

Press kit best part of film

By MICHAEL REDHILL

Georgia, Ben Lewin's new Australian retro-mystery, has the nicest press kit you have ever seen. The face of Judy Davis graces it, an intense black and white portrait of the hard-to-cast actress.

Although Davis has won 10 major awards in only eight years (and was also nominated for the 1985 Best Actress Oscar for *Passage to India*) no one knows who she is. *Georgia* may further contribute to her anonymity, and unless you get your hands on the press kit, you will be missing the best part of the film.

The photo is the one tax inspector Nina Bailley sees at an art exhibit near the beginning of the film. The photo is of Nina, only it isn't. It's the mother she didn't know she had. The photo starts Nina on a hunt through the past of the mysterious *Georgia*, the phantom mother who drowned when Nina was an infant.

Or was she murdered? Her beach party death is recreated half a dozen



Judy Davis strikes a pose in *Georgia*.

times as Nina hears different accounts of the fateful evening.

The script is wordy, and hackneyed at times. Who can believe that in modern cinema, characters are still grabbing each other in abandoned warehouses and whispering in low compassionate voices, "be careful!" to each other? Aside from Nina, who is well fleshed-out, the screenwriter appears to have saved

his energy with the characters, opting instead for the old saws: Silver-Haired Socialite; Debonair But Frightening Rich Patron Of The Arts; Tormented Artist (complete with Cute But Odd Fashion Sense) and Ex-Cop With A Hidden Past.

Even the plot is stock. Only Judy Davis shines.

Unfortunately, *Georgia* is a lump of coal and her lustre is fairly lost.

Exploring relationships, stereotypes

By MICHAEL REDHILL

After this film was over, filmmaker Catherine Breillat was asked if she meant to disturb the audience. Her reply was: "I do not intend it, but if you are disturbed I do not care. It's about life."

36 Fillette alternates between hateful and positive, outraging and pleasing. Fourteen-year-old Lila (played by 16-year-old Delphine Zentout) has grown up fast. Her body is that of a mature woman, but her mind is

still an adolescent. On vacation, she meets a man twice her age, who is only partly able to ignore her age. He is a brute, to be sure, but she leads him on and is abused, only to return to him over and over again.

The girl's relationships with men are full of anger and spite. She hates her father and brother, and she cannot reconcile her desire for her lover, with her repulsion.

Many scenes are calculated to make you weak. Male viewers may thrill to young Zentout's body and

female viewers will surely hate the vile, older man.

In the end, *36 Fillette* is a story about mastery of the self, a young girl's confrontation with the stereotypes engendered both by her age and by her body and how she learns to overcome all but her own impressions of herself.

(Important aside: keep in mind that Bill C54 is silent but not dead. Under the wording of this bill, *36 Fillette* would be pornographic, and banned in this country.)

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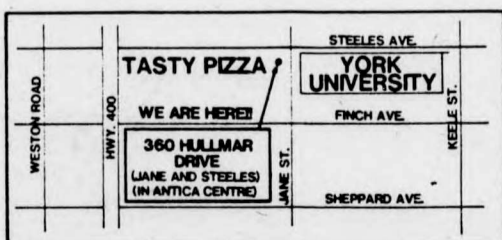
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