

WILD AND Tacky

by HEATHER HUESTON

The impression I got from this movie was Style. Not the air-brushed slickness of a TV style-show like Miami Vice. Instead of pastels and over-posed shots, *Something Wild* is more of a visual scrapbook compiled by an art director with a taste for the current trend of kitsch.

There are the ubiquitous pink flamingo lawn ornaments, a Gumby, seedy motels wallpapered in orange or leopard-skin prints (don't most crummy hotels have dingy colours? Must not be photogenic). I think this movie is after a higher reality. Most of the action takes place in the sticks of heartland U.S.A., and it's as if the director went looking for as much Americana as he could cram in ("Oooh! Vulgarity!") — the other, grittier side of America. The 7-11 stores and strips and freak characters such as "Dad" of, yes, Mom and Dad's Restaurant, or gas station attendants with t-shirts reading "I Don't Love You Since You Ate My Dog," or people just generally chosen for their look of the slightly oddball.

Dragged into this world is Yuppie Charlie Driggs (Jeff Daniels). He's spotted sneaking out of the restaurant without paying up by Lulu (Melanie Griffiths), an 80s vamp who knows a closet rebel when she sees one and reels him in. She half picks up,

half hijacks Charlie to a dumpy motel. Griffiths is great as a wild but basically harmless Lulu. Even when she's straddling Charlie and handcuffing him to the bed, the action is all fast and comic, not sexually tense. This is not a *9 1/2 Weeks* flick. From this point on, Charlie is hooked and he goes with Lulu back to her little hometown for a high school reunion, where they pose as man and wife. There's an ongoing competition to see who's the better liar and Daniels flips back and forth between his role-playing and his old, habitual "Hey, guy!" kind of talk.

The plot doesn't do much in this movie except serve up new twists at regular intervals. It's the main characters that make it interesting to watch, once you're sick of highway life.

The plot does turn serious at the end, after Lulu's ex-husband Ray shows up. He's a very disturbed individual who enjoys hurting people. His character fills up the whole screen — menacing smile, creepy charm like one of those black leather villains from the 50s. The violence he's supposed to represent mars the rest of the movie as Ray and Charlie fight for Lulu. The brawling and beatings seem a forced, over-serious end to this comedy.

Something Wild is playing at the Hyland.



Melanie Griffiths and Jeff Daniels. They look cosy and normal, don't they? but he's wearing her love handcuffs.

Bill MacGillivray: Film "maker"

By ELLEN REYNOLDS

William D. MacGillivray, director, is working on his latest feature film, *Life Classes*, his first film to be nationally distributed. On location, between the cuts and takes, he found the time to answer a few questions.

Besides being a director, MacGillivray is also a script writer, editor and executive producer — in other words, he is a film "maker" and not the type to lounge in a director's chair wearing a silk cravat.

Born in St. John's Nfld., MacGillivray now lives in Herring Cove, N.S. with his family and has been here for what he says is a "long, long time."

His two major feature films, *Aerial View* and *Stations*, are essentially about people and their personal growth and change. Dismissing some of his early work as "foolishness," MacGillivray talked about *Aerial View*, his first independent drama about a married couple who have grown apart and the way they deal with their inevitable separation. The film started out as an Atlantic Filmmakers' Co-op production but grew so much that it had to be finished independently. "At that time," says MacGillivray, "it was way outside the Co-op." It was

necessary to form an independent production company which formally became The Picture Plant Ltd. in 1981.

Stations (1984) is about a Newfoundland journalist travelling from Vancouver to St. John's by train, interviewing people along the way. Both these films reflect a sincere and unaffected style.

In 1982 MacGillivray made a film on contract called *The Author of These Words*, a documentary on Harold Horwood, a journalist and politician from Newfoundland. MacGillivray says, "I wasn't too pleased with it — I couldn't do what I wanted to do."

MacGillivray says his favourite film is *Linda Joy* (1985) because "it says the most with the least." Linda Joy Busby asked MacGillivray to make a film from a series of powerful interviews about her terminal cancer. "It's the structure I'm pleased with," he says. "It's very simple." The film has been selected for several festivals including the Torino in

Italy and Toronto's Festival of Festivals.

Sometimes labelled an "intellectual filmmaker," MacGillivray cringes. "My films deal with ideas rather than

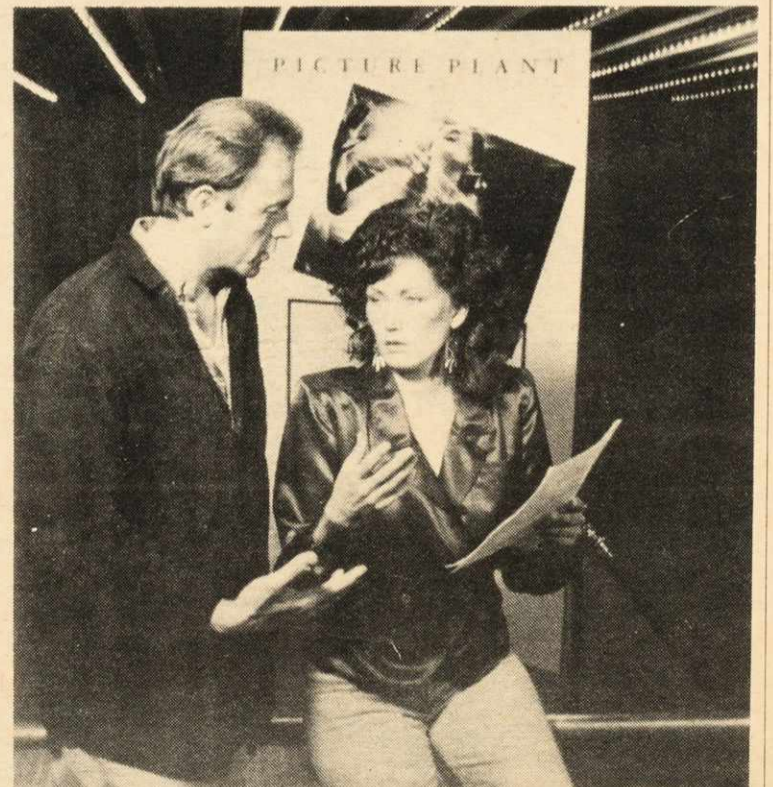
actions but I don't think of myself as other than simply a person who makes films."

MacGillivray prefers the making of a film — the writing, editing, and directing — to the finished product, which he says is "always an anticlimax and never as good as you wished." Also, while working on a film he says "in spare moments I'm writing the next thing. Dreaming of the next one is a way of relaxing."

The shooting of *Life Classes* was expected to be finished by the end of October. It is billed as "the story of Mary Cameron and her quiet growth from being a passive consumer of ideas and events to a producer of ideas and images." She is a small town Cape Bretoner who moves to Halifax where she becomes an accomplished artist who, in the end, returns home to Cape Breton.

Bill MacGillivray enjoys being an Atlantic filmmaker, although he says "Atlantic films are better received in Central Canada." He feels a lot of the people in the region just haven't developed a taste for Atlantic or even Canadian films.

MacGillivray didn't have a film for this year's Atlantic Festival Atlantique, but he says emphatically, "I'm a firm believer in the Festival."



Bill MacGillivray and "Life Classes" star.