

IN PROGRESS...

Cries in the Night

exec. p. Barry Allen, p. William Fruet, d. William Fruet, sc. Ida Nelson, ph. Mark Irwin, p. asst. Goff Martin, a.d. Susan Longmire, wardrobe Mary Jane McCarty, ed. Ralph Bunjes, stills Rick Porter, sound Ian Hendry, continuity Marie-Thérèse Boily. l.d. Kav Hawtrev, Barry Morse, Lesley Ann Donalson, Dean Garbett, Harvey Atkin, Peggy Mahon, Alfred Humphrys, Jack Van Evera, Les Rubie, p.c. Incident at Northampton Production.

Cries in the Night may be the smoothest, most serene of the more than a dozen shoots going in Toronto this summer. Despite weather that's shuffled clear skies, cloud and rain like the pea in the old shell game, the picture is on budget and on time.

A good part of the credit for this must go to the crew, led by Dop Mark Irwin. Most of them have just finished five weeks together in Puerto Rico, shooting *Tanya's Island*. They're thoroughly used to each other and, judging from the comments they made when I visited the set at Lakeshore Studios (where they'd moved after three weeks at the main location in Markham), they've become quite fond of one another. They all seem to work together quite efficiently.

However, legendary gaffer, Jock Brandis tells me the efficiency is all illusion. He suggests that if I listen to the same people communicating on the same subject five minutes later, I'll hear them being just as firm and sure about totally contradictory information. Jock Brandis, however, is a world-class cynic and three-times winner of the Liberal Party of Canada's Lying to the Press Competition. He may be right, but if he is, the chaos is eliciting panicky responses from no one and the work proceeds apace.

The other major factor in the success of the shoot is the schedule itself. Seven weeks (from July 23rd to September 7th) seems a generous schedule for a traditional horror film that doesn't rely heavily on special effects.

Cries in the Night is a horror film of the madman-with-an-axe variety. Teen-aged Heather arrives at her grandmother's funeral home to help turn it into a tourist home. It's the only way the old lady can hang onto the place since her husband, the undertaker,

died. There's one guest already, the affable Mr. Davis, but two others arrive, Harry and Florie. At first they appear to be married but, in fact, they are a salesman and his floozie on a hot weekend. They're murdered. Heather begins to hear voices in the night. Grandma denies that there's anyone in the cellar. More murders. Could it be Hibbs, the grotesque and horny handyman? Is Mr. Davis as affable as he seems? Finally, Heather becomes the target and that leads to the shattering climax in the embalming room.

The script is by Ida Nelson, whose previous credits are in television and include *A Cosmic Christmas*, and producer/director William Fruet is quite pleased with its traditional qualities. He feels that audiences associate more with reality than with the science fiction/fantasy of *Alien* or *Hallowe'en*, making **Cries in the Night** a "marketable commodity." The rumor on set is that he's going for a GP rating, a move that will enhance the film's marketability in a season filled with Restricted horror movies.

The special effects for the film are being done by Dennis Pike and include the shovels that, later that afternoon, are to bludgeon Barry Morse (as Mr. Davis) to death. Pike's problem was to

create something light enough to do no damage, yet strong enough to seem real and not to break. He solved it by casting his shovels in urethane, a lightweight fiberglass. Since urethane can't be painted, he created a realistic look by coating the inside of the plaster mold with a mixture of black paint, latex rubber and aluminum. The resultant rough, dark, metallic finish looks quite realistic.

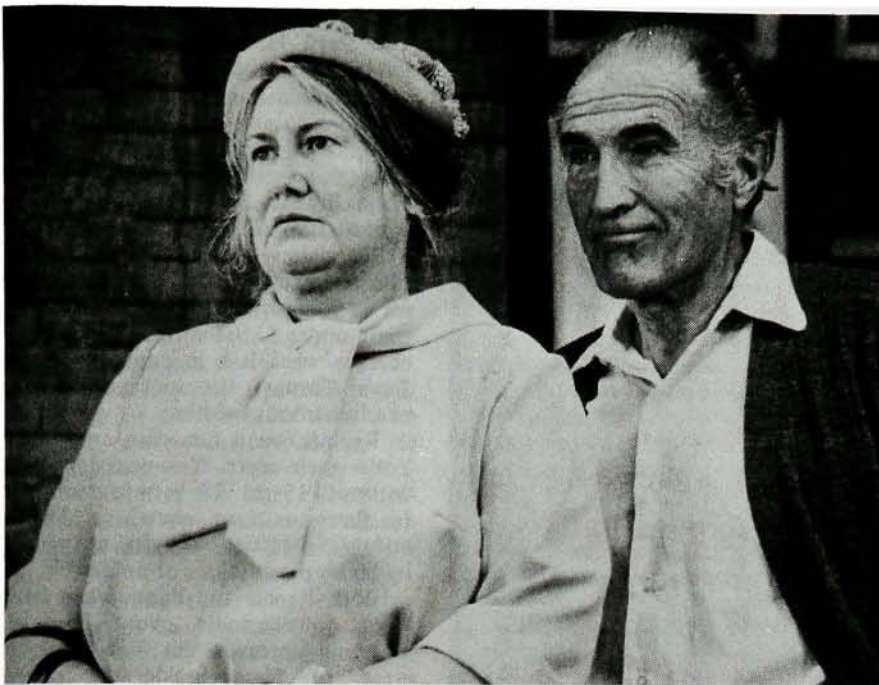
The look of the picture will be "Ontario Gothic." Mark Irwin is using lots of soft lights and no camera filters for an effect he describes as "Muted, mellow, contemporary low key." The mood will be enhanced by a lot of motivated tracking and deep focus. He adds that the murders are receiving a lot of time, energy and coverage.

Cries in the Night boasts an all-Canadian cast. Grandma is played by Kay Hawtrev, Heather by newcomer Leslie Donalson and Mr. Davis by Barry Morse.

When I mentioned that Mr. Davis appears, in the script, to have little character, Barry Morse replied, "That's very interesting to an actor because it provides a framework into which you can put almost everything. What I chose to do, in conjunction with our director, Bill Fruet, is to make him a seemingly contradictory person, so that one says at one moment, "Well, he's a very good-natured and soft-hearted and sentimental and rather befuddled old chap." Then another time, one thinks, "Well,



A tense moment between Hibbs (Stephen Miller) and Heather (Lesleh Donaldson) on the set of **Cries in the Night** photo: Rick Porter



Grandma (Kay Hawtrey) and Mr. David (Barry Morse) on the Elora, Ontario set of *Cries in the Night*

is he exactly what he seems?" The script, I think deliberately, leaves a lot for the actors to do and it's noticeable that a great many good scripts of this kind, in this genre, also leave a lot for the artist to do."

With distribution deals not completed, William Fruet and associate pro-

ducer Patrick Doyle wouldn't reveal the budget, but other sources inside the company put it at around 1.5 million. The film is also undergoing a little change, but that, too, remains an official secret.

Andrew Dowler

The Squad

p. André Link, Marie-José Raymond, d. Claude Fournier, asst. d. Avdé Chiriaess, Michèle St-Arnaud sc. Claude Fournier, from an original idea of John Dunning and André Link ph. Daniel Fournier art. d. Anne Pritchard cost. François Laplante l.p. Harry Reems, Jeff Bowes, Daniel Pilon, Jean Lapointe, Fiona Red, Gilles LaTulippe, Nicole Morin, Monique LePage, p.c. Squad Film Ltd.

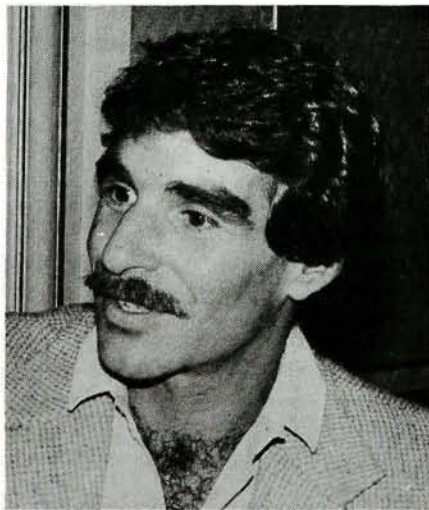
The Squad, due to wrap Sept. 7, began shooting July 21.

"We're on schedule," says veteran Quebec director, Claude Fournier. Then he chortles, "And within budget — this far anyway."

Marie Josée Raymond, producer, production manager and Fournier's partner in Rose Films and real life, permits spontaneity to poke through her cool, artful elegance to explain their success. "We've got a great crew! It's a lot of hard work but a very pleasant shoot."

On set, crew and cast morale is high.

Atop Mont Royale, against a "Giotto Sky," soundman Richard Nichol delays a take to find a "dead" spot for his



Harry Reems stars in Claude Fournier's latest comedy *The Squad*

Nagra. Bent in the cold wind, he shuffles the machine around, aware everyone is waiting. Instead of curses, someone yells, "Don't look for water; look for oil." Soon, a pleased Fournier jigs atop a rented truck. Later, when stunning black newcomer, 6 ft. plus Maggie Crooks (Fast Annie) is prone on a patrol car front seat, one foot out the back window, the other out the front, she'll be asked for some foot expressions. Her curling and uncurling toes straighten the kinkiest hair of most male onlookers. Someone mutters her legs are so long they meet at her chest; it's a sight when 5 ft 4 in. Fournier stands before her.

The Squad's budget is closer to \$1 million than the rumoured \$800,000, according to Irene Litinsky of Cinepix/DAL films. They, the CFDC, L'Institut Québécois du Cinéma, and Rose films are financing, though percentages are confidential. Private investors are involved, too; all \$5,000 units were snapped up within four days of the offering.

Daniel Pilon (Frank, "a cop who gets paid to get laid") says the film is "bawdy but not dirty." Purportedly a fast-paced comedy, it was co-authored by Raymond and Fournier. Mr. Clean (Harry Reems) is invited to rid Montreal of sin, having done so to Toronto. The morality squad he heads is corrupt and inept. Each cop's misadventures are depicted as he works under Clean's strait-laced supervision.

In one sequence, Reems and Swanson clumsily search a skyscraper foyer for clues. Suddenly, Reems points down.

Reems: "Pick it up."

Swanson: "But it's only a piece of lint, sir."

Reems: "Pick it up. We've got to start somewhere."

(Exasperated, Swanson wraps it in an oversized plaid handkerchief.)

Reems (taking Swanson aside): "We want the cold hand of the law in this man's pocket."

The "man" is Harry the Flasher (Gilles LaTulippe, praised by all). In the sequence prior, Deborah Weinstein has fainted after slipping a hand into the Flasher's pocket. The pocket has no pouch and everyone knows what's under a flasher's Aquascutum.

Much research has been done, since the authors originally had written a serious vice-squad corruption drama. It was DAL's John Dunning and André Link's suggestion that led to a transformation into comedy, which Fournier has done before (*Deux Femmes en Or*; *La Pomme, la Queue et les Pepins*; and *Je Suis Loin de toi, Mignonne*).