

Rare gem set in the nation's courts

Recommendation for Mercy is a rare gem among the worthless pebbles the movie industry rains upon us. As a Canadian production with Canadian content and Canadian identity it deserves, and moreover requires, no preferential treatment over the aristocracy of American films. *Recommendation for Mercy* can stand alone as a masterpiece of social significance, the relevance of which should be appreciated.

Society today is marked by increasingly violent antisocial acts. The populace is saturated by inundations of violence in the media. The current trend of rationalization and secularization is being exploited to the fullest by the entertainment industry, and particularly by the movie industry.

This "no holds barred" attitude is in keeping with the reality of our times, and is fulfilling a necessary expression of the same. An awareness of the social upheavals we're undergoing is necessary to understand and exist within modern society.

Unfortunately most of the sordid sex and singularly violent acts expressed in our movies are viewed by a detached audience whose appreciation is limited to escapist excitement. Any depth of meaning, if in fact any exists, is not portrayed in a manner conducive to individual identity.

The leading roles in *Recommendation for Mercy*, played by Andrew Skidd and Robb Judd, are not particularly distinguished by acting ability. Rather, under the direction of

Murray Markowitz, they display a superb blend of individual and stereotype situations.

The plot opens in a small eastern Canadian rural community. In a perfectly natural setting, the characters are a vivid and frank portrayal of the frustrations of heightening sexual awareness. Having all experienced the traumas inherent to the early teens, viewer identity is complete and unsolicited.

The action is fast-paced, and with the spontaneity so characteristic of Canadian films, often borders on being sketchy. Important scenes are juxtaposed and flashed back out of context in a fashion similar to the *Catch 22* mode. Initially these devices are annoying, but later are demonstrably keynotes to the success of the film.

From introduction through the rising action the effect is low-key comedy and placid audience participation. This is abruptly shattered by the dis-

covery of the grisly rape-murder of a young girl.

Justice must be done and a 14 year old boy is implicated by circumstantial evidence. He is subsequently jailed and treated like a hardened criminal. Only a true sociopath could avoid sympathizing with the boy's terror and sense of abandonment.

He is relentlessly questioned and verbally bullied by gun-toting detectives, subjected to the indignities of public physical examination, and questioned under the nightmarish effects of an hallucinogenic drug. His days are periods of extreme mental agony, and his nights are trials of fear and loneliness.

The resulting trial of a juvenile in the remorseless arena of an adult court is a remonstrance of the injustices our judicial system is capable of perpetrating on what is possibly an innocent victim of cir-

cumstance.

The inhumanity of the entire procedure further distorts and corrupts our legal system in a manner more than faintly reminiscent of the infamous Steven Truscott case.

Whether the boy is an innocent victim or a diseased society must destroy is subject to the interpretation of the viewer. The evidence is so skillfully introduced that the actual events could be any but those which the jury must interpret.

Billed as the most controversial film ever produced, *Recommendation for Mercy* is all of that and more. Regardless of interpretation, it is a stunning portrayal of the implications of violence in our society, sexual permissiveness, and the injustice of our legal system. Above all it is an in-depth view of the consequences of capital punishment.

Chris Olson

140 ORIGINAL ESKIMO CARVINGS
FIRST TIME EVER IN EDMONTON



Public Auction and EXHIBITION

TUESDAY, NOV. 25, at 7:30 p.m.
MANITOBA ROOM - PLAZA HOTEL

Preview and Exhibition:
Monday, Nov. 24, 5 p.m.-10 p.m.
12 Noon to Sale Time on Tuesday, Nov. 25

Each piece a truly unique work of art. Included in this group are Sculptures, executed in Soapstone, Whalebone, Quartzite, and Arctic Ivory.

A very special group of exquisite sculptures in beautiful British Columbia soap stone, executed by three outstanding B.C. sculptors who will be in attendance at this exhibition.

An outstanding collection of over 140 Carvings from the Eskimo co-operatives of: Cape Dorset, Lake Harbour, Pangnirtung, Baker Lake, Arctic Bay, Port Harrison, Povungnituk, Clyde River, Broughton Island, Inoucdjouac, Wakeham Bay, Rankin Inlet, Belcher Islands, Eskimo Point, Pelly Bay, Igloodik, Sugluk, Repulse Bay, Spence Bay.

Included in this collection are many works by the following leading Arctic Artists: Johnnie Inukpuk, Erkashuk, Levi Smith, Okangut, Arlook, Madelaine Isserkut, Johnassie Jack, etc., etc. All of the above artists had pieces on display in the Vancouver Art Gallery "Sculpture of the Inuit" Masterworks of the Canadian Arctic Exhibition which have recently been on exhibit in Paris, Copenhagen, London, Moscow, the Hermitage in Leningrad, Philadelphia and the National Museum of Man in Ottawa. In addition, many of the other artists' pieces in this sale are represented in "The Sculpture of the Eskimo" by George Swinton.

As an added attraction for Ivory lovers and Collectors, a group of beautifully carved Tupaliks (Whales Teeth) from Greenland, also Scrimshaw works executed in Ivory and Caribou Bone.

MOST GOOD ART IS SOLD BY AUCTION.

Canadian Eskimo Soapstone and Quartzite Carvings enter the United States or any part of the duty free as original works of art. All of these beautiful carvings are ideal for the home or executive offices. The time is now opportune to select pieces of Sculpture for Christmas giving. Included in this collection are pieces at appraised value of \$50 to \$3,500.

"Eskimo Art draws large U.S. Crowds" Canadian Press reference to showing in San Francisco.

"U.K. Press enthralled with Eskimo Art Show" Carol Kennedy - Canadian Press.

In an article in business quarterly entitled "Eskimo Art Demand is Greater Than Supply" Maurice Cutler states one of the world's most distinctive art forms... a form of expression that today is appreciated by a wide public and is sought after by museums and private institutions around the world.

"The Price of Eskimo Sculpture Will Skyrocket in the next few Years." Ken Dodd - The Vancouver Sun.

"Good Eskimo Art Attracting Investors" - H. Pryce-Jones, Financial Times.

ADMISSION IS FREE - Absentee bids will be accepted. TERMS CASH OR APPROVED CHEQUE.

This auction presented by Alfo Inc. of Vancouver, B.C. Western Canada's Largest Eskimo Art Dealers, in conjunction with Robert Smithens, Lic. 010084 and Bud Haynes Lic. 010311, SMITHENS AUCTION GALLERIES, CALGARY.

Book Review

Land of breeds, Mounties

Hollywood's Canada, the Americanization of our National Image by Pierre Berton. McClelland & Stewart, \$13.95. Available in U of A Bookstore, SUB.

Hollywood's Canada is mostly padding. For the film buff this book-length thesis is amusing and refreshing reading, independent of the usual inexhaustible reminiscences of Hollywood and its stars. For the non-film buff it could be boring; it was treated better as a magazine piece in a recent issue of *The Canadian* weekly. In the course of research Berton has illustrated those bad old days of movies with 64 pages of black and white stills from archives around the world. With each still there is a splendor of cliches and Canadian humor.

Departing from his doctrinal tradition of great historical adventures (*The National Dream, Klondike*) Berton marshalls detail and data to focus in on how Hollywood moviemakers in the past have distorted the Canadian identity. He writes:

"If Europeans are baffled when they reach our shores to find that most of us live in cities - and they are - it is because the movies have misled them. And if Canadians continue to hold the belief that there is no such thing as a national identity - and who can deny that many hold it? - it is because the movies have fre-



To Hollywood minds, the setting for "The Storm (1922) may have been anywhere north of the 49th (page 197).

quently blurred, distorted, and hidden that identity under a celluloid mountain.

Berton expends to the page the inaccuracy in nearly all the 600 films Hollywood has made about our image. For instance, Hollywood's fantasy factory depicts the Canadian environment as a land of measureless snow and great woods. More than 170 movie titles bore code words like "Northwest", "Big Snow", or "Great Woods".

A crucial point Berton makes is the historical inaccuracy of the medium. Cecil B. DeMille, known for his Biblical

epics, is the butt of a standing joke. "The Gospel According to C.B. DeMille" spoofs C.B.'s inaccuracy in his picture "North West Mounted Police" (1940). Another source of paradoxical misconception was Nat Holt's "Canadian Pacific" (1949). This film was treated like another transplanted Western and is nothing like the history it was supposed to portray. In it Holt used the standard cliché of an Indian attack, this time on the Canadian Pacific Railway, an incident which in reality never occurred.

The worst cinematic image of the Canadian character and lifestyle can be illustrated in how the Americans observed the perils of the Royal Mounted. Of 575 motion pictures that Hollywood has made about Canada 256 have featured the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or their predecessors. The Hollywood Mountie was invariably featured as the hero with Boy Scout qualities overwhelmingly complete with "scarlet" tunics and funny hats. To plot the synopses on the myth and reality of the Mounties, it is interesting to note that in Berton's research he studied the files of the R.C.M.P.

A movie buff himself, Pierre Berton and his latest book *Hollywood's Canada* give the reader a generally amusing true history of cinema which evokes our Canadian nationalism.

Dennis E. Clark



Paul Muni in the cliched role of the ebullient French-Canadian woodsman in "Hudson's Bay" (page 57).