Gina Dick, Peter Cowper, Don Francks, Patricia Hamilton, Larry Reynolds, Jack Van Evera, Jeff Banks, Pat Hemingway, Graham Whitehead, Fred Watters, Jeff Fulton, Pat Walsh, Marguerite McNeil, Sandy Leim, John MacDonald p.c. The Secret Film Company Inc. 1980 dist. Paramount Pictures col. 35 mm running time 91 min.



● Kelly's Robert Logan—with a bear behind.