

Moving pictures from the end of time

BY GINA GRANTER

In one month you're going to die. Don't worry, it won't only be you. The whole world is ending. Try not to panic. At least you've got some time to plan out your final hours. Now, what are you going to do?

This question sets the scene for *Last Night*, a special presentation in the Canadian Perspectives series at the Atlantic Film Festival last week. Written and directed by Don McKellar, the film takes a look at the final six hours of Earth's existence through the lives of several intertwined characters in Toronto.

McKellar stars as Patrick Wheeler, a man who decides to spend his last moments alone, much to the dismay of his parents, who have arranged a final "Christmas" family reunion. Sara Polley (*The Sweet Hereafter*) plays Wheeler's sister, who is going downtown with her boyfriend for a final New Year's Eve in Times

Square-type countdown. We also meet Wheeler's friend Craig (Callum Keith Rennie of "Hard Core Logo"), who wants to "go out with a bang", and, through the convenience of internet personals, acts out most of his sexual fantasies before it's over. Talk about valuing bodily pleasure.

One of the most captivating characters is stranger Wheeler meets named Sandra, played by Sandra Oh (*Double Happiness*).

is this turn of fate that leaves the two of them spending their final moments together. The interaction between these characters is the most powerful force in the film.

The movie features an incredible survey of the ways different people would choose to spend their last day. It shows us the criminals, the families, the insane, and the lonely.

It's assumed one would likely choose to die with loved ones.

But what if you've already lost your loved one? This is the case for the cynical Wheeler, whose wife died just days before the news of "the end".

It is this and other ironies that make the film so beautiful, and force us to

think a little more about fate and circumstance. The atmosphere is just right, with abandoned streets and awkward silences. There are constant pauses in the dialogue before each character speaks, revealing the discomfort of the entire situation.



Sandra (Sandra Oh) loses her car to a mob in *Last Night*.

One of the first characters we see in the film, she stops at an abandoned grocery store for some provisions. While inside, her car is flipped by a chaotic mob, leaving her with no way to get across town to be with her husband. She runs into Wheeler and asks for help. It

High in Montreal

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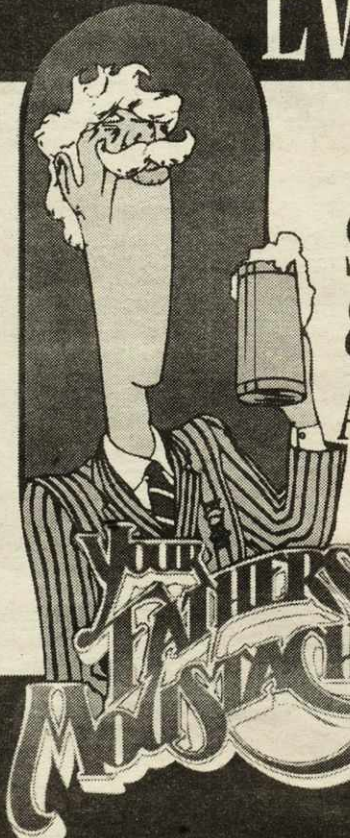
language in the narration was descriptive to the point of vulgarity. This realistic interpretation allowed the audience to almost feel his

needle in their arm. L'Ecuyer made no attempt to tip-toe around the social stigma of heroin, leading us right to the hard and cold truth.

The young L'Ecuyer has recently worked as a television

producer for such series as *Ready or Not*, and *Traders*, and has also released a jazz CD. Moreover, he won the Jury Prize at the Toronto Film Festival in 1995 for the critically acclaimed film *Curtis' Charm*.

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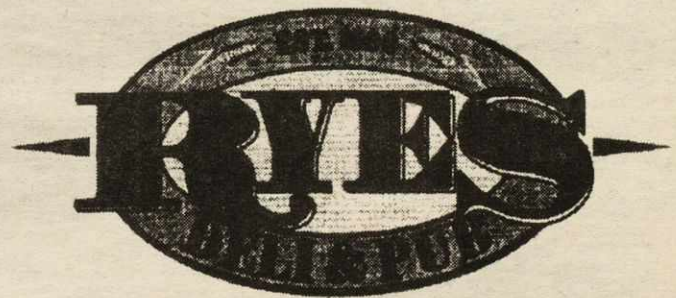
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