

## **NOW, YOURS (1981)** [previously *Louisiana Purchase*]

*Clint Enns*

Before a screening of *Louisiana Purchase* at the Funnel, it is rumoured that the ever-scissor-happy Mary Brown of the now defunct Ontario Censor Board demanded to be shown a copy of the film. Mary was on a personal crusade to end underground cinema after the Canadian Images Film Festival had shown Al Razutis's film *A Message from Our Sponsor* (1979) without first submitting it to the Censor Board. It became her mission to personally watch every underground film being shown in order to weed out all the degenerate artists that were hiding in the very dark shadows of the underground, and to control every single cinema in Ontario ... no screen was too small.

After handmade countdown leader and a lecture challenging the audience to revolt against the one-way dialogue presented by the media they are currently watching, we are shown a title card: "And now eleven films so brutal, so horrifying, they had to be kept from the public for over a century." Apparently, Mary took this claim literally, but couldn't determine exactly what scenes the title was referring to. To her, the images looked normal. What can be horrific about the news or game shows that promise that you too could be lucky enough to own your own electronic backgammon game? She understood the film was intended to be subversive, but she could not find "just cause" to censor any specific section of the film, in spite of the film's initial threat.

In a Hail Mary, she noticed that the last section of the film had closing credits lifted from those "nice boys" down at Ontario Travel Film. At that moment, she did something that was out of her jurisdiction, but "for a cause that she was equally concerned about"—copyright infringement. She took it upon herself to chop out the credits, assuming she would kill two birds with one stone: Hoolboom would no longer show his artistically compromised work, and Roy Crost would have his credits back. Fortunately, punks don't believe in concepts like "artistic integrity" and Hoolboom was no stranger to constantly recutting his own works. *Louisiana Purchase* became *Now, Yours*.

### **NOTES**

In reality, the CFMDC 16mm print of *Now, Yours* was cut down at a screening when a projectionist mistook a long stretch of red film frames as tail leader. This projectionist error had nothing to do with the title change, which had been implemented decades earlier. All the same, the reality is that Mary Brown and the Ontario Censor Board were truly this ruthless in their policing of the Funnel and other institutions that screened films in this era.