

Curatorial essay by Andy Jones to accompany the Cinema Lounge screening of *Crime Wave* by John Paizs on Saturday, February 26, 2011

Homage to John Paizs' *Crime Wave* by Andy Jones

Interior. Night. The Public Screening Room. Winnipeg Film Group Cinematheque

(A sixty-three year old agitated man, ANDY, walks to the podium. He has a black bag with him which he places under the podium. He eyes the audience nervously.)

ANDY:

This is my idea for the opening of my unfinished speech about *Crime Wave*: *(HE READS)*

The Top! Few guys ever make it. In THE EAST the Jones Brothers had the colour comedy film world pretty well sewed up with their Newfoundland film *The Adventure of Faustus Bidgood!* IN THE SOUTH, near the American border town of Toronto, Gordon Pinsent was wowing the crowds with his *Rowdyman!* THE WEST was producing a real gusher from a seemingly endless comedy well called SCTV. New colour comedy talent had a tough time breaking through. Then from THE NORTH, a young John Paizs started with nothing but a dream. With a bunch of unconnected ideas, a dash of self pity, inspired gratuitous violence, and a Canadian sensibility he went on to make *Crimewave*, A COLOUR COMEDY FILM so spectacularly, so ridiculously funny that, when I look at it today I am *humbled* !! All the comedy I have ever done is so belittled by this rich kitsch north prairie absurdism; **so belittled, that**, well ... I am going to ritually disembowel myself here at the Winnipeg Film Group's Cinematheque (HE TAKES OUT LARGE RUBBER PIRATES SWORD FROM HIS BAG; HE WAVES IT ABOUT MENACINGLY). Yes you heard me right! the first in what I predict will be a series of such public disembowelings (if this film ever gets proper distribution). (HE HOLDS THE SWORD TO HIS GUTS THEN SUDDENLY STOPS)

No, no, on second thought I'm going to blow my brains out! It's quicker. It's in the CRIME WAVE TRADITION. Goodbye everyone ! Goodbye John Paizs and thank you. (HE PULLS A SCARY LOOKING YELLOW AND GREY SUPER SOAKER WATER PISTOL FROM HIS BAG. HE PLACES IT IN HIS MOUTH. HE PULLS THE TRIGGER REPEATEDLY WHILE MAKING A CHILDISH GUN NOISE. HIS MOUTH IS FILLING WITH BLOOD FROM THE PISTOL. BLOOD STREAMS DOWN HIS SHIRT) Oh god I seem to have misfired. I seem to have blown only the back part of my mouth and on through my neck, (HE FEELS THE BACK OF HIS NECK) apparently missing my spinal cord. And vocal cords. Thus I am still able to form sentences and speak. Blood is gushing down my chest; a river of gore covers the podium in front of me. Oh god (HE FIRES AGAIN) wibble flibble flrpp whrrr ...rup (HE DOES HIS WORLD FAMOUS '*SOUND OF THE SLOWING DOWN OF A PROJECTOR SUBJECT TO FLUCTUATIONS IN ELECTRICAL INPUT*'). (HE COMPLETELY RECOVERS; HE SLOWLY WALKS BACK TO THE PODIUM AND PLACES THE WATER PISTOL UNDER IT)

So.....that's my idea for the opening of my unfinished speech for you tonight. I can't figure out the middle of my speech. For some reason I have difficulty with that.

The ending, however goes like this. (HE BRIGHTENS)

I love this movie, it's my favourite Canadian movie, it is exquisitely, ridiculously, wonderfully without meaning. It is in my opinion AN ODE to the meaninglessness of all human endeavours and to the absurdity of life.

Or did I miss something my friends?

Is it possible that there is a message here that that I have yet to discover?

If there is, please don't tell me. This *lack* of reason for living has become my *reason* for living.

I have a calling at last!

It is to herald *this movie* and other great works of art that are brilliantly hilariously without redeeming social value; works of art like this colour crime wave/colour comedy MASTERPIECE which, through heartfelt attention, through hard work, through the filmmaker's skill and dedication to making every meandering foolish moment absolutely perfect, is thereby a clear and trenchant echo of the so obvious fact that we are ***out of control! Humanity is a handful of dust particles being thrown about by an infinite uncaring universe!***

I first saw *Crime Wave* in 1987. It deeply influenced me.

It was the first time I saw that right here in Canada we could lavish time and effort and love and skill and training and resources onto **meaninglessness!**

Ah, Meaninglessness: THAT ULTIMATE UNIFYING REALITY for all humans, the one thing that we all share and every single human being knows.

Crime Wave is, in its careful capriciousness, its beauteous disjointedness, a thrilling illustration that we are in a disjointed uncaring universe; that there is no god who has ever answered our prayers.

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is the message that will bring the peoples of the world together: Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Jew; this is the message that will convince us that in this cold arbitrary universe the only thing we have is each other....that we had better all hold hands and love each other and SHARE!! Yes, SHARE.

Oyez oyez this message will bring peace at last and a lasting peace.

Yes, this **film, IF SEEN (IF DISTRIBUTED)** can be a glittering tile in the mosaic of world peace; a stellar patch in the quilt of constructive hopelessness.

(ANDY GOES VERY QUIET; VERY STILL)

Therefore tonight at this very Cinematheque I am launching a new religion. Yes you have heard correctly. I am starting the godless useless meandering religion of absurdity and foolishness. Yes I am indeed saying "**come follow me**".... join the godless useless meandering religion of absurdity and foolishness (or GUMRAF)...and start by attending our service. Our communal event ... our mass if you will ... the collective watching of the John Paizs Film **CRIME WAVE**....and that is the only requirement for membership in GUMRAF. (If you have trouble remembering the name of the religion it it's sort of a combination of 'gum wrapper' and 'riff raff': GUMRAF.)

Let the service begin. Introibo ad altare Paizsii.

(THE CEILING OF THE CINEMATHEQUE OPENS UP: ANDY IS ASSUMED INTO THE LIGHT)

