

## Winning by a Narrow Margin

by Gurn Blasten

The most influential and copied film maker of the last fifty years has to be Alfred Hitchcock. His technical and narrative style has been so ingrained in the minds of film goers all over the world that his name has become synonymous with suspenseful, thrilling entertainment. Some directors have even made a career out of copying this very identifiable style. Brian DePalma, Richard Franklin, and others have all used Hitchcock as a model for their work.

Peter Hyams, the director of the new film *Narrow Margin*, does not specifically belong in the above category (two of his earlier films do). Both *Capricorn One*, and *The Star Chamber*, draw on Hitchcock for their inspiration. *Narrow Margin*, also follows in these familiar footsteps of the so-called

"Master of Suspense". In fact one might draw striking similarities between his film and such Hitchcock classics as *North By Northwest*, and *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.

However, although Hitchcockian in style, *Narrow Margin* is actually a remake of the 1952 film *The Narrow Margin*, directed by Richard Fleischer. The new version is far from the classic status of the original, but on its own terms it is an exciting and fast moving suspense yarn. Make no mistake, this is light entertainment. It is the type of film one watches for the great actors, the thrills and twists of the plot, and the eye-popping stunts. Fortunately *Narrow Margin* delivers in all of these departments.

The cast is led by Gene Hackman, who has to be, along with Michael Caine, the busiest and

most dependable actor working today. Here Hackman plays a deputy D.A. who must escort Anne Archer (*Fatal Attraction*) from Alberta back to California so that she can testify to witnessing a mob hit. Of course the two eventually end up on a VIA train bound for Vancouver through the Canadian Rockies. Along the way Hackman has to protect Archer from the numerous mob hitmen sent to kill her.

It is interesting to note that this is one of the few films in recent memory that puts a man and a woman on the run and doesn't let their uneasy partnership degenerate into another implausible love affair. Instead, these two fine actors imbue their characters with a believability that allows their relationship to naturally develop into respect for one another. This re-



Hackman and Archer play in film strain, on writer-director Hyams' part is most refreshing, and as a result the suspense of the film is never impeded by a forced love interlude.

This unique aspect is particularly important in a film like *Narrow Margin* because it is the suspense that drives the plot, and what a thrilling plot it is. The claustrophobic atmosphere of the train also adds to the suspense by increasing the isolation and vulnera-

bility of the characters. It also provides the perfect setting for some truly hair-raising stunt work, much of it without stunt doubles! Special mention must also go to director Hyams for his exciting camerawork. He has also demonstrated with *Narrow Margin* that he can carry on the tradition that Alfred Hitchcock started over fifty years ago. That is to provide the public with exciting and suspenseful entertainment. "The Master Of Suspense" is smiling.

## Princes - pioneering glimpse of cancer patients

by Alistair Croll

*Princes in Exile* is a cancer patient's Dead Poets' Society. It does for them what *Longtime Companion* did for AIDS patients.

Cancer isn't something people want to hear about. When we do hear about it in the popular media, it's someone beating the disease. Cancer isn't something any company wants its name linked to; selling a script that deals with it is hard at best.

The film tells of a summer at Camp Hawkins, a summer camp for cancer patients. *Princes in Exile* (based on the book of the same name) deals with the disease in a way that is subtle, poignant, and often humorous. There's nothing unusual about what the film's campers do during their summer (except perhaps more frequent trips to the clinic) but they get far more out of it.

For one thing, it's many of these kids' last summer. Leukemia and brain tumors will claim them before next year. Yet they are more alive than most people can hope to be, trying to pack so much living into so little time.

But *Princes in Exile* is much more than another movie about camp. It's a movie about a cure. No miraculous healing or wonder drugs. This is a cure that comes from inside, a victory over a foe worse than death itself.

Ryan Rafferty (played to perfection by Zachary Ansley) is consumed by the despair and resignation that is a part of cancer. The camp environment — where he's no longer special — forces him to come to terms with his despair and learn to hope. By the end of the film, Ryan has finally overcome the despair and self-pity to which he had clung and can

get on with the business of living.

All around Camp Hawkins, the campers see symbols of their disease. These symbols do not change; rather, director Giles Walker masterfully charts the changes in each kid's perception that brings the campers to embrace rather than spurn the world about them.

The spectrum of patients and the variety of ways they see their affliction (from the unbounded growth of a forest to spiritual possession by demons) says much about the human condition, and

the way people deal with death itself.

This is a film filled with symbolism. You could spend hours analysing each detail of the movie for hidden meanings. But at the same time, Walker has made a film you can just sit back and let happen. You'll get most of the symbols without looking too hard. You'll learn with the campers. And you'll want to switch into Medicine.

*Princes in Exile* is filled with lush scenery, beautiful camera shots, and great acting. There's

none of the "Degrassi" look one associates with NFB films. It's blessed with great direction, an uncluttered (if somewhat long) script, good sound, and talented acting.

One can only hope this film makes it out of repertory theatres. It's longer than most mainstream films, but well worth the wait — and despite the subject matter, you leave with an uplifting, warm feeling. For two hours you can lose yourself in the triumphs and tragedies of people trying to fit a lifetime into one summer.

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October 14th: 10:30 a.m.  
 Sermon: Many are called, Few are chosen  
 Rev. Adele Crowell  
 Baptist Chaplain for Dal  
 Music: Bach, Bruch, Bruckner

**Ministers: Rev. John E. Boyd, Rev. Adele Crowell**  
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