

MINI REVIEWS

by Pat Thompson

*First Choice*Superchannel launched the second 90-minute Ray Bradbury Trilogy during August. Once again, Atlantis Films of Toronto produced the three stories – all conceived and written by Bradbury, directed by Canadians, and with the now familiar mixture of casting from this country with non-Can "leads". It's no surprise to find the production values are all there along with interesting locations but, somehow, the stories seem flaccid and sort of ho-hum this time around.*

THE SCREAMING WOMAN

Heather loves the horror comics – Tales From The Crypt being a favourite – and her mother has a hard time prying her loose from them to hop on her bicycle and go for ice-cream. On her way back, Heather stops to pull out the secreted comic and have another read. Finally, she cycles off past a small stand of trees – and hears a woman's soft scream for help. While investigating, Heather hears another noise. "Who's crying?" she calls. Finding and seeing nothing, she rushes back home with her tale.

As Heather pours out her story, mother copes with melting ice-cream and blames all on a combination of the choice of reading material and a vivid imagination. Father is indulgent, and goes along to investigate the woody glade with Heather, but finds nothing.

So Heather recruits her friend Dippy, and persuades him to join in digging in the area. Dippy does hear screams, but being of contemporary outlook, is convinced that Heather is playing a concealed cassette. Then Old Man Kelly chases them off his plot. Next, the kids fix on Charles Nesbitt whose wife doesn't seem to be around. Heather's father, a long way back, once went out with Nesbitt's wife before they both married others, and she wrote a song for him (remember this plot signpost...). Heather goes looking for Mrs. Nesbitt at her home and, while ostensibly waiting for her, tells the husband about the Screaming Woman. Charles Nesbitt says she has a "weird imagination," and twitches a bit.

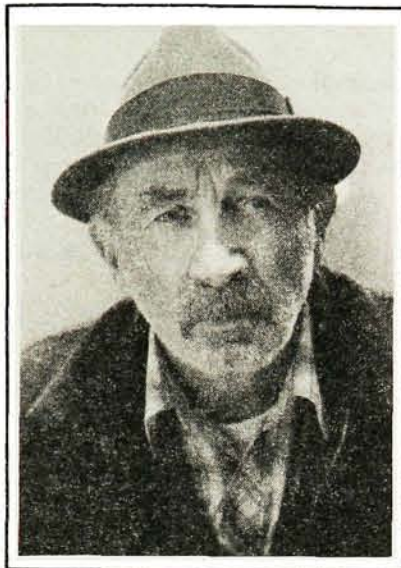
Finally, Heather in a half-sleep, hums a little song, arises from her bed and goes to the copse. Mr. Nesbitt is there too, but luckily Heather's dad comes to her rescue.

Good cinematography, and Bruce Pittman's firm hand on the direction, help to sustain what little tension there is. Drew Barrymore is chubbily bovine, and Canadian stalwarts do what they can with a little – Janet Laine Green, Roger Dunn, Ken James and Alan Scarfe.

d. Bruce Pittman l.p. Drew Barrymore, Janet Laine Green, Roger Dunn, Ian Heath, Ken James, Alan Scarfe.

THE TOWN WHERE NO ONE GOT OFF

Cogswell stares out of the train window as the small towns glide by. Across from him, a salesman wonders who lives in such God-forsaken



places – boring places, boring people, he asserts. Cogswell demurs, but the salesman persists, eventually daring him to get off and meet the folks in his "rural paradise."

The challenge taken up, Cogswell finds himself in Erewhon... get it? He wanders around the deserted streets and finally realizes he's being followed by the old man who was sitting in a rocking chair on the run-down train platform.

In the ensuing confrontation, the old man talks about anger bottled up inside, about hitting, and about murder – and finally says he has been waiting twenty years for a stranger to get off the train so that he could kill and get away with it. Though frightened, Cogswell thinks fast and turns the old man's plan around – and a deadlock results.

A mildly interesting little anecdote, set in a convincing location, and redeemed by an excellent performance by Ed McNamara as the bitter old man. But one wonders why Jeff Goldblum was recruited for Cogswell, as he literally walks through this run-of-the-mill role. And then there's Cec Linder and the vastly talented Clare Coulter playing virtual bit parts...

d. Don McBrearty l.p. Jeff Goldblum, Ed McNamara, Cec Linder, Clare Coulter.

BANSHEE

The garrulous Irish taxi-driver lets off his fare at the remote country mansion of eccentric film director, John Hampton. Doug Rogers is bringing a final screenplay for his friend to accept.

Hampton – womanizer, practical joker, all-around scoundrel – greets him at the door, tastefully clad in knickerbockers. Gazing out into the haze of an autumn evening, he murmurs, "Did you hear that? Never mind..." Doug follows his friend through the house as he reads the script, makes pointed comments, and scatters pages in his wake. Hampton teases and plants verbal darts, and purports to read a critical review of Doug's latest book. A mournful wailing cry seeps into the

house, and Hampton says it is the Banshee. He dares Doug to go out into the woods and charm the Banshee, and the writer indicates that he will do just that.

Doug walks among the trees – a veiled and draped figure of a beautiful young woman appears. She mouths poetic phrases and an impatient message, "Tell him he's needed – hurry!" He returns to the house and says that the most beautiful woman he has ever seen is waiting – "You must learn not to pay any mind to my jokes," Hampton responds. But, after the writer relates all the details of his encounter with the beautiful, pale as a lily maiden, Hampton decides he must go to her. The writer stands in the hall and listens to strange cries from the woods...

Peter O'Toole gives a familiar, quirky performance as the film director, Charles Martin Smith, as the writer, has a few smart lines, and Jennifer Dale is suitably ethereal in the title role.

Again, an excellent location and good camerawork but, once more, a soft, non-scary tale.

d. Doug Jackson l.p. Peter O'Toole, Charles Martin Smith, Jennifer Dale, Michael Copeman.

ANDY MOEBRICK'S LAST STAND

Another vibrant, sleazy, tongue-in-the-cheek offering from the maker of *Transplant* (Cinema Canada, June 1985). This time, filmmaker Steve Dimarco takes us into the netherworld of B films (perhaps even C and D films) where Andy Moebriek specializes in titles such as *Attack of The Mutilated Atom Creatures* and *Teenage Jail Bait* – cutting corners, making the would-be starlets, and generally cheating and chiselling his way through each day.

After promising Rita the lead in his new exposure epic, he changes his tiny mind. Rita, a sort of witch-in-training, persuades her friend Allegra to help cast a spell on the awful Andy. The basement is draped and decorated for the ritual, the girls robe-up, and the deed is done – "We can get any parts we want!" trumpets Rita.

Back at Andy's office, he's planning the latest double-cross. He's turning off one director in favour of another who has been persuaded to quit the union and work for less. Herman, this European 'master' of the art film, tastefully overdressed, dark glasses in place, and dragging a large fur coat along, talks grandly of bringing out "the inner turmoil" of the characters – Andy is appalled, he only wants skin and titillation.

The spell starts to work – Andy's hatred for house flies leads him to terrible destruction, including the bust of his idol Elvis, and to raging madness. Ah me, what a moral tale this filmmaker tells!

Steve Dimarco has, for this re-

viewer's money, the strong beginnings of a cult filmmaker. His sense of wry humour allied to snappy scummy stories, is reinforced by the use of actors who fit the type of roles his fertile imagination brings forth. The locations are well-chosen, and the colour of the films is suitably hard and murky – the reds are winey, the blues are midnight. Dimarco now has two of these TV half-hours under his belt, and it's rumoured that he's well into planning a third. It might just beat the Ray Bradbury Trilogies hands down.

p. Louie Odorico d./sc. Steve Dimarco cam. Brian Hebb sd. Peter Sawade ed. Melody Long, Karen Kanata, Eugene Amodeo running time: 25 mins. (approx.)

THE STORYTELLER

A man lights candles, and the music comes up. A woman's voice-over talks about the art of storytelling, and four people assemble around the candlelit table, start a tape recorder, up-end the hourglass – and the tale begins.

"Arthur's Story" is told in turn around the table several times, passing from man to woman to man to woman. The extemporized plot weaves from one to another, and the twists and turns these imaginations devise is great fun to bear, but it's not certain that it makes a film. The camera circles the quartet and, for the most part, they are not animated in person. It's the voice that counts, and one could just as easily close one's eyes and enjoy the tape the group is making...

A film by Bruce Moffitt/Toronto, running time: 28 mins., 16mm/tape.

A TRIP AROUND LAKE ONTARIO

A rather engagingly off-beat documentary on this man who's had two books published about camping trips with his family. Now forty, with his children grown up, he's going to write up this third trip he's taking alone and in October.

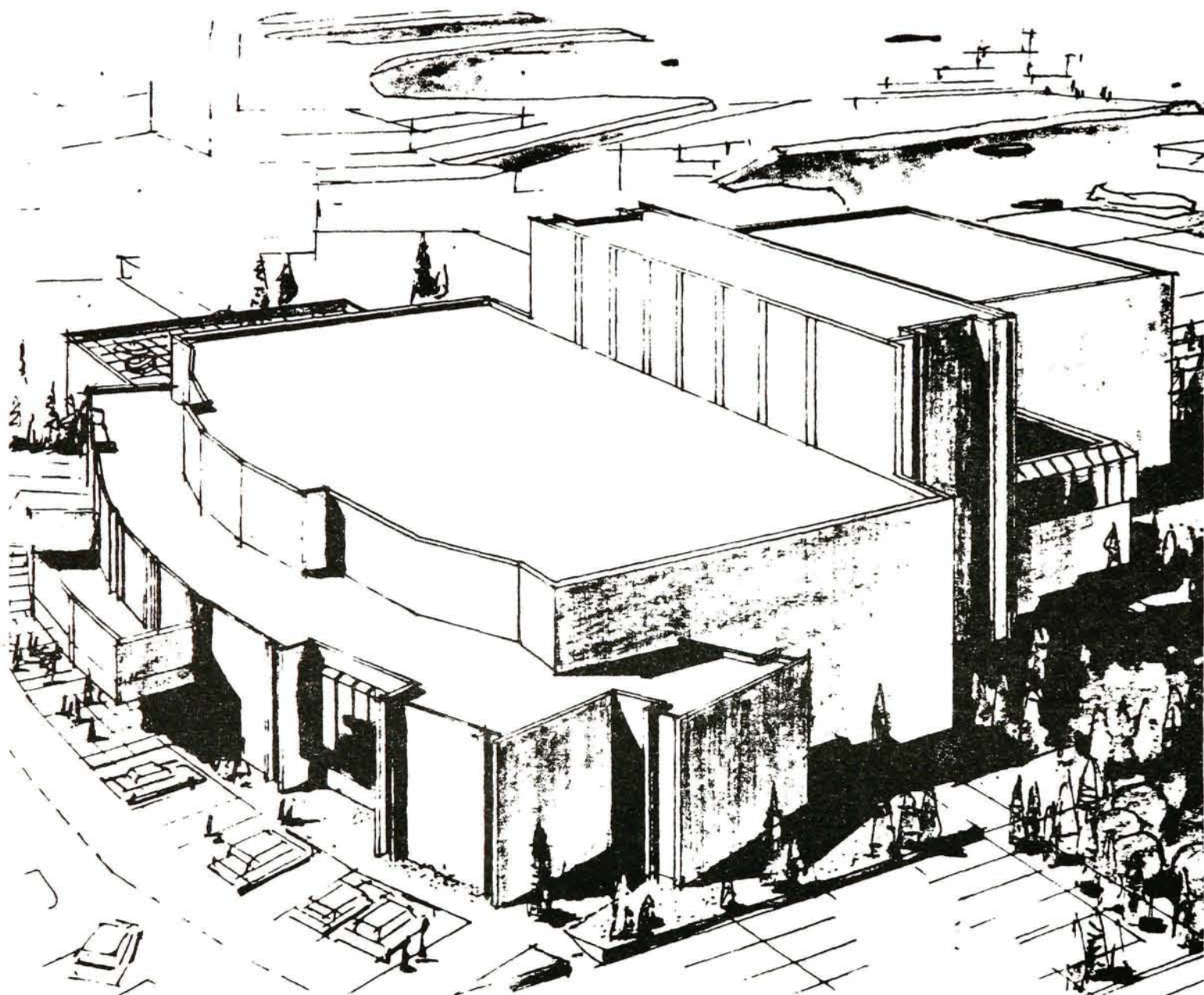
The writer bowls along in his car through the countryside, stopping in small towns and villages, talking generalities with the people he meets. The visuals are nice – mists, stones on the lakeshore, autumn trees, a ferry trip. No watch, no map – "Time loses its sharp little teeth" – and then he panics. "Let something happen... or the book will be a dud!"

It's O.K. People give forth with halting reminiscences and trite remarks – strippers, a customs officer, Casey the volunteer fireman, a strange retarded girl and her mother. And they smile and pose for the camera. And the writer forks over \$1,000 for car repairs...

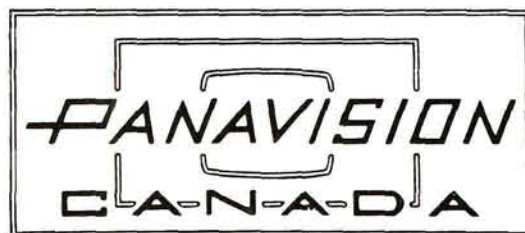
What's that? Sounds boring? Never. In fact, it exerts considerable natural, grass-roots charm. Back home, the writer clacks away at his computer keyboard as shots of his real "characters" come on the screen.

A film by Colin Brunton/Toronto, running time: 26 mins., col. 16mm/Beta. Made with assistance from The Canada Council/Ontario Arts Council.

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Denys Arcand

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Perspective Canada



Anne Trister

Director/Réalisatrice :

Léa Pool

Co-produced by/Coproduit par :

**NFB/ONF and/et
Les Films Vision 4 Inc.**



Pouvoir intime

Director/Réalisateur :

Yves Simoneau

Produced by/Produit par :

**Les Films Vision 4 Inc., in
association with/en collaboration
avec NFB/ONF**



Sonia

Director/Réalisatrice :

Paule Baillargeon



Passiflora

Co-directors/Coréalisateurs :

**Fernand Bélanger and/et
Dagmar Gueissaz Teufel**



Sitting in Limbo

Director/Réalisateur :

John N. Smith



The Final Battle — The Champions, Part 3

Director/Réalisateur :

Donald Brittain

Co-produced by/Coproduit par :

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Richard Cardinal: Cry from a Diary of a Metis Child

Director/Réalisatrice :

Alanis Obomsawin

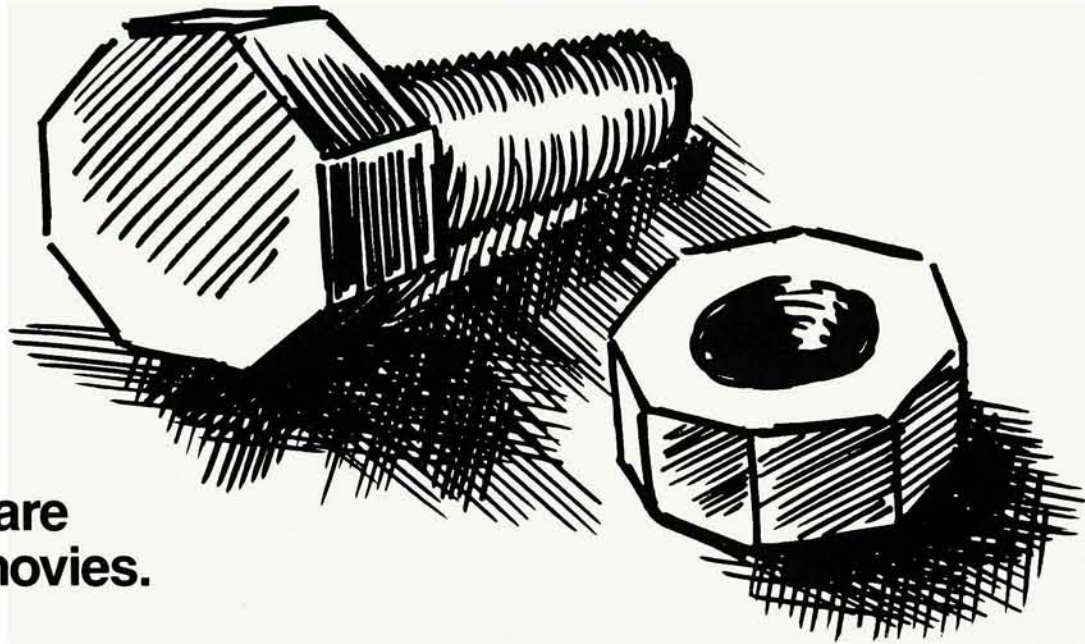
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	Lighting Workshop	Lighting Workshop	Interactive Video (panel)	Interactive Video: A Workshop
14:00 - 17:00	Signal Wars: Cultural Sovereignty and the New Technologies	New Ways of Seeing: Experiments in Visual Communication	Case Study — PM The British Creative Crossover	Technology, Technique & Dramatic Fiction: The Directors
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18:00 - 23:30	Screening Program	Screening Program	Screening Program	* Schedule subject to change without notice

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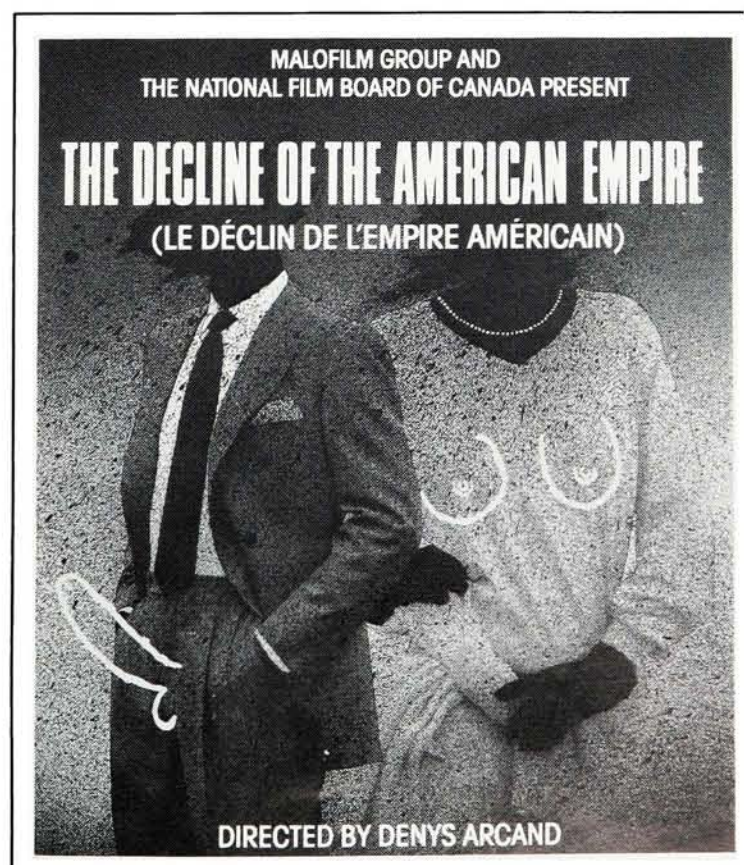


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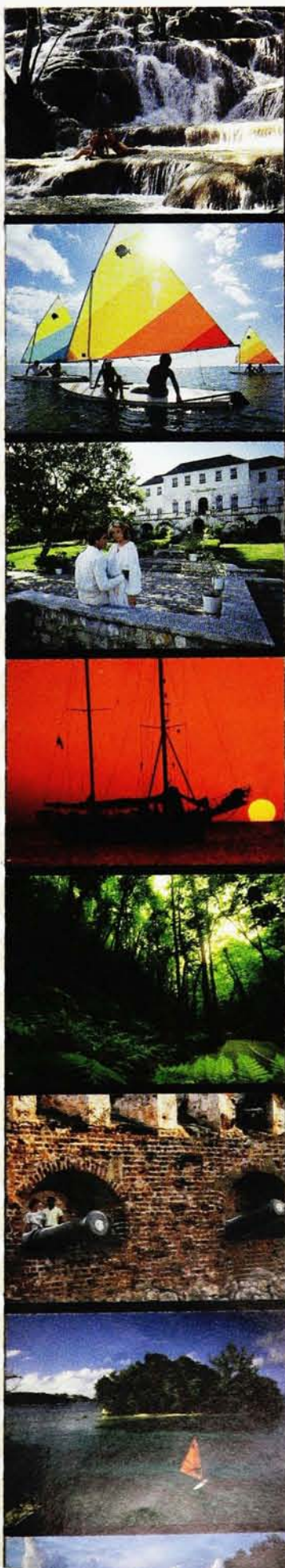
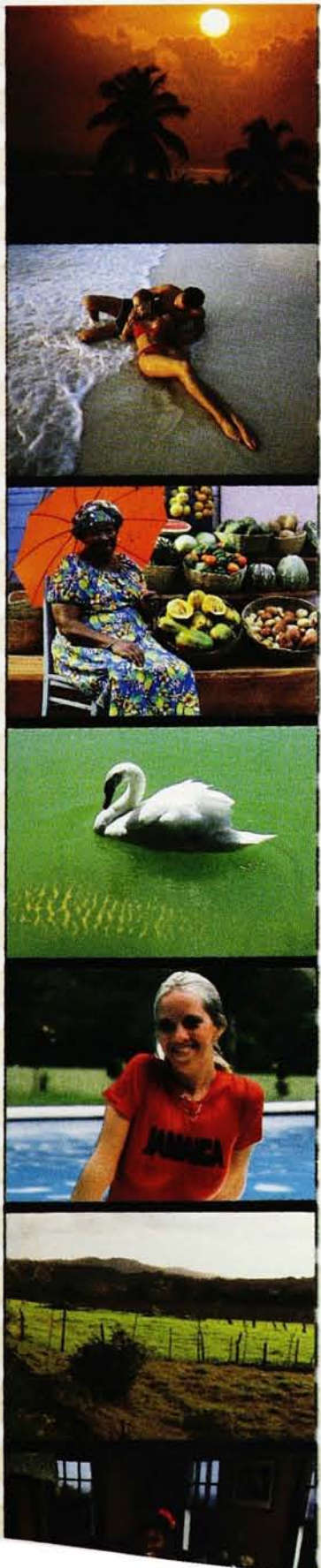
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