

Hello, movies.



What does Steve Lask?

Elliott Lefko

In *The Perfumed Nightmare*, a 1976 Philippino film opening soon at Cineplex, we see the opportunistic American technology machine that has transformed the Third World. In the view of the film's director, the modern boom may look and smell nice on the outside, but it has a bitter taste on the inside.

If for no other reason, one should view *The Perfumed Nightmare* for the tour-de-force effort of one Kidlat Tahimik, the film's 38-year-old director, writer, editor, voice-over, and star. The film is his tribute to growing up in The Philippines in the aftermath of World War II.

As Kidlat grows we see the foreboding shadow of America hanging over him. He listens to the Voice of America, is infatuated with the United States Space Program ("Hello Voice of America, this is Kidlat Tahimik and I would like to ask what were the first words the astronauts spoke when they landed on the moon."), and kisses his *Playboy* pictorial calendar upon rising each morning.

While he is infatuated with Yankee culture he seems to be the last remaining link to the old world culture too. We see Kidlat at around six years old, waiting for the circumcision that will make him a man. He tries to understand the ritual by concentrating on the beauty of the misbegotten white caribou, and losing any sense of pain. We also see him taking part in the new year's ritual of beating himself on his back until it is just a large red sore.

The film begins with Kidlat introducing the only bridge out of

his village. Kidlat first wheels a tiny model car across the bridge, then a kiddy car, and finally a truck, all along claiming, "I choose my vehicle, and I can cross all bridges."

Kidlat makes a living as a cabbie driving a recycled American jeep painted in bright colours. These jeeps, left over from the American occupation, represent the seeds of technology, vehicles to escape the old world of the primitive Philippines.

Besides driving his cab around, Kidlat spends his time as the president of The Werner Von Braun Fan Club, in honour of the former Nazi who designed the American rocket which landed on the moon. Kidlat tells the village kids all about the wonders of America. Ironically most of the kids will experience some of the American technology when they leave their village for Manila, and wind up working in its factories.

Kidlat realizes his chance to escape his village when an American befriends him and offers to take him to Paris to experience his Western dream. While the city's technology is impressive at first, it soon turns sour, and progress comes to mean just another parking spot. Kidlat's last words are simply: "Who will stop this madness?"

Scanners, now at the Hyland, is the latest in Canadian director David Cronenberg's horror-science fiction films that include *Shivers*, *Rabid*, and *The Brood*. *Scanners* is a lot of science fiction, a smatter of horror, and some dumb humour.

Cronenberg's films have

become popular with both horror and science fiction buffs, as well as with drive-in audiences. His work is extremely popular in Europe where good gory films are widely embraced. However, Cronenberg is so silly, you really laugh at some of the scenes. If it is his intention to spoof the conventional horror films which seem to be cropping up these days with the frequency of dandelions on an open field, he succeeds only marginally. There are not enough funny moments for it to be a comedy.

Cronenberg's films have made money, and that is a good way for a director to earn a reputation. We call him a successful director and have watched other contemporary directors like George Romero and Brian De Palma swerve away from the 'sickening' horror film to a more adventure-mystery approach: more plot and less gore.

Scanners gets lost, trying to give us a few instances of special effects, while attempting to tell the tale of a mad scientist. At the film's end it's clearly special effects coordinator Gary Zeller who is the star of the show rather than Cronenberg or any of his assembled cast.

Emile de Antonio Yank upstart surfaces

Vivian Bercovici

"You are hereby commanded to appear in the United States District Court...to testify before the Grand Jury and bring with you any and all motion picture film..."

1975. The provocateur—Emile de Antonio, controversial and influential American documentary filmmaker. The provocation—a de Antonio documentary film of the notorious 1960's revolutionary group, The Weathermen, political activists who claimed responsibility for up to 20 public bombings in the U.S.

Appropriately entitled *Underground*, the film consists of a series of interviews between de Antonio (and co-editors Mary Lampson and Haskell Wexler) and several Weathermen, among them Billy Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn. Dohrn just last year turned herself in to the FBI after living "underground" for many years on account of outstanding Federal charges.

de Antonio himself calls *Underground* the "ultimate anti-film, a coming out." This does not

so much imply a legitimization of the Weathermen per se, but rather a serious and thoughtful document of their political objectives and effectiveness, providing them with a "place in history."

Fortunately for the film buff and the curious, de Antonio and his intriguing film survived the Grand Jury testimony relatively unscathed.

On Tuesday, Feb. 10 the Festival Theatre, in conjunction with New Cinema and the York Film Department, will present a screening and discussion of two of his films, *Underground* and *Painters Painting* (a documentary study of modern art and artists, featuring such notables as Jasper Johns, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol). de Antonio will be present to answer questions.

This is a unique opportunity to view the works and person behind a major innovative trend in documentary film-making.

"You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows."

L'Acadie: l'anger & le despair

Reg Hunt

In addition to being an excellent example of *cinema verite*, the National Film Board production, *L'Acadie, l'Acadie*, is a disturbing reminder that language and cultural problems in Canada are not a simple matter of Quebec versus the other nine provinces.

Directed by Michel Braud and Pierre Peffault, this 11-year-old film documents a struggle by Acadian students in Moncton, New Brunswick, to obtain recognition for the French language, spoken by 40 per cent of the area's population.

The struggle, which took place in 1968/69, is seen from the viewpoint of the losers, who began by being publicly humiliated by then mayor Leonard Jones, and ended with an eight-day occupation of the science building at the University of Moncton.

In between are anger and despair, and a growing knowledge that just a decade ago the gap between French and English speaking New Brunswickers was as wide as the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The students fought a losing battle; their few victories included a presentation to Mayor Jones of a pig's head—for which two students were duly arrested and charged with public mischief.

The film has a French soundtrack with English narration. Titles are made up of newspaper headlines describing the various incidents which took place.

The best sequence of the film, apart from the footage of the actual occupation, is of a public meeting at which Anglophone hostility is stretched almost to the breaking point, and the gap between the two groups seems unbridgeable. In this totally polarized situation, a member of

the New Brunswick cabinet speaks in platitudes about Canadian unity. The entire sequence has an eerie sense of unreality that makes the viewer wonder if this is the same country that he live in.

The mood of the students occupying the science building is recorded with a sense of "being there", from the high spirits of the first nights to the melancholia of the eighth, and final night.

Though the students sing as they leave the building, arms linked, it is obvious they have been defeated.

The epilogue depicts the breaking up of the group as they go their separate ways. With a final touch of irony, we are told that following the occupation, the university expelled 30 students, hired 30 policemen, closed the Sociology department, and awarded an honorary degree to Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

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