



## **MY BODY BURNS (1972)**

**Director: Jean-Marie Pallardy**  
**Le Chat qui fume/MVD**

One of Pallardy's first films, **MY BODY BURNS** (penicillin should clear that right up) fails to reach the level of entertainment, or degree of nudity than that of his latter erotic titles. Working with a true life story, Pallardy paints a tale of lesbian lust and small town scandal that too often feels heavy-handed, with most dramatic scenes lacking punch, with little help from performances that do anything but invoke sympathy. Still, there is enough sexual congress and topless antics to tide one over for 80 minutes, so long as you're not in the mood for an in-depth drama or understandable narrative.

The friends and neighbors of the local notary (Claude Sendron) have been talking, as small communities are prone to do, and unfortunately none of the gossip has been kind. It seems that reports of the notary's appetite for frequenting underground orgies has been making its way around the suburb, with rumors fueled by the senior's very public womanizing and lengthily bachelor status.



To squelch such chatter, it is suggested that the notary settle down and get married, an inclination that has already been raised by his current girlfriend Evelyne (Evelyne Scott, **NIGHT OF THE SKULL**). Attracted to his money, Evelyne regularly meets her sugar daddy for hush hush rendezvous in the French countryside. Intoxicated by his bank account, the thought of marriage appeals to Evelyne greatly, however there is one slight catch preventing the May-December romance from making it official; Michelle. Fond of being whipped and beaten, yet averse to plucking her eyebrows, Michelle and Evelyne have been hiding their lesbian relationship from their small town for fear of being ridiculed and labeled deviants. Only Michelle's father and her sexy blonde sister know of her true sexual preference but her desire to be with Evelyne is becoming an obsession, one that may not be easy to hide from the tight knit community for much longer.



Unlike **EROTIC DIARY OF A LUMBERJACK**, whose sex scenes have a fun loving bawdiness to them, **MY BODY BURNS** tends to feel awkward in its own skin. There are touches of attempted comedic moments that feel wholly out of place, particularly when

juxtaposed against sensual scenes that leave most of the pictures erotic elements unable to make up their mind as to whether or not they should be lighthearted or rough. The majority of the cast is also far from stimulating, save for one or two ancillary characters and as is the case with **EROTIC DIARY OF A LUMBERJACK**, most displays of feminine beauty are quickly overshadowed by the hairy backside and receding hairline of their much older costars.

**MY BODY BURNS** is based on the case of Bruay-en-Artois, in which the body of Brigitte Dewèvre was found in a small town located in northern France that is now known as Bruay-la-Buissière. Rumor would implicate the local notary of murdering the young girl and would provide strong enough gossip that he was eventually brought to trial for the killing. Litigation



was overseen by Judge Henri Pascal, who eventually dismissed the charges, much to the chagrin of the French public. Furious over the mishandling of the case, Pallardy began filming **MY BODY BURNS** (Dossier érotique d'un notaire), shortly after finishing his first feature, **UNSATISFIED** (L' Insatisfaite). The film would find Pallardy in hot water as it was yanked from theaters after only one week due to complaints. Similarities with the lead character's occupation to that of the accused, and Claude Sendron's apparent stunning likeness to Judge Pascal, lead both men to bring charges against Pallardy. After talking with the distributor, it was decided that it was the use of the word "notary" that would eventually be their downfall, if the case was ever brought to court. As such, the workprint was stripped of the word entirely, mere days before being screened by those assigned to follow up on the complaints. Such butt saving action would explain numerous sudden cuts and jumps in the film as well as one glowing error, found just before the film's 44 minute mark. In the scene, Georges Guéret and Jacques Insermini, both regular Pallardy players, are



informing the notary of the dirty gossip that is being spread about him around town. There is a line of dialogue that is repeated, that is hard to miss given that what is being discussed is the notion that Claude is a "queer after young boys."

For its Classics of French Erotica line, Le Chat qui fume has remastered **MY BODY BURNS** in a non-anamorphic 1.66:1 aspect ratio, from elements made available by Pallardy himself. Picture quality varies throughout, ranging from adequate to tolerable. While nicks and scratches are kept to a minimum, the print suffers from several coloring

issues. Hazy yellows fade to a saturation of greens only to be drowned out in a sudden brightening of white. About 50 minutes in, there is a major discoloration of the print in the form of a flickering red staining on the far right side, as if a red bulbed strobe light was placed just out of sight but aimed at the camera's focal point. The English dubbed audio is peppered with pops and crackles, with dialogue often drowned out by the pan flute dominated soundtrack.

Extras include "The Erotic Journal of Jean-Marie Pallardy", an hour long interview with the director about his beginnings in film and the scandals they've caused. Featuring clips from many of his erotic films, including UNSATISFIED, BODY GAMES and LUCKY LUCKY & THE DALTIMES, this interview can also be found on Le Chat qui fume's other Pallardy releases, TRUCK STOP and EROTIC DIARY OF A LUMBERJACK. A stills gallery of 100 photographs from Jean-Marie's private collection and trailers for other Pallardy films round out the disc's supplements. *(Jason McElreath)*

