

NEW MALAREK MOVIE

A street kid who made it

by INA WARREN
Canadian Press

MONTREAL — "Malarek — A street kid who made it!" blasts the trailer for the new Canadian movie Malarek.

It's based on the true story of Victor Malarek, delinquent-turned-journalist, who exposed abuse in Quebec juvenile detention centres.

Featuring a smouldering performance from Elias Koteas, a 27-year-old Greek-Canadian actor, the rough-hewn action drama is scheduled to open in Canadian cities in March.

Malarek is a tough, salty, straightforward movie about journalism as well as delinquency.

Set mainly in 1971, the movie ends on a high note with Malarek enjoying every crusading reporter's dream — rubbing the nose of a corrupt adversary in a hard-hitting front-page story.

In this case, the victory is doubly sweet because the adversary is the brutal director of a juvenile detention home which has repeatedly covered up child suicides.

Now 40, the real-life Victor Malarek, has never completely clanged the door on his institutional past.

The nightmare began when Malarek, a shy, religious kid of 10, and his younger brother were separated from their Ukrainian parents and put in a Montreal boys' home named Weredale House "for their own protection."

What followed for Malarek was a series of institutions, foster homes, run-ins with the police and a narrow miss with prison.

Now a senior reporter for the Toronto Globe and Mail and the author of Hey Malarek!, on which the film is based, he still speaks to child-care workers and kids in detention centres.

The authorities usually introduce him to the kids as "a guy who was a punk like you and made it."

"Can you imagine?" snaps Malarek, rolling his eyes expressively.

On this day, he is giving interviews in a luxurious Montreal hotel along with other members of the Malarek movie team, including Koteas who's come from New York and director Roger Cardinal, a veteran Quebec film-maker.

"Don't you think it's nice there's no sex (in the movie)?" asks Malarek, momentarily playing reporter.

At one stage, the script had young Malarek hopping into bed with Claire, his encouraging lady editor at the fictitious Montreal Tribune. Claire is played by flame-haired Canadian actress Kerrie Keane.

"I didn't feel good about it at all," admits the darkly handsome Koteas, who phoned Malarek about his unease.

The journalist recalls being "really upset" about the inclusion of a bedroom scene, "because I just didn't feel it was in keeping with me and in keeping with the character."

Ever the nosy reporter, Malarek would drop in on the set while the movie was being shot here last summer. Koteas said he found his presence inspiring.

"I loved him when he was on the set, I could get some support from him. I'd go behind Roger's back and whisper to Victor 'How would you play this scene?'"

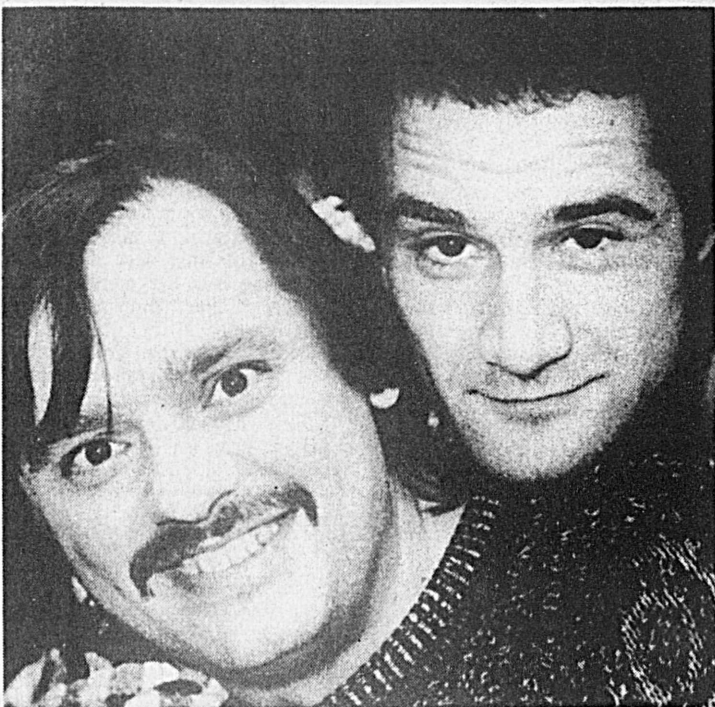
The juvenile detention system portrayed in Malarek is populated by brutish louts, negligent bureaucrats, and sadistic cops along with a minority of well-meaning but ineffectual care-givers.

There are scenes in which the police try to extract a confession out of the teenage Malarek by beating him up then throwing him over backyard fences in the working-class Montreal neighborhood of Pointe-St-Charles.

Malarek maintains the violence he was subjected to has been toned down, not exaggerated, for the movie.

"It was far, far more in excess than you'll ever see in that film." But, he says, "I survived the system."

"A lot of kids that I went through the system with didn't."



Journalist Victor Malarek (left) poses with his movie counterpart, actor Elias Koteas, recently in Montreal. The movie is a hard-hitting drama based on Malarek's early life as a reporter trying to expose abuse in the juvenile detention system.



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Top books

Here are the week's Top 10 hard-cover fiction and non-fiction books as compiled by Maclean's magazine. Bracketed figures indicate position the previous week.

FICTION

- (1) *Sands of Time* — Sheldon
- (2) *Cat's Eye* — Atwood
- (3) *Star* — Steele
- (3) *The Lyre of Orpheus* — Davies
- (4) *Journey* — Michener
- (5) *The Edge* — Francis
- (6) *Spy Hook* — Deighton
- (-) *The Satanic Verses* — Rushdie
- (-) *The Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soul* — Adams
- (8) *Mitla Pass* — Uris

NON-FICTION

- (1) *A Brief History of Time* — Hawking
- (2) *The Arctic Grail* — Berton
- (3) *Gracie* — Burns
- (4) *The Struggle for Democracy* — Watson and Barber
- (7) *Canadian Living Microwave Cookbook* — Fraser
- (5) *Stress for Success* — Hanson
- (8) *Blind Faith* — McGinniss
- (3) *The Last Lion, Winston Spencer Churchill* — Manchester
- (-) *Child Star* — Black
- (9) *Private Voice* — Gzowski

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