

# entertainment

## 'Never Cry Wolf': haunting images

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The image is haunting. It is August in the Arctic. A lone human sits on an outcropping of rock, near tears. He squeezes plaintive wails out of a bassoon, waiting for a reply, the howl of a wolf.

The picture is one of many in *Never Cry Wolf*, a Walt Disney production directed by Carroll Ballard and starring Charles Martin Smith as Tyler, a young government biologist sent to the Arctic to dig up some evidence that will "prove" wolves are killing caribou. Then the government can justify exterminating the wolves.

Fact becomes fiction. Fiction becomes fact. Farley Mowat's experiences in the Northwest Territories provided the basis for *Never Cry Wolf*. In British Columbia, plans are being made to exterminate wolves, ostensibly for the same reason Mowat was given almost 30 years ago.

Smith portrays the naive biologist whose self-professed journey to "find the animal hidden within myself" crosses pathways he could have hardly anticipated when he started out.

Tyler's unpreparedness for Arctic ways gives over to the life of survival, thanks to the aid of an old Inuit, Ootek, who arrives out of nowhere -- deus ex machina -- across the snow. As Ootek, Zachary Ittimangaq adds a touch of the mystical, teaching Tyler Eskimo myths about wolves, much different from those propounded by the scientists back home.

Ballard has managed to circumvent the curse of the Disney productions: squeaky clean heroes and superficial story lines. As in Ballard's only other major feature, *The Black Stallion*, *Never Cry Wolf* contrasts animal behavior with a number of distinct types of human behaviour. At the same time, he is able to blur the distinctions between animal, as exemplified by the Arctic white wolves, George and Angelina, and

the Canadian caucasian, Tyler.

Hino Narita's cinematography continues what was perhaps a Disney studio trademark -- superb wildlife photography. Wolves in isolation; wolves playing with cubs, baying in pairs, hunting caribou, cowering in a stone den. The images give the wolves understandable personalities without resorting to the cruder techniques of naming and identifying character traits.

Nature lovers, animal lovers and conservationists will back the movie's philosophy 100 per cent. It is a plea that an understanding of nature precede unreasoned, ill-motivated attempts to destroy wildlife.

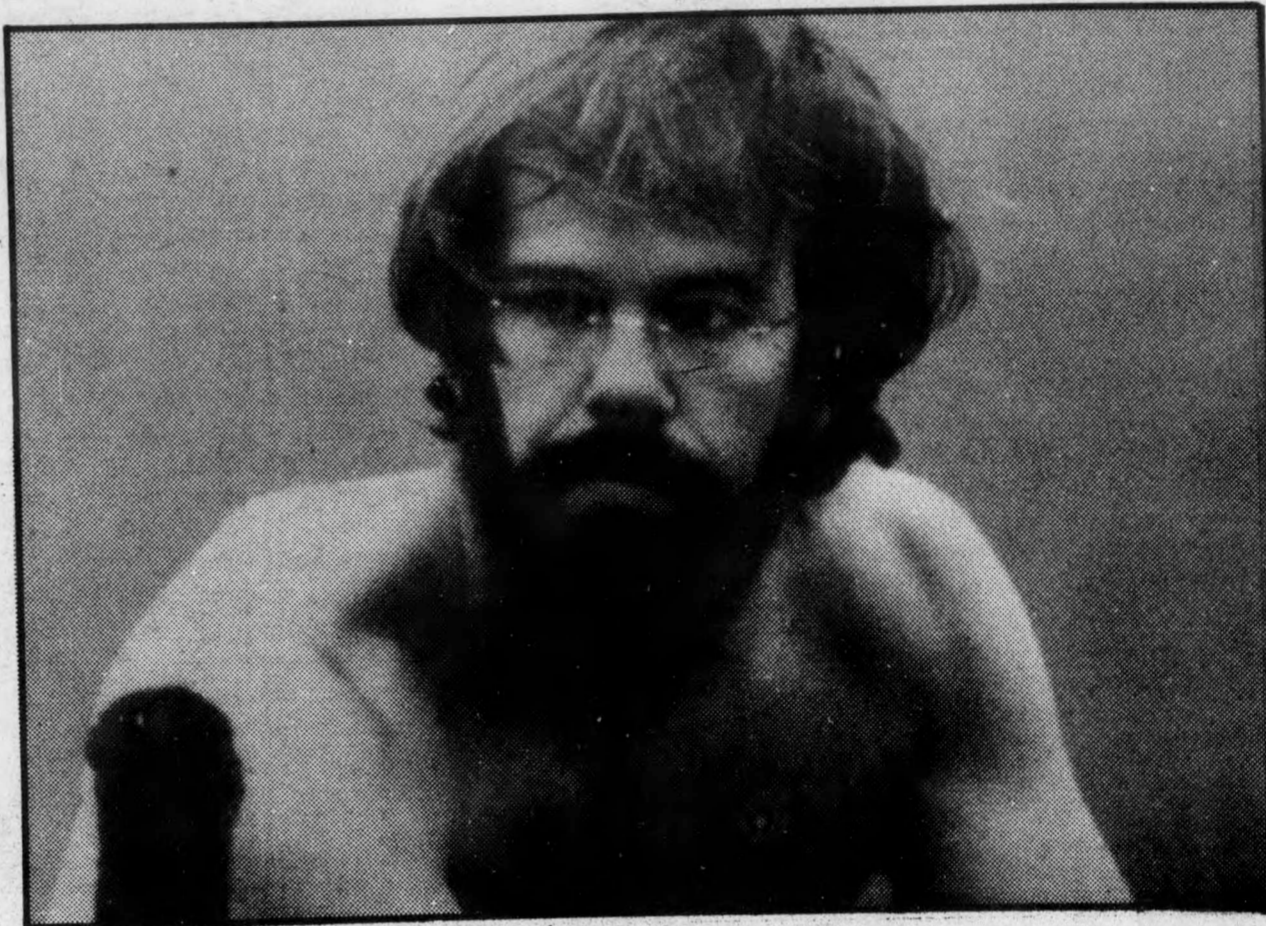
*Never Cry Wolf* makes it very clear that objective scientific observation will not yield the knowledge necessary for understanding wolf behaviour.

Tyler discards the accepted scientific techniques of his day along with the triplicate forms and useless supplies provided for his by distant government pencil pushers.

As the cameras trace Tyler's learning experience, mixing long-shot vistas of mountains, water, cloud and tundra with close-ups of wolves and Tyler, the biologist adapts the ways of the wolf in his effort to understand how they behave. Territory is marked. Mice become a dietary staple. Howling and bassoon playing express loneliness and the desire for companionship.

Tyler makes or breaks the film. He is on camera 95 per cent of the time. He has very little dialogue. He has only the wilderness and the animals with which to interact.

Smith makes the film. He co-authored the narration; he performed many of his own stunts. His own experiences during the production must have had a powerful effect on his own perception of wolves, of man's place in nature. Smith displays a sensitivity only hinted at in earlier performances as Terry in



Charles Martin Smith portrays Tyler, a government biologist sent to the Arctic to study wolf behavior in *Never Cry Wolf*.

American Graffiti and the bassist in *The Buddy Holly Story*.

It's a toss-up whether Smith is acting when he renews acquaintances with the pilot who flew him to his first camp or with the

Eskimo who kills wolves for a living.

In his obsession to learn why wolves kill caribou, Tyler eventually stumbles into the dilemma of those who observe behavior: "By watching them, I had

pointed the way for those who followed." In his quest to know the wolves in their natural habitat, Tyler has initiated the process that will ultimately erode that environment and its inhabitants.

## Theatre Fredericton to stage 'Butterflies Are Free'

"Butterflies Are Free" is the play selected by Theatre Fredericton for its 1984 Spring production.

This contemporary drama was written by Leonard Gershe and premiered in New York City in October 1969.

"Butterflies..." was subsequently produced as a film starring Goldie Hawn and Edward Albert.

Theatre Fredericton's production, at The Playhouse, will be directed by Prof. Alvin Shaw and will play four evening performances in June.

A production meeting is being held at 7 p.m. Sunday, February 12 in Memorial

Hall. Everyone interested in live theatre is invited to participate. Theatre Fredericton needs help on stage and off stage.

Auditions for parts in

Camera Club Exhibit March 4-12

Once again this year, the UNB Camera Club will be holding its Annual Exhibition at Memorial Hall. This year, the event will be held March 4-12.

For our 12th annual exhibition, slides and prints are welcome from all photographers. Prizes will be awarded in several categories. There is an entry fee of 75 Cents per slide or print entered (all prints

"Butterflies..." will be held on campus Thursday evening, February 16 (Marshall d'Avray) and Saturday afternoon, February 18 (Memorial Hall).

must be 5 x 7 or larger and mounted). All entries must bear a name, title, and telephone number and be submitted between 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday at Memorial Hall Room 15 together with the entry fee in an envelope. The deadline for entries is 5 p.m. Tuesday, February 28. For further information, contact Jeff Fryer at 453-4985.