

SIX to

In the world of Canadian filmmaking, probably nothing is more difficult than making the first feature. Budgeted between \$50,000 and \$500,000, these films fall into a financing limbo, especially for directors without established "track records." The "industrial" agencies, like Telefilm, OFDC, B.C. Film, AMPDC, are difficult to access without distribution deals and secured financing. The "arts" agencies, like the Canada Council and its provincial equivalents, have only limited funds, usually targeted for less expensive projects. First-time feature directors have to be tough, dedicated and thoroughly inventive. Take One offers a dossier on six to watch.

By Marion Lewis, Virginia Kelly and Wyndham Wise.

NAME: Glenn Walton
BORN: 1952

CURRENT PROJECT: *Love and Oysters* is about gay men and straight women. Most gay men have very good and long-term relationships with heterosexual women. Very often their best friend is a woman they have known for a long time. I am fascinated with a male/female relationship that is not based on sex, and is devoid of that tension. Men and women can truly be friends in these relationships. It's about a character who's a student at the beginning, but a professor at the end. It's about his relationships with



women and lovers over a seven-year period. It's about food, sex, friendship and time.

BACKGROUND: I teach English at St. Mary's University in Halifax. That's my day job. Some directors come from a visual background, and others come from a literary or theatrical background. I'm definitely from the literary/theatrical tradition. I've always made home movies, and when I graduated from Dalhousie University, I joined the film co-op in Halifax. I basically did everything, made coffee, production managed, edited. I spent last year at the Canadian Film Centre as a writer/director resident.

INFLUENCES: I've wanted to be a filmmaker since I saw *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in Belfast, Ireland, when I was a wee kid. I was about three or four. My nanny took me and my brothers and sisters, and since then I've always been susceptible to the magic of cinema. It's not something I can even articulate. Lulu Keating has been an influence on me. She made low-budget co-op films before she made her feature, *Midday Sun*. Bill MacGillivray, of course, but not so much on me, because he makes "serious art." I love Woody Allen's movies. I like his comedy and tragedy, that symbiosis in his films. Life is funny. Life is tragic. To me that's the essence of wit, and he's a very witty writer. I love Merchant/Ivory, Stephen Frears, and Terence Davies. I love Denys Arcand, because he's an intellectual filmmaker who knows how to make his movies supple. They're not dry, they're not pedantic, but they're full of ideas.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: In Canada there is such a gap between the artist-driven films that are funded by the Canada Council and the Film Board and so on, and

the million-dollar films that are funded by Telefilm. There's a huge gap, and we need to fill it in. People like me, who want to make their first features, can't be expected to come up with a masterpiece the first time. We need to cut our teeth on lower-budget films. I know there is funding, but it is very hard to access without all the right distribution and broadcast agreements, and we need more support from the agencies and Telefilm to fill that middle-budget area, between \$200,000 and a million. We are having a terrible time raising the money. It's mostly private, but now we're going to the agencies. We're hopeful and it's going well, but it's a lot of headaches •

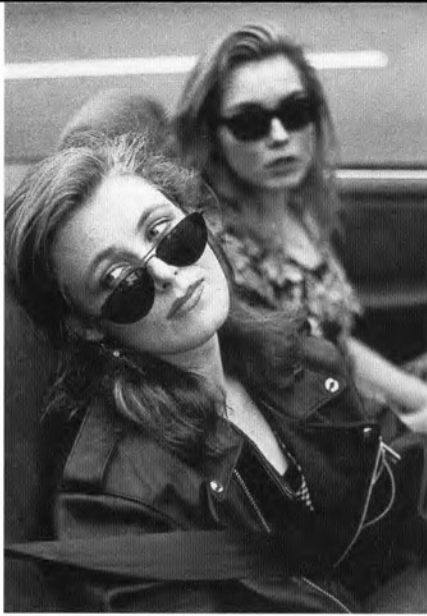
NAME: Cynthia Roberts
BORN: 1965

CURRENT PROJECT: *Jack of Hearts* is about a guy who has a heart transplant and is haunted by his phantom heart. It's "way-out-there," an authentic Christian horror film. *Jack of Hearts* is steeped in Calvinism and Catholicism, and will be quite a treat for anyone with ecclesiastical tendencies or fetishes.



BACKGROUND: As soon as I started wanting to be something, I wanted to be a filmmaker. It's even in my high school yearbook, beside my graduating picture. I arrived in Toronto eight years ago and I've been living here ever since. I studied philosophy at Carleton University and film at Ryerson.

INFLUENCES: Sam Peckinpah's *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, Spielberg's



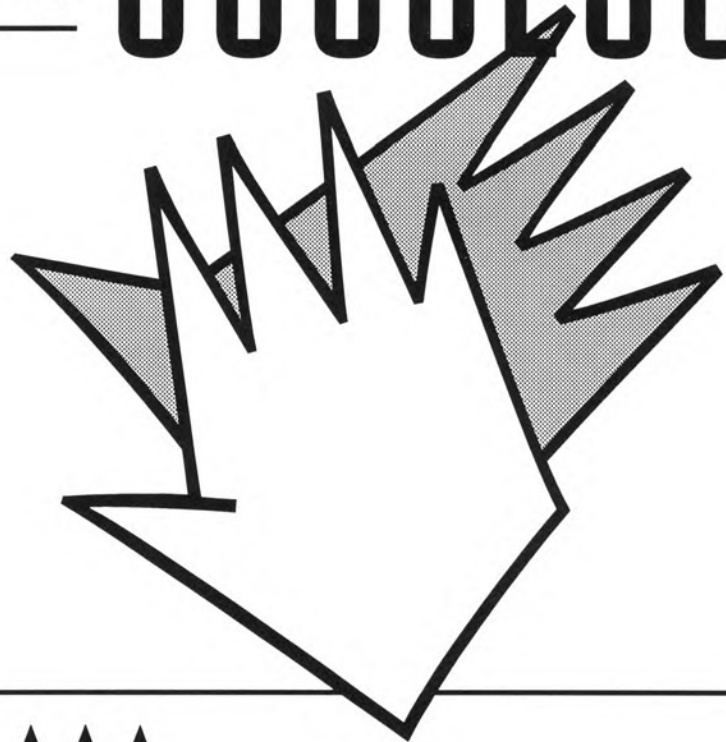
Kaya McGregor in Gun Control

Jaws, Russ Meyer's *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, Cronenberg's version of *The Fly*, and seeing *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which my parents took me to on their wedding anniversary, are my early influences. Peckinpah is poetic, and yet he gets to the core of things in a really violent way. I know this might sound funny, but violence is an essential element. Every change denotes violence, and change is a law of nature. Peckinpah has heart. It's blood, sweat, tears, and sentimentality. I love that scene in *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* where Warren Oates empties his gun into a corpse and says, "Why? Why? Because it feels so goddamn good." Russ Meyer is the most ultra-feminist around. Women aren't all meek and correct. If it's the bad boys who get to the top, well, bad girls can too. The real power of women is their very own power as women, and Russ Meyer understands this more than any other living director. Doris Wishman made these totally unusual independent films for a very specific market—the same market that Russ Meyer worked in—"nudies" and "roughies" in the pre-porn era. Even though she, like Russ Meyer, was making films for a mostly male audience, the films still had a lot of oomph for a woman.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: If I was going to make *Jack of Hearts*, this is the way it had to be made. It was always intended as a totally "way-out-there" film. Now I'm working on a B-movie. I've got to support myself in the craft of filmmaking, and if I can make B-movies that tons of people enjoy, then I'm happy. If I can make art films, then I'm happy too. But I can't make a living on art films, nor can I churn them out like I can B-movies. Anyway, with B-movies, I can be twisted and abnormal •

Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation Celebrates

A DECADE OF SUCCESS



Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation

*Consultative and financial services to Alberta's
film and television industry.*

690, 10020 101 A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta
Canada, T5J 3G2

Tel: [403] 424 8855 Fax: [403] 424 7669