

the form of a smooth entertainment lawyer (Yves Jacques).

Worst of all, Daniel is betrayed by Father Leclerc, who like a movie producer turning chicken, backs off from his director's original, truthful, and dangerously provocative production ("I have to answer to the board of governors"), and tries to impose his stilted, artificial 35-year-old stilted, artificial script on the actors.

In *Jesus of Montreal's* finale, Daniel falls and rises twice in a chain of ludicrous, ironic, and deeply disturbing episodes. Arcand's movie - beautifully acted, designed, and filmed (by Guy Dufaux and Jacques Leduc) - leaves you at the end with no clear resolution to the mystery of its enigmatic hero, played with an uncanny vulnerability and strength by Lothaire Bluteau.

Is Daniel an actor who crossed over into his role, or has Jesus returned in Daniel's body? It doesn't make any difference when we are haunted by images of him cradling a small child, loving his marginal friends, revolting against the contempt of power creeps, haranguing the living dead in a purgatorial metro station, or shouting at Father Leclerc under an echoing dome, "There must be something more than waiting quietly for death."

Maurie Alioff •

JESUS DE MONTREAL p. Roger Frappier, Pierre Gendron assoc. p. Gérard Mital, Jacques-Eric Strauss, Doris Girard p. mgr Lyse LaFontaine scd. Denys Arcand d. o. p. Guy Dufaux ed. Isabelle Dedieu art d. François Séguin sd. Patrick Rousseau, Marcel Pothier mus. Yves Laferrière, François Dompierre, Jean-Marie Benoit cost. Louise Jobin animation/titles François Aubry images of Montreal Jacques Leduc 1st. a. d. Mireille Goulet 2nd. a. d. Jacques Laberge, Marie-Madeleine Demay 3rd a. d. Guy Bouchard, Benoit Laroche post-prod. sup. Suzanne Dussault deleg. p. Monique Létourneau admin. Bernard Lamy 1st. asst. cam. Nathalie Moliakko Visotsky 2nd asst. cam. Sylvaine Dufaux asst. ed. Claudette Duff cont. Marie La Haye boom Veronique Gabillaud stills photog. Pierre Gros d'Aillons gaffer Normand Viau elec. Claude Fortier, Robert Auclair, Michel Steinmetzer, Marcel Breton, Sylvain Bergevin key grip Serge Grenier grips Grégoire Schmidt, André Tisseur set dec. Frances Calder, Simon La Haye coord. Lise Pharand props Patrice Benge, Ian Lavoie head makeup Micheline Trepanier makeup Cécile Rigault, Natalie Trepanier hair Janick Roda, Réjean Coderre cost. Josée Boisvert, Jacqueline Rousseau, Pierre Perrault cost. assts. Sylvie Chaput, Dominic Girard hd. dresser John Stowe dressers Mariane Carter, Marie McLaughlin, Dominic Girard unit mgr. Estelle Lemieux loc. mgr. Huguette Bergeron assts. Sylvie Vincent, Lucie Bouliane p. a. Jean-Pierre Fautoux, Pierre Lambert sp. fx. Louis Craig asst. sp. fx. Jacques Langlois, Pierre Rivard rear proj. Denis Gillsion c. s. c. sd. fx. ed. Marcel Pothier asst. Antoine Morin, Yves Laferrière, Mathieu Beaudin rec. Claude La Haye post. sync. /diul. ed. Diane Boucher, Annie Jean, Matthieu Roy-Décarie, Normand Bélanger rec. Jocelyn Caron, Laurent Levy, François Lepeuple, Jacques Juliani asst. ed. Catherine Legault mix. Hans-Peter Strobl, Adrian Croll l. p. Lothaire Bluteau, Catherine Wilkening, Johanne-Marie Tremblay, Rémy Girard, Robert Lepage, Gilles Pelletier, Yves Jacques, Cédric Noël, Pauline Martin, Véronique Le Flaguais, Jean-Louis Millette, Monique Miller, Christine-Ann Atallah, Valérie Gagné, Claude Leveillé, Paule Baillargeon, Boris Bergman, Gaston Lepage, Pascal Rollin, Marc Messier, Marcel Sabourin, Roy Dupuis, Claude Blanchard, Andrée Lachapelle, Denis Bouchard, Ron Lea, Anna-Maria Giannotti, Tom Rack, Marie-Christine Barrault, Judith Magre. A Max Films/Productions Gérard Mital production.

Martin Lavut's Palais royale

Mitchell Gabourie's Buying time

Palais Royale and Buying Time are two Toronto movies with strikingly similar story lines, sharing the same American "star", Dean Stockwell (both were shot before his comeback role in *Married to the Mob*), and bedeviled by similar problems of character development and lack of focus in the script. However, neither disguise where they were shot and both were released in Toronto during the same week. As far as this reviewer can remember, this has never happened before.

Palais Royale is the more stylish of the two, but also the weaker. Billed as a 'comedic romance noir', it is neither very funny nor is there a real romance. Set in 'Toronto the Good', circa 1959, Gerald Price (Matt Craven) is a clerk with small-town roots and big-time ambitions. He's a hustler who dreams of running his own ad agency and of the blonde on the billboards for Royal cigarettes. Sooner then you can say Charles Dickens (for plot convenience) he meets the blonde, Odessa Muldoon, (played by Kim Cattrall by way of Marilyn Monroe) on a street corner and immediately makes at pass a her.

Getting nowhere, he nonetheless manages to track her down at the Palais Royale, an art deco dance hall on Lake Ontario, where it seems all the best of the Toronto underworld meet for a bit of R and R.

Before long, there is a senseless killing and Gerald literally finds himself lying on top of his dream, having saved her life. She lures him into her world of cheap thugs and even cheaper hotel rooms. She pouts, she lounges, she gets slapped around by her bullying boyfriend Tony (Kim Coates) who is working for the local mob boss, Michael Dattalico (played by Stockwell). He too is tired of Tony's boorish ways. He wants to run a legitimate carpet business through which he can funnel his hard-earned cash.

Tony screws up once too often and Gerald is given the carpet business. Dattalico figures him to be the perfect front man because he looks like "fresh air and corn flakes." Meanwhile, Tony plots his revenge, and after some not very interesting plot twists, they all end up at the Royale for the final shootout, after Tony has killed Dattalico.

There is humour in *Palais Royale*, if you don't mind Toronto in-jokes ("This whole town is small-time", says Tony, trying to convince Odessa to run away with him. "We're going to Buffalo."), and both Gerald and Tony have it off with Odessa. But the laughs are slight and the sex surprisingly sexless. The audience is expected to go with Gerald's naive enthusiasm and big dreams, but the script doesn't allow us to really know him or care about his dreams. Odessa never rises above the level of a cheap tart

despite Cattrall's limited efforts to give her character some class. Her Monroe mannerisms and sluttish nature deflect any sort of sympathy the audience might have for a small-town girl trying to survive in the big bad city. The rest of the thugs and cops are one-dimensional, except for Stockwell who ignites a few sparks in his role as a distinctly respectable crime lord. Unfortunately, he is only given a couple of key scenes.

Palais Royale was premiered at last year's Festival of Festivals, but was subsequently re-edited and rescored. It remains clumsy and almost completely without suspense. A nicely appointed period piece, full of slinky gowns and big-finned cars, it's all dressed up with no place to go. Martin Lavut's direction is uninspired and only occasionally do his images rise above the ordinary. He ends up dwelling on Cattrall's face, but unlike Monroe, she can't carry the film on the sheer force of her personality. She has none.

The idea of a mob film in Toronto set in the '50s is certainly an appealing idea, but the end result smacks of too many fingers in the creative pie. Hugh Graham is a talented and funny writer whose material used to be heard on a regular basis on CBC Radio's Morningside. Apparently he worked two years on the script, but somewhere along the way the focus got lost. The producers went for an expensive look and the easy clichés, and *Palais Royale* ends up being victim of a lot of wrong choices.

Buying Time shares a lot in common with *Palais Royale*, apart from Dean Stockwell. Both are about young men who get involved with



Kim Cattrall and Matt Craven in *Palais Royale*

gangsters and chase the elusive blonde plaything who, in reality, is just a country girl yearning for the simple life; both men get the blonde and a lot of trouble from the bad guys; and both films end with the death of the gangsters and the young couple settling down for a bit of clean country living.

However, not to be too unfair to *Buying Time*, it does have more authenticity and action in the first 30 minutes than is to be found in the entirety of *Palais Royale*. The creators of *Palais Royale* try to achieve authenticity with set decorations and big shiney cars. *Buying Time* does it, at least for the first third of the film, with believable characters, a sense of place, tension (something almost completely lacking in *Palais Royale*), and some tight, effective directing.

The film opens in a Toronto car wash with strong visuals and the casual introduction of the two main characters, Jabber (Jeff Schultz) and Reno (Leslie Toth). In quick succession, a third worker is gunned down in Union Station (looking dynamic and very threatening) by a particularly nasty-looking killer during a dope deal, while Jabber and Reno get in trouble with the law trying to shake down a bookie who owes Reno money. The bookie takes exception and tries to kill them both. In steps Detective Novak (Stockwell, in a throw-away role, is probably the weakest part of *Buying Time*, while his character in *Palais Royale* is the only one that stands out), who puts the squeeze on Jabber and Reno to cooperate in the Union Station killing. They protest that they don't know much, but Novak figures they can find out and promptly dispatches them to a rehabilitation home in the country run by the prime suspect in the killings (five other dope dealers have been killed recently by the same gun), a certain local hero, Curtis King (Page Fletcher).

Up until this point the film captures the look of the city in a way that totally eludes *Palais Royale*, and hasn't been seen on the screen since Don Shebib's *Heartaches*. The scenes on Spadina Avenue, in Kensington market, and especially the killing at Union Station, are striking and



Jeff Schultz and Dean Stockwell in *Buying Time*

imaginatively done. Jabber and Reno blend into their milieu effortlessly and *Buying Time* settles into an inner-city action film with plenty of mystery and suspense. Then, suddenly, the whole story switches gears and the sharp focus is lost. The blonde (Laura Cruickshank) appears as if out of a vision (or a commercial for bathroom tissue) on the back of a horse and the "rehabilitation home" has the appearance of an up-scale resort. Jabber is assigned to work in the stables and Reno is essentially dropped from the story. The relationship between Jabber and the blonde wanders back and forth (she is also involved with Curtis) as he discovers Curtis is running illegal races at night, improving the odds by drugging the horses. His assistant is the sinister killer, Cody (played with a nice menace by Michael Rudder).

It turns out that Curtis has been not only

rigging the races but also killing the dope dealers for no other reason than he is a nasty person. None of this makes much sense and the inevitable shootout comes complete with a *pro forma* false ending. Curtis appears to die in a car accident only to return to threaten Jabber and the blonde one more time, just when they think they are free of him.

Director Mitchell Gabourie, son of producer Richard (*Three Card Monte* and *Title Shot*) uses his skills as a director of rock videos to push the action forward at a fast clip, especially during the early stages and the later horse-racing scenes. There is some original work here, but *Buying Time* is such an odd little movie that it makes one wonder why it was made in the first place. What makes it even odder is that it was picked up for distribution by a U.S. major, MGM/UA. For a relatively low-budget Canadian film with no

obvious marketing hooks, this is a rare achievement indeed.

However, it is apparent that *Buying Time* proved too big a marketing problem for MGM/UA and it was dumped in the Toronto market for only a week's run with three prints and zero advertising. The film deserved a better fate. Whereas the eminently forgettable *Palais Royale* benefitted from a televised launch and reviews in all the major Toronto dailies, *Buying Time* was ignored, a minor gem of a film in search of an audience.

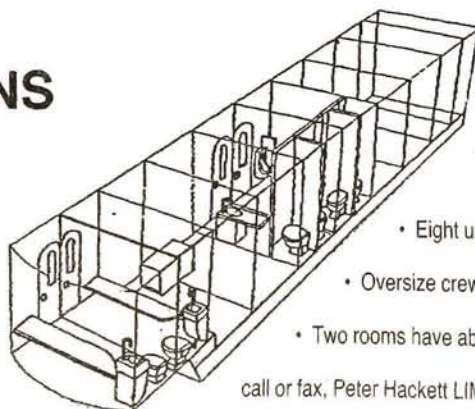
Paul Townend •

PALAIS ROYALE exec p. David Daniels, Steven Levitan, Lawrence Zack p. David Daniels, Lawrence Zack assoc. p. Jo Ann McIntyre line p. Duane Howard d. Martin Lavut sc. Hugh Graham d.o.p. Brenton Spencer l.p. Kim Cattrall, Matt Craven, Kim Coates, Brian George, Michael Hogan, Dean Stockwell, Dee McCafferty, Victor Ermanis, Mario Romano, Sean Hewitt, Robin McCulloch, David Fox, Helen Hughes, Sam Malkin, Henry Alessan, Bill Snazel, Lou Pitoscia, Norma Del, Agnese, Andrea Mann, Elizabeth Leslie, Tommy Earls, Elizabeth Walker, Ricardo Giorgi, Mort Spizarsky, Anthony Davis. A Metaphor Inc. production.

BUYING TIME p. Richard Gabourie d. Mitchell Gabourie sc. Mitchell and Richard Gabourie mus. David Krystal d.o.p. Manfred Guthe ed. Michael Todd art d. Bill Fleming cast. Armstrong/Clydesdale/Laela Weinzweig line p. Dan Nyberg 1st a.d. Stephen Reynolds cost. des. Ann Tree Newsom p. coord. Sheena Graham sd rec. Steve Joles cam. op. Gordon Langevin unilloc. mgr. Ted McGrath sc. sup. Jean Christopher 1st. asst. cam. Brian Harper 2nd asst. cam. Stewart Aziz trainee Ted Overton 2nd. a.d. Robert Petrovicz 3rd. a.d. Delanie Prasek t.a.d. Michael H. Smith asst. a.d. Rick Roberts gaffer Zoltan Pasztor key grip Wayne Collins 2nd unit John Joffin trainee Richard Highgate key props Jake Fry asst. props Caroline George set dec. Brendan Smith asst. set dec. Greg Chown sculptor Ann Clifford sound. Ann Russell word asst. Patricia Venema makeup Carole Davidson hair Sherry Baker best boy David Kellner dolly grip John Scott McDonald boom op. Cory Siddall asst. loc. mgr. Randy Kennedy addnl. dialogue Gordon McDonald, Dean Gabourie dial. ed. Tony Currie a.d.r. ed. Wayne Griffin, Stephen Withrow sd. fx. ed. Jane Tattersall, Marta Nielsen Sternberg asst. fx. ed. John Laing Foley artist Terry Burke Foley asst. Donna Powell revec. mix Paul Coombe, Marvin Berns a.d.r. rec. Peter Kelly sp. fx. Mike Cavenaugh 1st. asst. ed. Jan Nicolichuk asst. ed. Allan Lee stills Susan Shaw stunt coord. Shane Cardwell l.p. Jeff Schultz, Page Fletcher, Laura Cruickshank, Leslie Toth, Dean Stockwell, Wayne Robson, Michael Rudder, Susan Potvin, Martin Louis, Sonny Forbes, Tony de Santis, Michelle Duquet. An Airheads production.

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