



TOP LEFT—The Suicide Scene. One of the young people is threatening to jump off the roof. Left to right, Vinette Strombergs (back), an unknown extra, Paul Hecht, Pinsent, Eugene Levy (back), and Don Colin (plays Fred the psychiatrist). CENTRE TOP—The Suicide Scene, with crew and actors. Michael Rapport sits on the roof in a chilling wind. He plays the suicide victim. CENTRE—The Bad Guys. Left to right, George Touliatos (a heavy), Tesa Farrow, Larry Dane, and Jack Nicholas (a heavy). The girl gets it, if they don't get the money back. CENTRE BOTTOM—The Good Guys. Left to right, John Beck (back), Pinsent, and Hecht. Father Hagen (Pinsent) boldly demands that the girl go free first. BOTTOM—Pearson stands on his perch overseeing the scenes.

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"Only God Knows" In Action

Canadian Film Director Peter Pearson (left) and Canadian film star Gordon Pinsent (right) confer for a brief moment between takes about a section of the script of the Canadian picture "Only God Knows" being filmed at locations here in Richmond Hill and King Township. The crew busy themselves making the set in the background.

A New Era Emerges—Shoot Film Here

"Hold it. CUT! Alright let's try it again. OK, everybody get ready. ACTION!"

A new Canadian film is "Only God Knows" presently being shot in and around Toronto. It has two locations in this area — Seneca College's King Campus, on Dufferin Street north of King Sideroad, and the old Langstaff Penitentiary, on Highway 7 east of Yonge Street — and headlines such stars as Gordon Pinsent, John Beck Paul Hecht, Don Colin and Larry Dane, who is producing this half-million dollar movie. The film is under the wing of a talented Canadian director, Peter Pearson (who also directed "Paperback Hero" which opened recently).

"Is the stuntman ready up there? OK... Ready... ACTION! Look scared... JUMP!"

The script was written by Paul Wayne, also a Canadian, as a situation comedy. It is almost a parody of the good guys versus the bad guys, without the Keystone Cops routine.

The good guys are a priest (Pinsent), a minister (Beck), and a rabbi (Hecht), who want financing for a half-way house that they have established, called "Junk House". The bad guys are the "infamous" Mafiosa. "OK, You see him jumping. Now everybody run, try and save him. SPLAT, he's down. That's good. Keep the camera rolling."

The plot centres on some money, approximately \$4 million, that the old Mafia leader wants to give to the clergyman for their cause. Now that he is dying, he feels he must undo all his wrongs and get rid of his "bad money". Vincenzo (Dane), the son, wants the money for his cause, though his motives are not as honorable as his father's. However, there is just a little problem that develops. The old man dies before he can disclose where, in his mansion, he has hidden his money.

The rest of the story has the three clergymen breaking into the house (Eaton Hall on the Eaton Estate, Seneca), finding and stealing the "loot", and then Vincenzo and his hoods coming to take it back again, using a little "iron" persuasion. The film will culminate with a big chase scene that starts a fire, races through a funeral, and concludes back at the mansion where the bad guys are inadvertently caught off guard, and end up driving their Cadillac into the lake.

I spoke with Peter Pearson and Gordon Pinsent in the courtyard at the Langstaff Penitentiary location. To those who work with Pearson, he is an outgoing, broadminded person who always wants to know what the actors think of his ideas and the production. He wants them to be as much a part of the film's making, as are himself and the crew. He exudes a certain charisma and talent, that earns the respect of all who work with him.

He rushed over, after a take, to sit with Gordon Pinsent and myself. He watched the crew busying themselves for another set-up. Was he pleased with how things were progressing?

"Sometimes it's hard to tell. I remember once asked a writer to write something for me. He said, 'sure. How much will you pay me?' I said, 'how much do you charge?' And he said, 'well, I can write you \$10,000 scripts, \$100,000 scripts or \$500,000 scripts.' That's what happens with movies. You do the best you can, and you do the best you can with the money you've got. But, sure, I'm pleased."

True, there is nothing that can be established in such a competitive field. Pearson jogged back to direct another take. Gordon Pinsent turned to me and explained about making the script work on screen.

"It was important that the priest, minister, and rabbi not come out looking like the three stooges at summer camp. It mustn't be a burlesque kind of thing, or look like a frivolous escapade on screen. They are involved in a situation with which we are all familiar. They are in charge of, have established a place called 'Junk House', treating young run-aways, drug addicts, people of this nature. So the comedy is a good counterpart for the reality within the thing.

"I don't know about it being a hit here in Canada. It

could be. It IS a very entertaining piece. And from what I've seen on screen so far, it's all going to work. One thing that it has, that we've been a long time trying to convince ourselves we've needed, is a good, solid hook into markets other than our own."

We glanced across the yard at Peter Pearson, standing on the end of a cement bannister, directing his cameramen for the set-up and explaining to the actors that he wanted more emotion. He was definitely the master of the ceremonies. Everyone listened carefully, then laughed as he pranced in front of the camera, delivering Larry Dane's speech. Was there anything about Pearson's direction that anyone was displeased with?

"Not in the slightest bit," Pinsent exclaimed. "Peter Pearson has got a magic touch. He has the ability, the common sense, the maturity to open up and say, 'give me all the help you can give me, and I'll give you all my help.' It's a combined thing. Then it becomes everybody's movie. He has a marvellous talent for making you feel that you're part and parcel of it."

Peter Pearson was jogging back towards us. I could see from where I sat, that he and Larry Dane were in agreement about the changes. How about the change that Canada is going through right now; trying to make a place for itself in the film industry? Is it possible?

"I think there's no question about that," Pearson grinned, looking towards the crew, then back to me again. "The Pyx" is making money. Shebib's film "Between Friends" is doing very well. "Kamouraska" was sold out over its first two weeks, and "Paperback Hero" has done quite well since it opened. I mean, what is happening is there's an audience out there. We've always known there's been that audience, but we're controlled by an American and British owned exhibition system; and we're controlled by major American distributors, who really have no interest in developing a Canadian motion picture industry.

"So it's getting access to the screen. It's getting Canadian shows on NBC and CBS. They don't care, and they don't want it. They have their own system, and they're making a lot of money that way, and they don't give... about making room for the Canadians.

"What we have to do is kick the... out of them, until we can find a way to get our own films on our own screens. And get not only that, but they have to be properly exhibited, advertised and promoted.

Canada is putting out more and more good films each year, but is it actually getting an identity that other countries will recognize? Gordon Pinsent leaned into our little circle, so we could hear over the shouting and hammering in the background.

"I don't think there's anyway you're going to do it in a general sense, as far as Canada is concerned. Some person said after 'The Rowdyman' came out, 'it looks as though we're not going to have Canadian films, we're going to have provincial film. That's not going to pull any weight, or make people sit up and take notice, outside Canada.' What will make them notice is the fact that it happens to be a good movie. It has to be special. It has to be something new and original, and it has to be done well. Hopefully, done better than anything in the States."

The crew hustle-bustled around us making preparations for the next take. Gordon Pinsent excused himself, and stroled away to the make-up van. Is this success? Or is it a come-down from what these professionals are used to? What is success for Peter Pearson?

"My idea of success, is to spend the rest of my life in this country, making films."

A broad, boyish grin exploded on his face. He said goodbye and turned to his assistant director. I moved to another bench, from where I could observe all the action. Pearson returned to creating and molding "Only God Knows", and in my opinion, he is one of the many who will be molding Canada's film future.

"Alright, clear the area. Get ready for the getaway scene. Get ready to light the fire. Let's go!"