

in 209

Canadian films screen N. Am. Atlantic City & Birthday tops

TORONTO — *Atlantic City USA* and *Happy Birthday to Me* continue to pace Canadian film grosses through the summer, with a surprise from *Search and Destroy*.

According to Columbia, *Happy Birthday* (a Dal production) garnered \$10,610,000 in its first twenty-four days. However, it has fallen off precipitously since then. With rare exceptions, this is the standard pattern for this sort of formula horror picture, with big bucks backed by a strong TV-buy and then a frantic falloff.

Atlantic City U.S.A. (ICC), on the other hand, has demonstrated astonishingly strong legs spending more than fifteen weeks on the Variety chart, most of that time in the top 15. Although its grosses have not been spectacular (\$2,993,953 as of July 8), they have been respectable for a limited release

prestige picture. In addition, it is the only picture in the top 15 that has been in release more than six weeks.

Bill Fruet's 1978 actioner *Search and Destroy*, distrib'd in the U.S. by Film Ventures, snuck into seventy New York area theatres as a fill-in and snagged \$485,000. A week later, it was down to one theatre and virtually no ads, and then it was gone. It also picked up \$6,500 in a single week in Buffalo and \$12,000 in the same in Kansas City. Proving that with a strong action market (New York, Philadelphia, Chicago) and a good campaign, somebody could make a go of *Search and Destroy*.

The Haunting of Julia (aka *Full Circle*) continued its sporadic showings and picked up about \$30,000 in one and two week stands in Seattle, L.A. and San Francisco. Kier Dullea, gone tomorrow.