Film Notes

Surprises: Good and Bad

By Dick Locht

If I've learned one thing from the inordinate amount of time I've spent in the dark dreamworld of moviemaking and movies, it is that few films are good, and none are bad. The best ones take some time to develop their characters, and few provide the sort of social commentary that propels the action. In HUSTLE, Reynolds' unending ramblings stop it in its tracks. Reynolds can't handle lots of worlds. He's the best one-liner man in the business, but it's folly to give him paragaphes. Just one of many mistakes. Catherine Dennece's inflexible snow queen call girl seems to have been carved from a cake of ivory and spun too artistically. John Biro's camera catches her bad angles. A few wrinkles here, a slightly sagging jawline there. And for some reason it dates on her more unattractive feature, her hands. Until HUSTLE, Reynolds didn't even know she had hands.

Ben Johnson is treated even more shabbily. Asked to play an embittered man of the lower-middle class, a "nobody" as he continually refers to himself, out to avenge his daughter's death, he finds himself uncomprehendingly in Shagan's morally murky sea. Uncluttered by Aldrich, apparently. The guy is so self-pitying and in the end so psychotically dangerous that we can only wonder why Reynolds' vschtik-rassden sloveh, or anybody else, should give a damn about him. It's an example of culled showing its culledite - a blasted corpse of a movie.

Paul Mazursky, a director of much more recent vintage, debuts in '68 with BOB AND CAROL AND TED AND ALICE. Reynolds gets progressively better with each new effort.

By Karin Stabiner

Taxi Driver is cruising through the American nightmare searching for the American dream. But Steven Spielberg's latest has as much chance of climbing out of the pit as the prostitutes, pimps and pushers it portrays. This film is inhumanely violent, grossly offensive to our society's moral standards, and it is a disgraceful commentary on our time. The film is a slanted look at the life of Travis Bickle, a mentally troubled, solitary man who lives in a dingy apartment. Travis is a Vietnam veteran who has been left with a limp and a wounded ego. He has a hard time coping with the everyday realities of urban life, and his imagination is eagerly filled with visions of an ideal world where he can escape from the chaos of his own existence.

Travis's life is filled with frustration and loneliness. He works as a taxi driver, but he is often ignored by other drivers and customers. He is also a regular at a strip club, where he watches women dance and fantasizes about them. Travis is particularly attracted to a young actress named Betsy, who appears in the club as a dancer. Travis is obsessed with Betsy, and he becomes more and more fixated on her as the film progresses. He even begins to stalk her, following her home after work and waiting outside her apartment building. At one point, Travis breaks into Betsy's apartment and 모르고 전에났다.

Travis's relationship with Betsy is complicated by the fact that she is the daughter of a wealthy and influential politician. This has made Betsy a target of harassment and abuse, and she is afraid of Travis. Despite this, Betsy is drawn to Travis's passion and intensity, and she gradually begins to respond to his advances. However, the tension between them becomes increasingly palpable, and Betsy is forced to confront her own desires and fears.

As the film progresses, Travis's obsession with Betsy begins to escalate into something much more dangerous. He becomes increasingly unstable and paranoid, and he begins to threaten Betsy and her family with violence. This leads to a climactic confrontation in which Travis attempts to kidnap Betsy and hold her captive. The film ends with Travis being shot and killed by the police, as Betsy looks on in horror.

Throughout the film, the viewer is left to question what motivates Travis's actions and whether he is truly a monster or simply a victim of a broken system. The film is a powerful exploration of the dark side of American society and the human condition, and it is a must-see for anyone interested in the exploration of these themes.
she knows what my decisions are financially because it's not a question of having to live off $50 a week, or anything. If we fail, she adds, "there are a lot of managers who want to make a fast buck. They're not building toward a long term career. They're not thinking about where the artist is going to be in terms of growth five years from now. They're thinking, 'If I can make a lot of money right now, and push them into certain situations and, you know, it's wrong.'"

"It's a combination of trust and being objective," Jeff retorts. "And understanding your own limitations, your lack of limitations. You know where you can go with a career. A lot of people get a lot more mileage out of the same set of circumstances than others."

"Overall exposure is where Jeff has intensely focused his direction. He has not been satisfied with Helen's best-selling records. He is proud of the fact that she has also had her own television series, made her movie debut and continuously headlines the MGM Grand in Las Vegas and concert halls across the country. And now she has added a new dimension to her long list of credits - she is the hostess for this year's weekly television program, 'Midnight Special.'"

"That really depends on the decisions involved," Jeff explains. "The day-to-day decisions - we don't talk about most of them, in terms of just day to day going on with the business. In terms of a major decision - I mean, I'd never make a deal for a movie that I didn't think strongly that that was the right thing to do - we both read the script, we both talk about it, we both sit in front of television, or if we decide to do a concert in Milwaukee - I don't ask her. If the time is right to go out and tour, I don't have to ask. I don't consider her for the most part."

"And in terms of the support elements involved, if she knows she's appearing some place, she knows when she shows up the set will be there, which we designed. I mean, that stuff is all done without her having to get involved in it. You know what I mean? On the other hand, I don't sit here and rehearse a song with her. There's no out of the picture, 'I'm not a record producer, so I don't get involved."

Jeff has gotten involved in choosing some of the songs, but he doesn't do too much with her. Helen reflects. "But, you know, this is the only country that has a 'star system.' This is the only country that can become rich being a musician or an actor or whatever."

"This is the only country," supports Jeff. "In Australia you can't get rich. You make a living - a bad living. Helen and Jeff are more than making a living in America. They have been successful possibly even beyond their own dreams. This success didn't happen smoothly or effortlessly, so now that they are able to accept the reality of success, they are forced to think about the future.

"We just want to expand our involvements into a lot of other areas besides show business," says Jeff. "We're very aware of the need for financial security. It gives you some kind of credibility - which is important. Helen has credibility with women, therefore, we've done some commercials. But, of course, you never see Helen sell anything - outside of Helen - if you know what I mean. And now that they're in - we don't spread it out. Women like Helen for what she stands for - Little kids like them because they like 'Della Dawn' or whatever. Everyone's got their own reasons for liking an artist. And to be a true star you have to have mass appeal. You've got to appeal to everybody. You can't appeal to a clique or clique."

The Reddy/Wald partnership has succeeded in gaining that desired mass appeal. Helen has been dubbed "The Queen of the Lonely Housewife." She encompasses what the lonely housewife yearns for - a life away from home. Helen has a husband and two children (Tracy, 13, and Jordan, 3), but she also finds fulfillment in a career. How does she cope with her two roles? And how does Jeff?

"I don't separate the two," says Helen. "It's our life."

"I don't think she'd want to be married to a plumber," suggests Jeff.

"No," agrees Helen, emphatically.

"And I don't think I'd want to be married to a schoolteacher," continues Jeff.

"No." continue the Reddys.

"I'm not putting down plumbers or schoolteachers!" exclaims Jeff, as he excuses himself to make a "false" phone call.

"I always wanted somebody who would share my interests," Helen continues. "A man who's interested in the same thing. I got me a man who's interested in the same thing!"