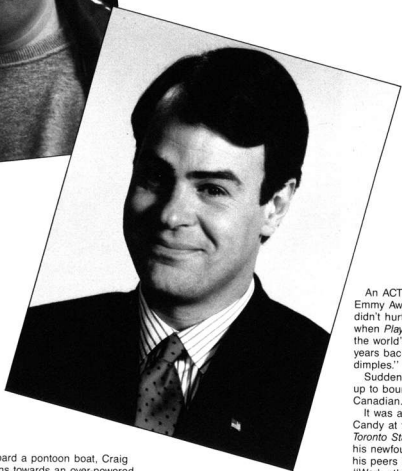
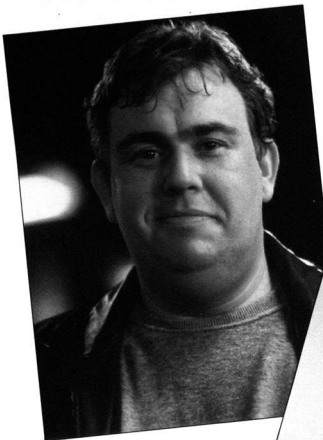


## BIG STARS, BIG LAUGHS

# BIG COUNTRY



**C**andy coated comics are fast becoming the latest North American taste sensation.

Tom Hanks,

Eugene Levy, Bill Murray, Richard Pryor, Steve Martin—some of this generation's most successful funnymen have struck box office gold by marrying their talents with the zany skills of Canadian John Candy.

And now, add Dan Aykroyd to the list.

Countrymen Aykroyd and Candy are the stars of the latest John Hughes scripted laughfest—a hoot-and-holler holiday on the skits titled *Big Country*.

The rubber faced Candy is cast as Chet Ripley, a family man intent on finding peace and contentment—not to mention family harmony—in a one week sojourn by the pristine waters of Lake Potowotominac.

But Candy, his wife (played by Stephanie Faracy) and his two sons (Chris Young and Ian Clatti) are just tuning in to the call of the wild when their reverly is shattered by the arrival of Ripley's brother-in-law, fast-talking Roman Craig (played by Aykroyd), trailing his family and a set of values completely at odds with nature and the holiday envisioned by the Ripley clan.

Where Ripley would rather commune with nature and family

aboard a pontoon boat, Craig leans towards an over-powered marine machine named "Suck My Wake."

But while the plot, penned by Hughes and directed by Howard Deutch (who also helmed Hughes' *Pretty In Pink* and *Some Kind Of Wonderful*) sketches a reunion between the movie's two stars which is less than idyllic, in real life, it was a different story.

It was Aykroyd, after all, who teamed with friend Vainie Bromfield to lure Candy away from a Toronto children's theatre group called the *Jolly Jesters* and arranged for him to audition for *Second City*.

And though the two have worked together on various

projects (Steven Spielberg's 1941, *The Blues Brothers*) in the 15 years since, Candy has always played second fiddle to the more visible Aykroyd.

But the stout and stalwart Candy, late of SCTV's lamented Schmenge brothers, hasn't exactly been idle. Whether cast as the sex-starved brother in *Splash* opposite Tom Hanks or the chained at the hip travelling companion of Steve Martin in Hughes' Christmas offering, *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, Candy has proved to be a more than equal foil to whatever comedic skills he's pitted against

An ACTRA award in 1978 and Emmy Awards in 1982 and 1985 didn't hurt his career either. Ditto when *Playgirl* named him one of the world's sexiest men a few years back, citing his "dynamite dimples."

Suddenly everyone was lining up to bounce off the corpulent Canadian.

It was all rather confusing for Candy at the time. When *The Toronto Star* asked him to explain his newfound popularity among his peers in 1986, he replied: "Work ethic? Easy to get along with? A pushover? I don't know. I have a good time working, I guess."

It's a good thing he does, because he's been working steadily ever since. Everybody, including Aykroyd, wants to play Abbott to Canada's Costello.

Indeed, the pressures of his film career have been so intense, he's reversed his stand on remaining in Toronto and re-located his family to L.A. to allow them more time together.

Success, when it's Candy swallowed, isn't a bitter pill to swallow at all.

— John Coulbourn

