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'I LIKE TO PLAY COCKY SCHMUCKS'

# WARREN BEATTY

## FROM POLITICS TO THE MOVIES

By MICHAEL WILMINGTON  
 and  
 GERALD PEARY



This interview was conducted last month in a comfortable and liberal middle-class home out in Madison's suburbs where Warren Beatty was resting up before the George McGovern rally; three hours after our interview he was scheduled to introduce McGovern at the Stock Pavilion.

Beatty met us at the door with a cherry "Hi! I'm Jack Nicholson." He was wearing his hair moderately long, and he had on glasses, clean Levis, and a denim jacket. He looked like a bright, wealthy college kid who was maybe into hustling, and when he spoke, he rattled off an impressive list of statistics and arguments in favor of McGovern's candidacy—crisp, assured and fluent.

In 1968, Beatty was a Bobby Kennedy man. He switched to McGovern and finally to Hubert Humphrey out of self-admitted pragmatism and from distrust of Eugene McCarthy.

But if you're talking with Warren Beatty, the first thing on your mind definitely isn't politics. Beatty starred in three of the best movies of the sixties—*Splendor in the Grass*, *Lilith*, and *Bonnie and Clyde*. Some critics, such as Pauline Kael, rank his last *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, with or above the others.

From movie to movie, a bit of Beatty is the same. He described his special film character as the "cocky schmuck." Whether his name is Clyde, Berry-Berry, *McCabe*, *Bud Stamper* or *Mickey One*, he always possesses similar qualities. He is jaunty, cunning, but also naive.

He is addicted to self-dramatization. He is a Romantic to the core, but his ideas about romance seem derived from the Saturday Matinee. He tells crummy jokes.

The women who love him treat him like a child. He's fond of violent games, but real violence leaves him desolate, bewildered...and sometimes dead. He's a *Golden Boy* with a worm of decay gnawing at his guts.

Beatty is probably the last of the Method Sex Stars. Like Brando, Newman, and James Dean, all of whom studied under Strasberg or Adler, and worked with scripts by Williams or Inge for directors like Kazan and Penn. Beneath a surface of sometimes feral virility, the Method Stars projected loneliness, confusion, and neuroticism: rejected by their parents, persecuted by society, feared and adored by women.

Also off screen, of course, Beatty has an unbelievable reputation with women. Natalie Wood, Leslie Caron, Joan Collins....and God knows who else. Even his supposed near misses—Vivien Leigh and Elizabeth Taylor—are awe-inspiring. Julie Christie, with whom he is living, probably inspired more erotic fantasies in the late sixties than any other actress.

But this begins to sound like objectification and, as Beatty smilingly admits, love is "a matter of art."

The thing which can't help but fascinate you is the secret of Beatty's appeal. Acting aside, why is Julie staying with him and not Aristotle Onassis or Rudolph Nureyev or Jim Brown?

Well, a lot of Beatty's appeal lies in his interpersonal shrewdness. He really knows how to stay on top of a conversation. He speaks with casual expertise on most subjects you bring up. Call him out on something, or argue, and he just grins and shrugs.

All the time, he seems to be sizing you up. His friendliness is unforced. Underneath, something seems to be churning around, and this is just enough to keep you vaguely unsettled. He keeps sliding back and forth between mellow pedantry, boyish enthusiasm, cool reserve, and ironic self-deprecation. He has the secret of any great conversationalist: he knows exactly when and how to adjust.

And what can you say: it works. We liked Beatty, probably because in part we felt that he liked us and took us seriously.

The secret of any sexual or personal success probably lies in making someone feel good. Beatty knows how to do that.

At the McGovern rally later, one of us, Mike, was sitting with legs up on the press table, alone and depressed.

Beatty got up on stage. He adjusted the microphone, adjusted his glasses, peeked down, and flicked up his hand, as if he'd just seen his oldest buddy. Right before he started in on McGovern, he said, "Hi, Mike."

Yeah. Hang in there, Warren.

Why are you campaigning for McGovern?

People just aren't aware of McGovern. He's a leader. He's the only candidate that said he'll put a woman in the Supreme Court, Cabinet, and on the National Security Council. He's the only Senator to completely endorse the Black Caucus Congressional Delegation on all 60 points.

McGovern fully understood our China policy twenty years ago and advocated the recognition of Red China. In 1963, he stood on the floor of the Senate and said we've got to get out of Viet Nam, in September, before John Kennedy was shot. I've never caught him in a lie and that's why I'd take the time to go out and support him.

Did you work for McCarthy in 1968?

No, I worked for Bobby. When Bobby died I didn't feel that Eugene McCarthy would make a good President. I supported McGovern after that, which was kind of a futile thing. I was uneasy about not supporting McCarthy at the time. But maybe subsequent events and McCarthy's attitude have borne out some of the feeling that a lot of people picked up on.

Did you finally vote for Humphrey?

My attitude was not that of a lot of my friends was, to throw up their hands after Humphrey was nominated. I just try to be practical. I'm the kind of guy who said it's very important to elect Humphrey instead of Nixon. You see the appointees on the Supreme Court.

I would not support Humphrey now. There's no point in it, although the man has in many years gone by a very good

record. But there are many, many reasons to be licensed at Humphrey. I wouldn't take a minute to work for Hubert Humphrey now.

But I will support anybody (I shouldn't say anybody) to beat Richard Nixon. I think it's important.

Do you find a danger in theatrical personalities using their charisma for causes they believe in, in politics becoming show business?

I think it's difficult to separate the need to be theatrical from the need to influence people from the need to stress a point of view. I don't know that it's bad. Being an actor is basically telling the truth. A good actor is the man who tells the truth. The politician is the same way.

The basic tenets of good acting are very important for politicians, the things you learn in acting about reacting from moment to moment, about listening to another person instead of pretending to listen. The ability to respond to accidents.

By your definition, is Richard Nixon a "good actor"?

Nixon falls miserably short. He constructs a reality which never really becomes a reality to him and that you and I think was a lie to begin with. So the poor man works out of no basis. He just tries to smile a lot. He gets little twitches and the sweat beads roll down his face.

Nixon disobeys certain cardinal rules of acting. He can shave all he wants and put all the makeup on; it's not going to change that. I saw him once walk into a wall in London when he went to 10 Downing Street or Buckingham Palace, I can't remember which. But there it was on the television cameras. He hit the wall and didn't acknowledge it.

But that didn't fool anybody. He pretended it didn't happen. But it had happened. And sure enough, NBC, and ABC, and CBS never stopped running that piece of tape.

Does it frighten you when show business personalities such as Art Linkletter and Ronald Reagan use their theatrical fame for the benefit of the opposition?

I don't think Art Linkletter brings very much. No, that doesn't scare me. He's a Republican. He has a right to his point of view. Ronald Reagan is a very good speaker and its unfortunate that he's on the side that he's on. He's a very, very powerful speaker.

Between campaigning for McGovern, are you currently working on any films?

I'm doing two things. I'm doing a picture about Southern California, about Hollywood that has to do with sex. I'm also preparing a project on John Reed. Not *Ten Days That Shook the World*, but a project about Reed himself. I'm planning to direct the first one myself. The second one, I don't know. I may direct parts of it.

Do you hope to make your John Reed film in Russia?

That's a sticky question. John Reed is the most famous American hero in Russia. They would like me to make a film about Reed in Russia. They've asked me to, but I want to make it the way I want to make it.

It's very hard to say exactly what you want to say in Russia and get approval to

take the film out of the country. I don't want to spend five or six or eight months over there having coronaries and not come back here with anything.

What contribution other than acting did you make on *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*?

I watched all the rushes because Bob Altman, the director, wanted me to participate very heavily in the writing and construction of the film. I like Bob very much. He works in such a way that he wants a high level of participation from the people in it. We kind of discarded the original script and I found myself writing most of the scenes. I wrote all my dialogue. The frog joke is mine. I don't like to use the word "mine," but I guess it is.

Would you call *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* a traditional "western"?

It's more of a Northern than a Western, more of a Northwestern. And yet I feel that it is very much the way the old West was in that it came from very diverse people. The think about the West is that they weren't all sitting around talking with accents that were western accents. There were people that came out of weird places. And what were they doing there? Like the British gunfighter. And where does Julie come from, that Cockney character that she plays?

The atmosphere of *McCabe* is a combination of things that Altman felt about the background of his family out of Kansas and Missouri; and dialogue which is largely things I have heard in Southern Virginia that comes from a kind of colloquialism that existed.

I created *McCabe* to come out of that Southeastern area of the country. In the book he didn't come out of any area. And in the book Julie wasn't a cockney character. We really created a different story and we used the book to get the film financed.

How did you like working together with Julie Christie on *McCabe* at the same time you were involved in a relationship?

It makes the relationship at home a little difficult. It makes the relationship at work a little better because I know that the girl loves me and she knows that I love her. We'd go out of our way to assist the other person.

I probably wouldn't have done so much work on the film had not Julie been in it. But because of my relationship with her I wanted to work a little harder.

I have tremendous respect for her kinetic energy and talent. She's terrific. She really is, and she thinks I'm good. So we have a lot of arguments and we work them out. She's going to be in the film that I do next, that I'm writing now, and that I direct.

She's a very unusual girl. I'm talking about her as objectively as I can professionally. I don't think there's anybody quite with that kind of equipment. In addition, I've never seen a face like that.

Did the stance that Mrs. Miller takes toward *McCabe* affect your relationship off screen?

Not really. You have to sit down very technically and say, "Look, this is what's happening to the characters. This woman

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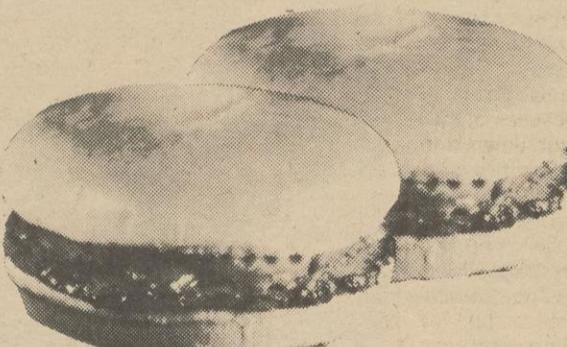
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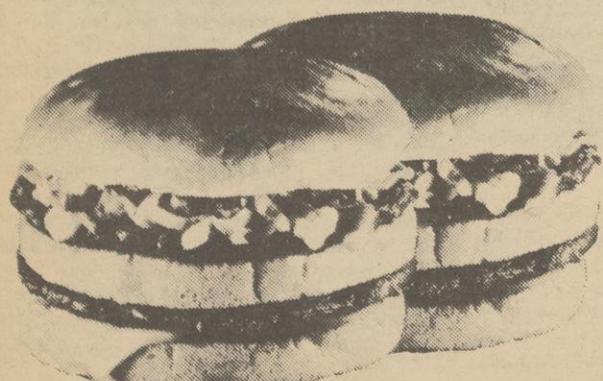
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**THE INVOLUNTARY MENTAL COMMITMENT OF**  
**'HOSTILE' HAZEL LENTZ**

**AS TOLD BY EDWARD ELIAHU ELSON**  
**SHOUTING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS**  
**FOR SOMETHING TO BE DONE**



Hazel Lentz is 68 years old, bordering on 70, so listen closely to what is said, for her time is very precious. Yes it's true that Hazel Lentz is full of anger, that she seeks revenge, but it was only after she was committed to a mental institution that she became "obsessed." And everyone who helped to put her there is going to pay, for she ain't crazy like the rest, who let themselves be walked on, who simply acquiesce. Following is the why and wherefore of "hostile" Hazel Lentz. Listen very closely and you may hear the duck within my stomach quacking; listen and you will see what I feel inside.

In 1953 Hazel Lentz inherited a small farm near Wisconsin Rapids from her eldest son who had died in an Air Force bomber crash. She was a nurses' aide at the time of coming into this property so she allowed the land to be tenanted while she continued her nursing work in a VA hospital in Minneapolis. On occasions she would come down to see how her tenants were doing and admire the land that she owned.

In 1958, while visiting her tenants, a neighbor by the name of Guy Luther dropped by and asked Hazel if she would be willing to sell a grove of Maple from her back forty. Guy Luther's offer of \$1.25 a cord was politely refused by Hazel, before being made a Gold Star mother by her eldest son's death, had intended to go into the Maple Syrup business with her son. "It just wouldn't have been right," said Hazel, "to have sold those trees for they were a link between me and my son."

**HAZEL WENT BACK** to nursing in Minneapolis and retired two years later, in 1960. She came back to her farm, carrying all her belongings, only to find her maple trees had been cut. The poor Indian family that had been tenanting the land told Hazel that Guy Luther, during the course of two winters, had come in and cut down and carted away what had been her grove of "beautiful maple." "Now there were only stumps," said dismayed Hazel Lentz, further away from her son than she had ever been before. A neighbor from across the way confirmed what the Indians had said, that Guy Luther, a jobber for the lumber companies, had come in and took off from the back forty the beautiful maple that Hazel's eldest son had left in her trusteeship.

Hazel went and saw an attorney in a nearby town to have him institute a suit against Luther for the conversion of her trees. This attorney informed Hazel that even if she could prove up that it was Luther who had stolen her trees, no money would be forthcoming since Luther had all of his wealth in his wife's name. "A judgment doesn't mean a thing, if you can't collect on it. If a welfare recipient runs you over and he doesn't have insurance, you will not only have to nurse your wounds, but pay for them yourself. If you are a criminal, and likely to be sued, the best thing you can do is put everything you own under someone else's name."

Since Hazel could not effectively sue Luther in a civil court, she went to the Sheriff to bring criminal proceedings. It is a crime in Wisconsin to steal another's property, but the Sheriff refused to investigate Hazel's case and told Hazel to get lost. Undaunted, Hazel went to the District Attorney to have him issue a criminal complaint. He, alike the Sheriff, told her to let the whole thing drop.

"**LIKE HELL**, I'll let it drop," she said. Instead she bought a typewriter and started writing letters from what was in her head. Between 1960, the time she discovered the timber theft and attempted to secure some type of justice from the local officials, and 1964, when she was committed to a Mental Institution for creating such a fuss, Hazel dashed off over 200 letters. Letters to everyone imaginable: Governor Nelson, Assemblyman Laird, Senator Proxmire, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, et al. From most she didn't get a reply, for she wasn't that good a writer. Some wrote her back. Gordon Roseleip wrote, "trust in God, he will see you through, and the people who robbed your timber will be punished." But apparently some of the officials she wrote to took the time to call the Sheriff. For on eight occasions, between 1960 and 1964, Hazel was visited by the Sheriff who informed her that if she didn't stop writing "those goddamn letters," he would fix her wagon. She didn't stop and in fact her wagon got a fixing.

April 13, 1964 started out as a day like most days in the life of Hazel Lentz. She got up at the crack of dawn, fed the chickens, looked up and saw the stumps of where her maple trees had stood, wrote some letters, milked the cows, saw Mrs. Luther's lumber truck moving down the highway, wrote some letters, got into her car and drove into Wisconsin Rapids to pick up chicken feed. But this day, unlike other days, ended in something special for Hazel Lentz. When the sun went down she would find herself in a Mental Institution, instead of home in bed.

Upon leaving the General Store, packages in hand, Hazel was met by the Sheriff, the one whom she had met eight times before. Hazel knew something was up, because this time, unlike any time before, the Sheriff was smiling as he opened up the door. "Come with me," he said, and she was forced to go. "Where are you taking me?" she inquired from the back seat of his car. "We are going to see Judge Fink," he replied, with a smile upon his lips. "You have no right taking me where I don't want to go," Hazel fairly shouted. But the Sheriff was unmoved: "I have a writ of detention for your medical observation, signed by Judge Fink." Hazel didn't say anymore.

\* \* \* \*

**HAZEL EXPECTED** that she would be taken to the Courthouse in Marshfield, but the Sheriff drove directly to the Marshfield Clinic. She was walked into a room where a Judge by the name of Fred A. Fink was standing. Hazel had never met Judge Fink before, but upon being introduced, she asked: "What am I doing here?" Judge Fink said that she was going to be interviewed by two psychiatrists to determine whether she was mentally ill. Hazel asked to have an attorney present. Judge Fink replied that she was not under arrest, that this was not a criminal matter, and that she didn't have a right to an attorney. Hazel, a lot more frightened now, asked that she be allowed to call her relatives and have them present. The Judge refused, saying, "this is not a criminal proceeding, you are not under arrest, you have no rights."

A Dr. John Mulvaney and a Dr. John F. Gouze walked into the room while Hazel and Judge Fink were arguing over constitutional rights. They were very busy men, as doctors often are, and they im-

mediately got down to the nitty gritty. "Hazel," one of the two doctors asked, "do you believe that the universe is run by a big electrical machine in the sky?" "Of course not," was Hazel's quick witted reply. The doctor wrote something down on the pad of paper he carried in his hand and didn't ask a further question. Hazel thought she had answered the question correctly, so when the other doctor asked Hazel if she heard voices, Hazel, a little flippantly answered, "only when I'm spoken to." One, if not both of her answers must have been incorrect, for the two doctors recommended that she be committed for a 30 day observation at the Winnebago Mental Institution. Judge Fink immediately signed the order and the Sheriff whisked her away. When Hazel got out of the Mental Institution eight months later, she took time to ponder what her answers should have been, but she came to the well founded conclusion that whatever she had answered, she would have been committed one way or the other, for that's what the function of the doctor was.

**THE ORIGINAL COMMITMENT** order was for 30 days, but after Hazel had been there for ten days, Dr. C.H. Belcher of Winnebago petitioned Judge Fink for an additional 30 days to be tacked on to the original 30 for "tests necessary to evaluate the patient's condition." After Hazel had been at Winnebago for 40 days somebody got off of their ass and interviewed her, but as you will shortly see, Hazel wishes that they hadn't. When Hazel first got to Winnebago everybody was all business. They stripped her of her clothes and put her in a dressing gown to let her know that she was a patient; put her in a private room; made her take a daily dose of thorazine so she would not rant and feel upset over her benign imprisonment.

But after 40 days, Hazel was finally interviewed by a psychiatrist, a woman psychiatrist by the name of Dr. Dachtera. Dr. Dachtera patiently listened to Hazel for less than five minutes and then told Hazel that if she would give up her letter writing and animosities she would be allowed out, but if she didn't promise to give up her letter writing, to give up her silly delusions and obsessions, she would stay in Winnebago forever. Hazel told Dr. Dachtera to drop dead. So Dr. Dachtera, the psychiatrist, as if to prove her point, reported to Judge Fink that she had interviewed Hazel and had found her to be "seriously mentally ill" as indicated by her "excitement, delusions, and hostility." Dr. Dachtera wrote Judge Fink that Hazel was a "paranoid schizoid type exhibiting an obsessive personality with hostility overtones." Judge Fink, at the suggestion of Dr. Dachtera, committed Hazel indefinitely.

**AFTER SERVING** eight months of her life sentence, Hazel, with the help of her children and her husband, finally secured a lawyer who was inexpensive enough to be retained, and the case was brought to the attention of Judge Herbert Mueller, who ordered Hazel's release. Judge Mueller wrote:

"The doctors who have examined the above named patient, now confined at the Winnebago State Hospital, have made their report to the Court. . . You will note that the report seems to have a dual meaning; namely, that if the events which she complains of actually took place, then, in that instance, they feel she is possibly a

fit subject to release; but, on the other hand, if these events did not occur and are a figment of her imagination, then she is suffering from delusions and should not be released. They also indicate that it is unlikely that she would do harm to herself or others, except that she might make a nuisance of herself."

Hazel, upon being released, showed herself to be as undaunted and unimimidated as ever. Now, however, besides writing letters about the timber racketeers, she wrote letters about her involuntary commitment. Once again, some people responded. Frank Nikolay, who was Majority Leader of the Assembly wrote back to Hazel on June 4, 1966:

"Dear Mrs. Lentz:

I have your letter of June 1, 1966. I would not be interested in handling your case. I have told you on several occasions that notwithstanding the fact that your commitment to a mental institution may have been improper and even illegal, the best thing for you to do would be to forget it. I think you run the danger of a legitimate commitment if you continue to devote your whole life to this obsession. I would think you would have something more important to do than to continue your personal vendetta against officials who may have acted improperly."

Hazel was trying to sue Judge Fink, the doctors who examined her, the officials out of Winnebago, and whoever it was, for Hazel still did not know, who started the proceedings against her that ended in her stay at Winnebago. Not Frank Nikolay, not anybody would take her case. Perhaps it isn't good policy for an attorney to sue a judge, because Judges are human and grudges they bear. But the main reason why no attorney would take her case is that Hazel was not allowed to see or get the files of Judge Fink and the records of her commitment. And Hazel, not having the records to show an attorney what had taken place, left every attorney she saw with the conviction that she was indeed nuts, and had gotten what she well deserved, because things like this don't happen in America.

**HAZEL CONTACTED** me in the beginning of 1970, after I appeared nude from the stage of the Dangle announcing my candidacy for District Attorney. She figured, "this is one attorney I can trust, cause he's as nuts as me." I got dressed and took her case. I immediately got the files from Judge Fink, and just as quickly disregarded his instruction to keep them secret from Hazel. I turned them over to her and watched her eyes bulge out. It was even worse than what she had expected. Hazel had never really known who had been the originators of the plan to have her locked away. Now she knew. The people who had initiated the proceedings against her were the son and daughter in law of the fellow she had accused of timber theft, Guy Luther. The petitioners were Richard and Francis Luther and an officer friend of theirs by the name of David Sharkey. Hazel to this day does not know what David Sharkey looks like, and she had only seen Richard and Francis Luther on one or two occasions. But these three people had been the ones who had signed the application for judicial inquiry into her mental illness, alleging that she was mentally ill in that she "constantly accuses people of stealing and constantly

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# A Grand Sneak Preview

## The 1971 New York Film Festival

By NANCY SCHWARTZ

I stood reverentially in Lincoln Center, the Alphaville of the arts, at the threshold of having a romantic fantasy fulfilled. A dedicated movie freak, I'd made the "filmgrimage" to the New York Film Festival, just a step away from Cannes or Venice. "This is the big one," I thought. Maybe my big chance. I'd be rubbing shoulders with auteurs, and someone might overhear a remark I'd toss off during intermission and ask me to write for *Sight and Sound*. I didn't care that the price of the seats I could afford kept a vast distance between the auteurs and myself. I was excited by the prospect of seeing new films, and I expected the series of panel discussions to be a dynamic interaction between people really involved in film.

HOWEVER, WHEN I LOOKED in the papers I felt like I'd been had. If the film festival was a showcase for new films, the best sampling of international film produced in 1971, why was nearly every film shown at the festival opening the next day at a theatre in New York? Was the 1971 New York Film Festival a grand sneak preview? On the whole, yes; but you had to admit, it had style. It was a status event among patrons of the arts—to many it was an "opening," and it could have been film or opera or the horse show. Of course, there was more than an ample representation of film lovers, but for many "in the business" it was just another convention.

The program for the festival was coordinated by an impressive sampling of film people: Richard Corliss, editor of *Film Comment Magazine*, Arthur L. Mayer, critic Andrew Sarris, director-writer Susan Sontag, and chairman Richard Roud.

The festival opened with *The Debut* directed by Russian Gleb Panfilov. It is a melange about the life, love and career of a young actress intercut with scenes from the film of *Joan of Arc* in which she's starring. Panfilov's major point seems to be that nobody wants you when you're down and out, but a little bit of fame will bring the fair-weather friends flocking to your side. The director seems continually muddled by his own technique, erratically sticking in a scene from the film within the film, uncertain of which film was working better. The ultimate effect of *The Debut* was overwhelming nostalgia for the performance of Falconetti in Dreyer's silent version of *Joan of Arc*.

THE FESTIVAL DRAGGED ALONG elegantly until *The Last Picture Show*, directed by Peter Bogdanovich. To put it bluntly, the crowd went wild, and it was well-deserved. Bogdanovich's saga about growing up in a tiny Texas desert town in the 50's is not just perceptive—it has great integrity, a quality lacking in most slick movies about the coming of age. Bogdanovich's choice of black and white photography heightens the feeling of life stifled by the dull, flat environment. His cast is likewise offbeat but uniformly excellent, and even the smaller roles are richly created. Timothy Bottoms delivers an outstanding performance as Sonny, whose senior year in high school is the chronological focus of the film, and Cloris Leachman finely understates her role as the middle-aged housewife with whom Sonny has an affair. Bogdanovich seems to be a remarkable director of actors, capable of letting the cameras run on while his players probe deeper and deeper into the dynamics of human conflict. *The Last Picture Show* is an extremely moving film, and it produces a special pain-filled poetry within a barren landscape.

The excellence of *The Last Picture Show* left the audience impatient for more works of that stature. Perhaps that feeling brought forth a harsh judgement on the other films presented during the festival, for such efforts as Ermanno Olmi's *Durante L'Estate*, Werner Herzog's documentary *Fata Morgana*, Bakaverjiev's *WR—Mysteries of the Organism* and Henry Jaglom's *A Safe Place*, all paled in comparison with Bogdanovich's superior work.

ANOTHER HIGH POINT of the festival was Akira Kurosawa's *Dodes'ka-den*. Kurosawa has created an episodic study of the lives of the different characters living in a slum shanty-town, a cyclical narrative whose elements are united by the common denominator of poverty and despair. This is Kurosawa's first film in color, and he makes a magnificently thorough exploration of this medium. Each episode has its own style of color composition,

ranging from harsh flat tones to an almost surrealist impressionism. Kurosawa's inventive use of camera angles complements this painterly use of color. The combination of such technical expertise with a haunting perception of the human condition mark *Dodes'ka-den* as a work of a master of the film medium.

Peter Bogdanovich's second contribution to the festival, his documentary *Directed by John Ford*, previewed the following evening. The film actually had its first showing in Madison this past summer at the University Film Association conference, while the American Film Institute was in the process of reducing the length. The film's major fault is Bogdanovich's willfully ignoring much of Ford's more recent work in his attempt to pinpoint a unifying theme in Ford's oeuvre. The film is nonetheless beautiful, making use of excellent prints of clips from Ford's work and carefully weaving in interviews with performers who have worked with Ford. (The film festival audience loved Jimmy Stewart's collection of anecdotes).

THE NEXT FILM I COULD get tickets for was Peter Watkins' *Punishment Park*. In Watkins' earlier films, *The War Game* and *The Gladiators*, he revealed himself as a radical sensationalist, best when revealing the horrors of injustice or war, but weak on solutions. *Punishment Park* carries this inclination several steps further. It involves a time in the near future when student radicals and third world agitators are summarily rounded up, tried by a kangaroo court of average Middle-American conservative citizens, and sentenced to severe prison terms.

Their option is to spend four days in *Punishment Park* instead of serving the prison sentence. The park is a desert stretch in which the prisoners are given three days to reach the U.S. flag (a distance of fifty miles) without water, in the blistering heat, pursued by National Guardsmen and TPF men in training.

Of course, all the kids choose *Punishment Park* and are hunted down in sporadic fashion. Watkins employs the device of a camera crew making a TV film to follow the court proceedings, intercutting "location" shooting of the fun at *Punishment Park*. The dialogues in the courtroom sequences are bountifully banal—the "New Left" confronts the "Old Right" with injustices that *Ramparts* considered conventional wisdom five years ago. After the film, Watkins revealed that all of the confrontations were real encounter group type conflicts, and that the actors were non-professionals. Finding out the spontaneous genesis of all the self-righteous political banality of this film was in many ways more depressing than the impression that it was scripted. Watkins' progressive intent is unfortunately lost by his inability to evoke any feeling other than utter impotence in the face of repression. But his position as the only director in the festival with a woman producer (Susan Martin) and a woman cameraman (Joan Churchill) deserves credit. *Punishment Park's* impact was summed up by an elegant model-type in the ladies room afterwards: "You know," she said, "Seeing that kind of thing makes me want to take to the streets—but I wouldn't know what to do when I got there."

CLOSING NIGHT. I had the most expensive seat I'd had for any of the films. Otto Preminger was sitting across the aisle from me, elegant in a tuxedo, with a black sequined muse figure on his arm. Eleanor Perry (behind me, to the left) was in good spirits. I felt like I'd entered Oz. That night's film was Louis Malle's *Le Souffle Au Coeur* (Murmur of the Heart). Feeling like the scarred survivor of many idiot ventures into cinematic description of how cute puberty is, I was wary of a film about a 15 year old boy's coming of age in France of the 50's. But the film is delightful, subtle, and wise. The boy is a young intellectual who reads Camus and listens to Dizzy Gillespie, whose warm love for his mother makes the Oedipal climax of the film a comprehensible extension of that relationship. This child watches his virginity evaporate with candor and resignation, a treatment that is entirely refreshing. It was a lovely way to end a film festival.

An element that deserves mention is the series of panel discussions held for the first

(continued on page 7)

# MERRY CLAYTON

## MERRY CLAYTON, Ode Records

Almost everyone has heard Merry Clayton, although very few people have actually heard of Merry Clayton. She is the screaming genius behind Mick Jagger's dull flat "Rape! Murder! It's just a shot away!" on the Rolling Stones' *Let It Bleed*, a performance which must surely rate as one of the most dynamic and impressive vocal backgrounds of any sixties' recording. Merry Clayton has been in the background for a long time (she is actually billed as "Mary" Clayton on the *Let It Bleed* album) but she is today a soloist and her second effort, *Merry Clayton*, on Ode Records, is just a shot away...

Her years of sessions and concert work with Ray Charles, Bobby Darin, Pearl Bailey, Elvis and the Supremes have paid off—Merry has exceptional voice control and she can scream or whine with crystal delivery.

Merry's second album (her first was *Gimme Shelter*, a poorly produced but promising album attempting to capitalize on her Rolling Stones' reputation) is a definite improvement over her first but producer Lou Adler (the man behind the Mamas and the Papas) has transformed a gritty Merry into a black Carole King, and the result is discouraging.

Carole King actually arranged

three of the songs on the album—the three which she wrote ("Walk On In," "Same Old Story," and "After All This Time")—and the result is that familiar limpid rock now too common to those of us familiar with the California Taylor-King musicians clique.

The sound is competent—indeed, the music is as good or better than any being produced anywhere. Unfortunately, however, it is too good: the sound is slick, lacking in that inimitable spontaneity good music needs to survive.

The album is full of pretty white-boy songs—music by Leon Russell, Neil Young and James Taylor. While all three of these artists are strong enough on their own terms, their music loses something in the translation.

Luckily, Merrily transcends these commercial efforts to make her product saleable and her clear, strong voice rises far above the music she is saddled with. She would probably be much better with a blues pianist and a good axe handler. She was so effective with the Stones' primarily because of Keith Richards' primordial semi-blues earthy lead guitar.

Those who saw Robert Altman's *Brewster McCloud* will remember the title song, a haunting blues melody—the singer was Merry,

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# CLASSICS

By D.M. CLARKE

## Mozart: Chamber Music on Original Instruments

Flute Quartet in A Major, K. 298; String Quartet in C Major, K. 157; Trio in E-flat Major, K. 498 (for piano, clarinet and viola).

Musical Heritage Society MHS 1169

Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (1644-1704)

Four Partitas (Sonatas for two violins and basso continuo) on original instruments (featuring Alice and Nikolaus Harnoncourt)

Musical Heritage Society MHS 1092

The Musical Heritage Society has one of the largest and most interesting catalogs in the business. They sell records only through the mail; the address is 1991 Broadway, New York 10023. The Mozart disc is lovely, especially the flute quartet. In the trio, the sound of the 1795 piano is lots of fun. It is evidently an instrument which Beethoven's Hammerklavier sonata would completely destroy! Biber is a composer who deserves more popularity. He was a great violinist who was constantly experimenting in his writing for the instrument: the Partitas are especially inventive and delightful because each one requires different tuning for the fiddles.

The quality of the records themselves is perfect throughout. Incidentally, English pressing plants must be dirty places: records imported from England often have noisy surfaces, but a careful washing in the sink (with luke-warm water, dish-washing detergent, and a suitable soft cloth) often works wonders.

Alban Berg: *Violin Concerto* (1935)

Bela Bartok: *Two Rhapsodies* (1928)

Yehudi Menuhin, violin; B.B.C.

Symphony, Pierre Boulez, cond. Odeon

ASD 2449

The Berg violin concerto is a twelve-tone piece that has already turned out to be a masterpiece. It is very Viennese, without sounding old-fashioned, as so much of Schoenberg already does. The present recording, with its textual clarity and its emotional integrity, should help popularize the piece. It is another recording from E.M.I. which should be released in this country. The rhapsodies are not as important, but very nice listening.

Crumb: *Ancient Voices of Children* (A Cycle of songs on texts of Lorca) Jan DeGaetani, soprano; Michael Dash, boy soprano; Contemporary Chamber En-

# BEATTY

(continued from page 1)

speaks with this accent, this man with that. He's a schmuck. She's a little silly." And so forth and so on, so that you are quite clearly characterizing. You avoid those embarrassing moments when you don't know who you are or where you are. That's just a matter of professionalism.

There seem to be two kinds of actors, those who work out everything on intellectual terms, and those who immerse themselves in their parts both while performing them and not performing them. How do you see yourself?

The second kind you speak of is a fool. I wouldn't want to do that with my life. It's too precious to me. But maybe I'm not interested in acting. My anxiety over succeeding in the form is not that great.

There is a process of intellectualizing that an actor can go through leading to clarity. And that clarity opens the door to empathy and sympathy toward the person that you might be playing, to the buttons which are similar in the characters and what we really are. That's a matter of technique. That's a matter of art.

What are your overall impressions of McCabe and Mrs. Miller?

Bob restructured several scenes in the interior of the film that I'm not completely in agreement with, so I have a slight uneasiness about it.

It was a film where you took the background characters and put them in the foreground. You took your obvious movie stars and put them in the background very often, which works well. It's disconcerting. It's nice.

The photographic effects we used in the film make it have an interesting effect; sometimes I think we went a little bit too far with a bit too much fog in the film. I also feel that the sound track is a little too muddy. Not far too muddy, but a little too muddy. That's upsetting, because in many theatres you can't hear it.

If I ever find myself consciously plagiarizing something I get rid of it. It makes me feel cheap, and I don't think it happened in McCabe. But I think there was an almost unconscious effort, also dangerous, to stay away from anything that is similar. And that I respect almost less, that you must be different.

How did you like portraying McCabe?

I like to play schmucks, cocky schmucks, guys who think they know it all but don't. It's been the story of my life to think I knew what I was talking about and later find out that I didn't. I enjoy that. I think it's funny and ridiculous. McCabe made me laugh all during the movie.

Were there ever plans for a big love scene between McCabe and Mrs. Miller, the scene which never occurs in the movie?

The big fuck scene? No, we didn't want that. That in the film was the feeling we

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## AMERIKAN BANDSTAND

By MIKE BARON

just one of the many times she has been heard in a good light before, and her uncredited background work is unanimously considered by industry men to be the best sound.

With the proper producer, Merry could emerge as good as she promises—she has the vocal talents, and she has the experience. Like other women with blues roots—Rita Coolidge, for example—she has excellent potential, if only she finds the proper material.

Merry Clayton will appear in a free concert sponsored by A & M Records, WIBA-FM and the Daily Cardinal, Monday November 15 at the Stock Pavilion. Tickets are available at all campus record stores.

semble, Arthur Weisberg, cond. Nonesuch 71255

One of the latest in Nonesuch's series of great contemporary recordings, this is an incredibly spare, delicate piece, yet supremely evocative. As far as I know, George Crumb is no relation to Robert, the cartoonist; yet as different as they are, they share an ability to make their impressions leap out at you from their work.

The present piece also reminds me of the theory that each of us contains within himself all of the memories, experiences, and passions of all his ancestors; perhaps especially of ancestral childhood. Small children do not know that they are not immortal; I think Mahler would have admired Crumb's piece.

Even if you don't think you like vocal music, or contemporary music, try out this bargain-priced issue. It's a spine-tingling, eerily beautiful experience, suggested, Crumb writes, by the final words of the last song:

"And I will go very far, farther than those hills, farther than the seas, close to the stars, to ask Christ the Lord to give me back my ancient soul of a child."

wanted to create.

The film seems kind of drug influenced, very appropriate that Julie Christie ended up in an opium den. Is this reading into it?

I would say that you may have hit on something there. (Laughs.)

What were your acting beginnings?

I never really intended to become an actor. I don't know how it really began. I wanted to be around the theatre, direct or whatever. I suddenly fell into working, then decided never to stop. I did some plays in New York. It's a bore to talk about. I've talked about it so many times for so many years.

I was very lucky. I studied acting in New York with Stella Adler who convinced me that I couldn't make a mistake. I made a lot of mistakes, but she was very good for a young male ego and enabled me to start.

I've never known what it means to worry about confidence in myself as an actor. I would say before I started making films some of the confidence had to be knocked out of me.

Is it true that when you go into a film project the most important thing to consider is the director you are going to work with?

It's not really true. It was true at a time in my formative years, but then I realized that it was a very rare director that can be depended on to be more capable than many actors or writers.

Now the projects I'm really interested in are basically things I'm writing myself

### THE MORNING AFTER, J. Geils Band, Atlantic.

Rock moves like the spark on a Jacob's Ladder. The bands start out at the bottom and rise, reaching ever higher in a sophisticated process that borrows from the classics, steals from jazz, tilts toward the opera, arranges, dubs in strings, horns, and distorts the rhythm until at the top the bands emerge as protean engines of creativity like the Beatles or spiritually bankrupt money mongers like Blood, Sweat, and Tears. But who is left at the bottom? Who fills the need for an immediate visceral experience, an audio communion with our ancestors the apes and Druids?

We're talking about rock and roll, friends, and though the Stones can make it happen now and forever, somewhere between the buttons they become the Stones so that listening to them would never again be a simple release of energy and celebration of animal rhythm. There is a Boston band, the J. Geils Band, who, in their depravity and insistence on keeping that spark down at the bottom where it belongs, produce a sound that can be described as...bitchin'.

J. Geils works with no more than stock rhythm section and harp, producing a filthy sound not so much calculated, but more by reflex to make you shake. J. Geils sticks with the classics, alright, classics like "So Sharp," peeling off the disc like a resurrected spirit of Sam Cooke. The sound comes from everywhere, but it starts with the worst voice you're likely to hear, Peter Wolf, who suffers from chronic exasperation of the larynx and a vocal range of approximately four notes. Wolf is terrific. The spirit of raunch. One of the best vocal interpreters in the much maligned medium. Like to hear Wolf and Screamin' Jay get together, that would be a sight. Wolf sounds much like a frog with a hard-on.

Behind this vocal '55 Chevy lies a simple-minded beautifully efficient band led by Geils on lead guitar. Geils has resurrected the long-dead art of the four bar guitar solo, thank the good Lord, and most every cut bristles with nuggets of nicely realized electricity; check out "Cry One More Time" or "Whammer Jammer." Now that's the kind of sour/sweetness that used to pour out of top 40 before a bunch of British guitarists realized that if saying nothing in thirty seconds was good, saying nothing in fifteen minutes was even better, not to mention some unsung singles by American groups like Sugarloaf wherein the guitar briefly surfaced as an instrument.

But J. Geils is superb for the reason this band is so deliciously right. They are into a narrow band of music and they do it well. No pretensions, a good dose of considered nostalgia, and spiritual alignment to the kind of music that pours out of black recording studios in the poorer neighborhoods of Maryland.

The disc is consistently good through and if any of the cuts were included on something by, say, Quicksilver, you'd have an instant classic rave-out screamer. All the power comes from a whole-hearted commitment to rhythm and blues/blues done in grittiness, assisted in no small way by every able musician. Seth Justman plays piano in the shadow of Otis Spann: that's a very cool place. Listen to his rolling enthusiasm on "Floyd's Hotel." Steve Bladd drums with the subtlety of Don Rickles using a jackhammer, and you know it works. He sparks an intense, driving rendition of "It Ain't What You Do (It's How You Do It)." The title serving as the motto of this band, 'cause they do everything with inverse class.

Now there comes a time in the affairs of man when you feel like ripping the Moody Blues off the turntable and throwing the effete snobs into the wastebasket, rolling your eyes to heaven and asking the musical question, "Why can't those fools just get it on? What do I care about the philosophical rift between the Trottskyite Revisionists and the Khrushevian Decapitalizationists?" I do not suggest that this band is either right or left-wing, but if there's a groove in the middle, they're in it.

### TEARS OF JOY, Don Ellis, Columbia.

Every year the Big Band dies to the hoots and tears of boozy middle-aged insurance executives awash in foam and fond memories of Glenn Miller, a twice-removed generational celebration of the annual death of rock; but for the twice-removed generation who celebrate the death of rock by the deification of early sixties folk music in drag with an electric guitar, the big bands never lived. What societal onus rock fans attach to the music of Ellington, Buddy Rich, and Fletcher Henderson is understandable from an emotional viewpoint but without basis musically.

Don Ellis has a big band, an iconoclastic, string-quartet, insistently difficult, outrageous, love it or leave it big band that creates most fantastic music. In all fairness, several bands beat Ellis to the punch with the use of the string quartet as a standing format, one of them a rock and roll congregation from Canada called Lighthouse. However, Lighthouse doesn't play in three and two thirds four quarter time. Ellis loves obscure time signatures. This used to serve as an immediate turn-off to the younger fans, who tend to reach for a bottle of aspirin and a good book every time the beat changes from 4/4. Be not afraid, the Don Ellis Band is good for you.

It has that distinctive sound, obtained through a wild horn section that vamps and vamps on a swinging line, interspersed with passages of multi-percussion. The soloists are strong, especially Ellis' new Bulgarian pianist Milcho Leviev, Fred Selden on alto, and Ellis himself who never ceases expanding his technique and facility with different instruments. He's taken up drums now, with very permanent roles to play in much of the pieces, and his playing is inventive and highly musical. But the trumpet work—a lot of jazz people wish Ellis would stop the big band trick so that he could concentrate on his trumpet in a smaller, freer setting; they believe him to be one of the finest trumpet players in the history of jazz.

He is a brilliant trumpeteer, and this band provides, believe it or not, a free setting wherein Ellis can move in whatever direction he pleases. He takes a magnificent solo in the middle of "Samba Bajada," leaving the band behind to grace the ears with acapella, biting, churning, swirling, tricking; they believe him to be one of the finest trumpet players in the history of jazz.

Ellis plays mad trumpet, always out-front, always reaching for the high notes in sincere excitement over his musical machine. The addition of the string quartet opens up vast coloring possibilities and before the Ellis Band disbands, I'm sure they'll have touched most of them. "Loss" is a haunting ballad with Ellis leading on flugelhorn, surrounded by the swirling, taut strings. They do not cloy and they have great bite.

"Strawberry Soup" opens with a cello solo by Christine Ermaoff leading into a delicate, Debussy-like string quartet. The horns come in fast and intense, churning into a viola solo that turns over to Leviev for a very tough, ringing statement, through some more exciting solos too numerous to mention, when Ellis comes in with a white-hot scream in the upper register, tension piled upon tension, a musical mountain.

Leviev opens up "Bulgarian Bulge" with a stamping resourceful solo in 33/8. He plays with the lyrical search of Bill Evans and the sweeping, ringing embrace of Ron Burton, Roland Kirk's pianist. Leviev and the string quartet bring a European versatility to this band, sitting solidly in the tradition of great black music.

The last cut is "Euphoric Acid," written and featuring Fred Selden on alto in a swinging, intense, blues-oriented solo. Throughout two discs the music never wavers. There isn't a weak cut on the album, from fast to slow, from 4/4 to 33/8. The live cuts are perfectly mixed, sounding like a joyous studio recording until the audience starts screaming its approval. When I played this for a friend, she said, "Gee, they sound like the Allman brothers." What better recommendation could you ask?

and things I intend to direct myself. If I go in as an actor it's hard to say why I go in. Sometimes it might be the money (it never has been that much for me) or it might be the location or it might be the leading lady. I'll confess to that.

Arthur Penn, who directed you in both Mickey One and Bonnie and Clyde, once stated in an interview that you were an actor who had to have total confidence in a director. Do you agree?

Arthur went through many years reading the *Cahiers du Cinema* in his young, young directorial life and feeling that he had to have the total confidence of everyone he was associated with. As he's become more realistic afterwards his work has become better; he's become more fun.

I've never had total confidence in a director and I've had very good directors. I don't expect to have total confidence in a director. I didn't have complete confidence in Arthur and he knew that. He felt that I never trusted him on *Mickey One* and he was absolutely right.

Do you think it was essential that Arthur Penn directed *Bonnie and Clyde*?

I produced *Bonnie and Clyde* and I certainly didn't think the director was the most important thing. When I went into that project, I almost directed it myself. I don't think Godard could have done it. I don't think Truffaut could have handled the language. I think that *Bonnie and Clyde* wouldn't have been the same if

another director rather than Arthur had made it, but still the picture was very much a group job.

Part of my impetus in getting together *Bonnie and Clyde* was that I had worked with Gene Hackman and Michael J. Pollard before. These are old friends of mine. I really wanted to get them into a movie. And Faye Dunaway, Estelle Parsons, Gene Wilder, Evan Evans: these are all people whose opinions and intelligence I respect.

*Bonnie and Clyde* was a combination of thinking of a group of people. It's a product of many, many long nights of friendly arguments and disagreements, of changes, rechanges, hashing, rehashing. It's mainly a good film because it's a product of people who really got together one time and said, "We've really got to make a good film here."

There are certain manifestations of a watershed feeling about *Bonnie and Clyde*. It obeys basic rules of theatre. There is a certain slickness to it which maybe is unsatisfactory to certain people but not to me. You might feel that it falls short in its polemics. I don't. I preferred *Bonnie and Clyde* to be exactly what it was.

What then do you think of the "auteur" theory of filmmaking?

I don't knock the theory. I knock the myth of the theory. I knock movie directors saying they are the only ones who made these films. It's just not a fact. It's

(continued on page 7)



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## ELSON

(continued from page 3)

calls the authorities, when actually there is no foundation for the accusations." Even if Francis Richard had said, "constantly accuses our father," instead of "constantly accuses people," it wouldn't have made much difference, since Judge Fink knew all about the case. Hazel recalls, that back in '64, in the Marshfield Clinic, when she was asking Judge Fink why she was arrested by the Sheriff, Judge Fink said: "Three people have filed complaints against you." "What kind of complaints," Hazel asked, and Judge Fink replied, "I can't tell you." Anything that's on the up and up can be brought out in the open, is the way I see the world.

**PERHAPS JUDGE** Fink was worried that Hazel would try to seek revenge and that is why he wished to keep the records from her. But I disregarded what he wanted, for it was the least that I could do. Even if she murders them, it is only what they deserve. But the unfortunate thing is that Hazel is non-violent. Though the statute of limitations has run on any suit that she could bring, and thus all those bastards who are concerned have gotten off scott free, Hazel is content in just bringing everything to light. All that Hazel wants to do right now is try to change the law and protect other people from undergoing what she has undergone. She's writing letters still and making a nuisance of herself, and though she knows that she can be put away for doing what she does, she keeps on doing what she has to do, right on doing what she has to do.

## BEATTY

(continued from page 5)

once in a while a fact. But very rare. Very rare. When people talk about "pulling an Orson Welles," I don't know what the hell that means. I know a lot of people made Citizen Kane.

There are very, very few instances where the auteur theory actually is put into practice. Even Charlie Chaplin was a very good director only for himself. When you get into the French, though, there are people who are more auteurs. And Roman Polanski is a very formidable creator and artist.

**Any opinions on Rex Reed or his interview with you in Esquire?**

I don't know what to say about a person like that. You would have to address yourself to the symptoms of American journalism and what allows that kind of sickness to sustain itself.

This is a guy who said he thought I was the best actor of my generation and that he'd seen these films of mine over and over again. He tried to get me to pose for a picture with thirty girls. I thought that was insane. Why would I do a thing like that?

I only spent an hour talking to him, certainly an hour of mistake. He made up the article largely out of things cut out of columns. He had me involved with women I'd never met and in all sorts of incidents

that never took place. I would say the whole thing comes out of his homosexual anxiety.

As I remember Rex Reed sat there for that hour, the only word I can think of is "dewey-eyed." I remember having a feeling of sympathy for him and trying very hard to answer seriously the questions he asked.

I think that the man is contemptible, dishonest, and a very hostile creature.

**Do you mind if we print that?**

What do you think I said it for?

**How do you feel about the complaint that American actors are deficient because they gradually become personalities, repeating certain idiosyncrasies over and over?**

I think that this happens with every nationality. It happens in the English theatre, but American critics perhaps are not as familiar with Olivier's "schick," with Ralph Richardson's "schick." As for an actor working within limits he can do well: I don't think it's good to be bad.

**Do you ever think that being an actor is a silly life?**

The older I get the less silly I think it is. Acting is an art form and nothing to sneeze at, though highly underrated by so many people in the movie milieu. The contribution more and more of the movie actor to the picture itself is huge.

Movie acting is important, not silly. But being a movie star is another can of peas. There's something silly about that.

## NY FILMS

(continued from page 4)

time at a New York Film Festival. Surprisingly, very few people stayed for the discussions. At a panel called "Women in Film" there were only about 300 of the nearly 1000 patrons left and so many walked out during the course of the discussion that the final total was closer to 100. The panel was moderated by critic Molly Haskell. The participants were director Nadine Trintignant, screenwriter Eleanor Perry, actress-director Barbara Loden (Wanda), Susan Martin, producer of *Punishment Park*, and actress Kitty Winn (The Panic in Needle Park.). Questions from the audience were surprisingly stupid for such a supposedly cosmopolitan group ("Why do you think you're discriminated against?"). The

panel did, however, bring out the fact that there were no films directed by women in the festival; nor were any women asked to be on any of the writers or directors panels. Fangs were finally bared when a portly mustachioed gentleman quoted the old saying about a woman behind every successful man, and implied the inverse was true in the case of the panel. Eleanor Perry, who recently ended her work association with her husband, director Frank Perry, grew livid and began to attack the point. Molly Haskell (wife of Andrew Sarris) murmured something in her ear and she calmed down, remarking disparagingly, "Oh, it's only you, John." John was none other than John Simon, the erudite ogre of filmdom.

And that was the Ninth New York Film Festival. It left me somewhat sadder and wiser, infinitely poorer. But it's not my last film festival. Next year, in Cannes?

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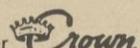
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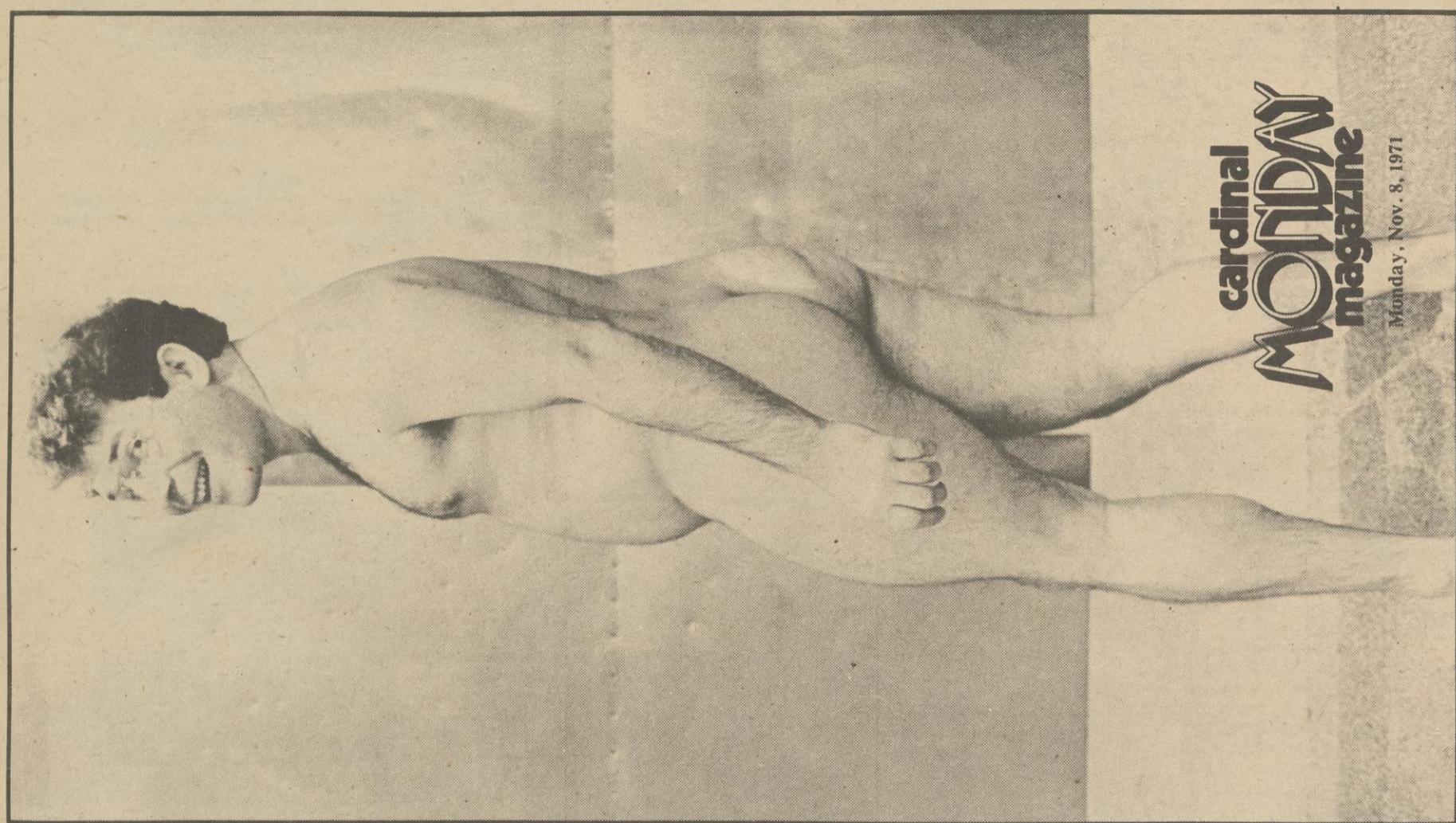
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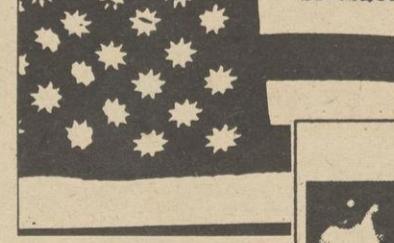
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