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## *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*

1974 121m *director* Ted Kotcheff, *script* Mordecai Richler and Lionel Chetwynd, *novel* Mordecai Richler, *producer* John Kemeny, *cinematographer* Brian West, *editor* Thom Noble, *music* Stanley Myers; *with* Richard Dreyfuss, Micheline Lanctôt, Jack Warden, Randy Quaid, Joseph Wiseman, Denholm Elliott and Joe Silver

In the 1970s, no diehard cineaste would have called Ted Kotcheff's version of Mordecai Richler's novel a groundbreaking film. Beyond its traditional film style, however, *Duddy Kravitz* was one of the first Canadian features to portray a minority group, complete with inter-ethnic romance. This story about a hyperambitious young hustler's fight to drag himself out of poverty offers a vivid, almost entirely unsentimental picture of working-class Jews in 1940s Montreal. Duddy (Richard Dreyfuss) manoeuvres to buy lakefront property he believes will give him self-respect. If he needs to hurt those closest to him, including his Québécoise girlfriend, Yvette (Micheline Lanctôt), he does so. The movie breaks with the unbearable niceness of being Canadian. Its characters arouse sympathy because of their comically flawed humanity, not because they are abstract symbols of class or nationality. At the heart of the movie is Dreyfuss's scratching, cackling, career-making performance. "What makes it an extraordinary film," says Lionel Chetwynd, who wrote the screen adaptation, "was the performance that Ted got out of Richard." Kotcheff, who had never heard of Dreyfuss when he gave him the role, thinks that the key to his performance is Dreyfuss's uncanny ability to "translate his intellectual understanding into very visceral and emotional acting."

AWARDS: Canadian Film Awards – Film of the Year, Overall Sound; Academy Award Nomination – Adapted Screenplay; Writers Guild of America – Best Comedy Adaptation; Berlin International Film Festival – Golden Bear; AV Trust – Masterwork

**Maurie Alioff**