

# MAHONEY'S LAST STAND

by Rutherford

The film is not an urban myth; I'm one of (at least) five people who have seen it.

Co-written and co-directed by, and starring, Alexis Kanner [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis\\_Kanner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_Kanner)] and filmed at the Pinewood Film studios in Kleinburg, just north of Toronto in Ontario, Canada in 1972, four of us discovered it when it was periodically broadcast in the late movies slot by a Toronto independent television station (CITY-TV) in the late 1970s.

Released in the US under the title **MAHONEY'S ESTATE**, the film (starring Alexis Kanner, Maud Adams and Sam Waterston) tells the story of a young man (Kanner) who leaves the city to live off the land.

While many people are aware of the film's deservedly well known soundtrack (written and recorded by Ronnie Wood and Ronnie Lane), the film has some hilarious moments, such as when, browsing in the local General Store, Mahoney decides to grow peas. Picking up a small envelope from the rotary seed display, he asks the proprietor "How many rows of peas will I get from this package?" "Depends how far apart you plant them." A long silence. Mahoney shakes the package by his ear. "How many pea seeds are there in this package?" "Open it up and find out." Mahoney slowly tears the top off of the package and pours the contents out into his open hand. A look of surprise, followed by indignation crosses his face. "Hey!" he complains, "These are just dried peas...!"



There's also a remarkable cinematographic moment when, to the accompaniment of a rhythmic percussive 'riff', the camera sweeps slowly across Mahoney's estate; finally coming to rest on the house and, as the view zooms in to reveal Mahoney: sitting in an old wooden chair on the porch, lazily rolling the handle of a hoe between his fingers, as the metal blade of the hoe rolls rhythmically back and forth across the wooden porch. This is the sound we've been hearing.

While still in Toronto in the early 1980s, my wife and I saw it again on the same station.

Then it disappeared off the rotation of films for which the station had the broadcast rights.

In the late 1980s, I attempted to purchase a VCR tape of the film, only to find that it was unavailable, and in many quarters, entirely unknown.

Eventually, I found a mailing address for Alexis Kanner in California, and wrote to tell him how much I enjoyed the film, and to ask if he could advise me how I might acquire a copy.

In his reply (since lost), he expressed (mock) surprise that "anyone had actually seen it" and thanked me for my kind words about his film. Unfortunately, he explained, even **he** didn't have a copy of it, but suggested that his agent in London might, and promised to contact him on my behalf.

Well, the bugger went and died didn't he? a couple of months later in London. (Without, apparently, having tracked down a copy of the film for me.) I expect that his mind was on other things.

Damn.

In 2007, I wrote to Sam Waterston, hoping that, as one of his earliest films, he might have (and be willing to have duplicated) a copy of the film.

08 June 2007

Dear Mr. Waterston,

You will recall taking part in Alexis Kanner's film *Mahoney's Last Stand* (a.k.a *Mahoney's Estate* and *Downtown Farmer*), shot at the Toronto International Film Studios in Kleinburg Ontario in the early 1970s. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the film was broadcast several times by a local independent television station (CITY-TV) in Toronto.

In the late 1980s, I spent several months in contact with several mail-order firms in an effort to purchase a videotape of the film, but could not find it listed in any catalogue.

Finally, a contact at CITY-TV directed me to the film's distributor, who in turn directed me to Mr. Kanner in Los Angeles who was evidently very pleased to learn of the lengths to which I had gone in the hope of acquiring a copy of the film. Unfortunately, even Mr. Kanner no longer had a copy of the film, but he promised to contact his agent in London who, he believed, might have a videotape that could be duplicated for me.

Over the next few years, I contacted Mr. Kanner on two or three occasions, but he had not been able to locate a copy of the film. After my third attempt, and not wanting to impose unduly on his time or attentions, I let the matter drop, while I attempted to find a copy of the film through other channels (including the film archives of the MOMA in New York). Unfortunately, it seems that very few people have even heard of the film, let alone offer a means to acquire a copy. (I found it interesting to note that, when I replaced my vinyl recording of the film's magnificent soundtrack, in his liner notes accompanying the CDROM, Carlton P. Sandercock-Rout states that "I've yet still to meet someone who's actually seen the film".)

Sadly, before I was able to contact him again, Mr. Kanner died in 2003.



Mr. Waterston, I realise that I am taking a liberty in doing so, but I am writing to you in the hope that you might have a copy of this film, and might be kind enough to share it with one who really enjoyed its witty and wistful depiction of a modern antihero.

With my very sincere thanks for your time and consideration,

Rutherford

Rutherford @ theshadowofthephotographer.co.uk

One of his managers replied that:

MAHONEY'S ESTATE / Sam Waterston Back to messages |  

---

 Ira Liss [Add to contacts](#) 22/06/2007  
[Reply](#)

---

Rutherford;

I'm one of Sam Waterston's managers. He mentioned that you inquired about MAHONEY'S ESTATE.

Per Sam's request, we tried to locate the film but unfortunately came up short.

Sorry we couldn't be more helpful.

Thanks,

Ira  
Ira Liss  
Industry Entertainment  
955 South Carrillo Drive  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
(323) 964-9275 (dir)  
(323) 954-9009 (fax)  
[iral@industryentertainment.com](mailto:iral@industryentertainment.com)

Does anyone know where one can get a copy of this lost masterpiece??