



Lies My Father Told Me

self, the audience is asked to take it on faith, to accept the appearance of feeling.

Yet given these limitations, the film works. Women were in tears at the end, and that's good boxoffice; the maudlin theme song is effective. And this is the sort of film which one is happy to claim as "Canadian". A well produced, thoughtful work with themes which are universal and which will hopefully find a sufficient audience to pay back the faith of the producers.

Connie Tadros

Brian Damude's

Sudden Fury

A film by Brian Damude. **Screenplay:** Brian Damude. **Cinematography:** James B. Kelly. **Music:** Matthew McCauley. **Sound:** Douglas Ganton. **Editing:** David G. Nicholson. **Performers:** Dominic Hogan, Gay Rowan, Dan Hennessey, Hollis McLaren, David Yorston, Eric Clavering, Sean McCann. **Producer:** Ben Caza. **Produced in 1974 by** Films Can. Productions. **Colour:** 16mm. **Running time:** 95 minutes. **Distribution in Canada:** Ambassador Films.

The Canadian Film Development Corp. low-budget programme has allowed a number of highly interesting films to be made; **The Hard Part Begins, Montreal Main and Bar salon**

immediately spring to mind. While I don't think **Sudden Fury** is as achieved a film as these three, it certainly merits attention and analysis. It is far more of a formula film or a genre film than we have come to expect from the low-budget features, which more often than not have been highly personal statements. Not that Brian Damude's film isn't personal, it's just that it exists more within the conventional commercial framework.

Sudden Fury has a very simple plot and as many probably have not seen it a short summary is worthwhile. The film revolves around a married couple, Fred and Janet, but everything is not well with their relationship. Janet is having an affair and is about to leave her husband, but the two of them are committed to going out of town together one Saturday. Fred, meanwhile, has plans that involve Janet. He wants to build a country hotel cum resort and he needs some of Janet's money as a loan to buy the land. Janet wants no part of it, and in the quarrel that ensues in the car she reveals her infidelity. Fred drives the car off the road in a fit of rage and leaves a seriously injured Janet to die beside this little-travelled country road. A car passes by and its driver, Al, gets out and helps Janet. He has to contend, however, with Fred, who is doing everything possible to obstruct this interloper. Through a series of incidents, three people are eventually left dead, and Al, who only stopped to help, is being accused of the murders, while it looks as if Fred will get off scot-free.

Dealing as it does with one man's madness, and the hideous forces that it can release, **Sudden Fury** bears an uncanny resemblance to John Trent's **Sunday In the Country**. Both films deal with one man attempting to impose his will on a situation and a group of people. Their megalomania is treated in a different way; Adam's in **Sunday** is more fascist than mad, but the forces that they release are just as destructive and violent. Damude's film raises questions concerning justice and its applications, as does Trent's. Al's increasing involvement in the action of the film undergoes significant changes. At first he stops out of humanitarian concern - there has been an accident and he wants to find out who's been hurt. When he discovers an abandoned and badly injured woman he is enraged at the person who has left her. When she dies he vows to kill the hus-

band. Motivated now by revenge and an anger that blinds him, he too turns into a semi-madman. It is only when he kills a farmer's wife (Hollis McLaren) mistaking her for the real villain that the full impact of what he has turned into strikes him. By a gradual process of involvement Al has gradually de-humanised himself to a point where moral attributes of good and evil become blurred.

Sudden Fury is played out on one level as a simple morality play of good versus evil. But evil is seen to be supremely triumphant. As an audience we sympathize with Al and this identification leaves us extremely frustrated. Everything seems to work against his actions and by the end of the film we feel completely impotent. The police assure him that he has nothing to be afraid of if he is telling the truth, but their quizzical incomprehension of what has occurred does nothing to change our secret belief that this is in fact false.

Even more disturbing is the sense I get from **Sudden Fury** (and also from **Sunday In the Country**) that normal people are not equipped to deal with certain violent or uncompromising situations. The farm couple of **Sudden Fury** are continually shown at one step removed from what is going on. They instinctively reach out towards Fred when he appears on their doorstep, bloodied and with his tale of the car crash. They mindlessly accept his interpretation of the accident and treat Al like the real killer. When they gradually realize the truth, it is too late, and both their deaths highlight their inability to deal successfully with what is going on. The tragic thing is whether they could have done anything differently! Even Al is treated in a similar way. By taking up a gun, he confronts violence with violence. Aware of what he is dealing with he is still naive enough to believe that alone he can defeat it.

The other thing I would like to comment on is the role that the farm couple play in the film. They have small roles in comparison to the major characters but this in itself is significant. Theirs is the only 'normal' relationship portrayed in the film. The fact that they are so peripheral, and that they are brutally destroyed says an enormous amount about this film's view of people's relationships.

I started out by saying that **Sudden Fury** was somewhat of a formula film. It is very much an action film and it becomes more and more so throughout

its length, as the visual passages begin to replace dialogue. One of its weaknesses however is its occasional wordiness. One of the signs of a true master is sensing when an image can be used to replace dialogue, or when dialogue is superfluous to the visuals. Damude has yet to learn this. I only have to think of the opening fifteen minutes or so of Melville's *Le samourai*, where the image communicates everything. The scene that offends and jars me most is when Al stumbles across the crash and finds Janet badly injured still inside the car. Here most obviously the spoken word is used to communicate certain information (the fact that she has been abandoned by her husband), the pace of the film slows, and the tension of the scene is allowed to dissipate. But there is a raw sense of cinema about *Sudden Fury*, so even with its lapses it manages to convey its ideas strongly though crudely.

Piers Handling

David Rothberg's

My Friend Vince

A film by: David Rothberg. **Cinematography:** Howard Alk. **Sound:** Peter Rowe. **Performers:** David Rothberg, Vince, Howard Alk. **Producer:** David Rothberg. **Produced in 1975. Running time:** 40 minutes.

David Rothberg, a young Toronto filmmaker, has made a film which reopens the old question of the honesty and involvement of the filmmaker with his subject, and which answers at least one old question for me, to wit:

What does it look like when during the course of his movie the filmmaker does reveal his own involvement and question his own motivation concerning choice of subject and approach in his work?

In the first portion of this forty minute film Rothberg interrogates Vince, a small time con artist and exploiter of human gullibility whose varied activities range from stealing from stores to conning acquaintances, women and even friends. The more we watch Vince talk of himself and his reasons for what he does, and of his relationships and how they matter to him (intercut with excerpted comments from these friends), the more we see him expose

himself as a poor pathetic bastard with minimal appeal.

But when the film suddenly changes tone, a new layer of truths is revealed. "On Sunday we got drunk," the narrative voice of the filmmaker, David Rothberg, confesses, and with that the suddenly swerving camera, the dedicatedly out-of-focus long close-ups and various inept shots of flashing mike and dipping frame keep us amused as we watch the filmmaker shift from an interviewer to an interviewee and Vince change roles and begin to question him. In fact this jagged camera work, the disconcerting appearance of out-of-focus faces and visible mikes give us also the extra awareness of the presence of the crew and of the actual creation of the film, intensifying the sense of veracity.

A rotund hirsute fellow scrunched in a corner asks a lot of pertinent and uncomfortable questions of Rothberg. This man is Howard Alk, himself a filmmaker of perception and reputation, and his questions are good. For a while one wonders uncomfortably if the film is going to degenerate into a collegiate bull-session on truth-in-art etcetera, but after a laggy spot where the audience squirms as much from boredom as the discomfiture of these almost unanswerable questions, the film picks up again.

Under interrogation Rothberg is as vulnerable as Vince, and we begin to see that anyone suffers from this inspection. Rothberg appears however to enjoy this public self-examination, and attempts to discover in front of us just what his real motives were, and understand who is exploiting whom and why. His explanation of his changed attitude toward Vince activates the film again, and keeps the investigation in a crooked lively present tense. Finally, confounded and tired, attacked by Alk and questioned by Vince himself, Rothberg withdraws saying "I've nothing more to say". "That's showbiz," responds Vince, bringing the film to an appropriate ironic close.

Technically adequate, rather overlong but basically full of interesting material, the film undoubtedly is an excellent prod for leading students and groups into worthwhile discussions of motives and integrity in film, of the use and misuse of documentary style, and perhaps of the hidden values in some of these investigations.

"I know now I'm not going to call the film *My Friend Vince*," says Rothberg, and the audience, aware of the title, chuckles happily.

Natalie Edwards

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