

Yale Film Associates NEWSLETTER VOLUME ONE, NUMBER ONE

Facsimile Edition

GALA PREMIERE

It wasn't Hollywood, but The Fans didn't care. From 5 to 6000 of them in raiment ranging from recherche hippie to 20th-century Housewife crushed against each other and the thick glass doors of New Haven's Roger Sherman theatre waiting for a glimpse of the Glory that is Film: Paul (bearded, beautiful) Newman, Joanne (blonde, bag-swinging) Woodward Newman, Barbra (crisp, crunched) Streisand, Robert (Who is that **Man?**) Redford, and wide-tied film-administration moguls of the most tony type around.



Notices of the press notwithstanding, police guards and barricades were the responsibility of Twentieth-Century Fox, not YFA. Photo by Paul Schumach

Strobes twinkled and the crowd sighed as one by strategic one, they made their entrances, guided by the unseen hands of 20th Century Fox, producers of the modern epic of Western Banditry that is **"Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid."** The premiere, met by a full house (a more-than-full house if you listened to the tuxedoed ticketholders left standing outside the cordons along the aisles) was gala enough to please those East of the

Coastal Range — one spotlight arcing the night sky enough to prove that This Was It; five policeman suitably insufficient to hold back the throngs (as Paul approached, limousine-clad, waving the facisti away as Butch himself might have done on some triumphal return to the States) the introductions sufficiently academic and urbane to please the numerous Yale faculty as well as the 60-odd reviewers and columnists; and the film enticing enough to the eye (with its artfully washed out color) and the mind (Son of View From the Tellace meets Return of Shane in a Wild West threatened by the communications explosion.)

In short, despite or because of a maddened horde reminiscent of The Day of the Locust, the premiere went well. The Mory's reception after the show for the poobahs and not-so-poobahs managed to be a pleasant meeting of the cravat and the black-tie sets . . . the shrimp and Swedish meatballs went down well with the Whiffenpoofs' collegiate-mod version of the Butch Cassidy theme song "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" (a lyrical description of the self-imposed water torture that is the frightening memorability of the tune) while curious undergraduates pressed noses on Mory's venerable window-panes.

Left to right on the Drama School stage the following day in a pleasantly unacademic seminar were Messrs. William Goldman (the creator of the screenplay who had definitely taken the trouble to make it ring true to the modern ear), Paul Newman (in his new role as former student — "the campus drunk who made it" — at the Drama School), Standish Lawder (cinematologist and the Associates' VP), Director George Roy Hill (Yale '43), Co-star Robert Redford, and Hollis Alpert (Saturday Review film critic). As they alternately asked and told How A Big Movie Gets To Be, it was evident that the chance to ask the pros their opinions of the film world was worth the price of the previous evening's ticket.

The seminar was keynoted by a stunning 45-minute documentary put together by young filmmakers whose prying Bolexes peered over the shoulders of just about everyone who had anything to do with the film as it was being made. Bravely commissioned by Director Hill, it superbly complements the prime epic, and will be shown often as part of the Associates' bill of fare this year. Indeed, the University and the Associates were left with a magnificent windfall of memorabilia which documents the assembly of a major motion picture more accurately than anything, anywhere. Memos of praise and damnation, conspiratorial notes, set sketches, and the massive meticulously detailed shooting schedule — a documentary of some note in itself — join the Yale film archives for future courses, research, or for those young filmmakers contemplating a first major effort.

Before a capacity crowd (and to the chagrin of Fox) Newman took the opportunity to really hit dead on when he confirmed that he would soon be forming a new film company with Barbara Streisand & Sidney Poitier to "slay dinosaurs" of Hollywood. George Roy Hill also got more than a few words in on the tradeunion-ism which is "strangling" the big studios, and foresaw a totally new breed of moviemaker arising in the next ten years; directors who would not be forced to hedge their bets.

After the Drama School, Newman (carefully shepherded by a roving band of too-natty, conspicuously non-Ivy 20th Century Fox

magnates) impressed about 250 students on the Old Campus with his ease of mind on diverse subjects as Vietnam (against), the New Haven Mayoralty (a carefully set up question determined his advocacy of Hank Parker), the big studios (run by "illiterates"), coeducation ("it was inevitable"), anonymity ("beautiful"), his present status ("unemployed"), and movie favorites (" . . . say you had 12 kids and someone asked you which one was your favorite . . . you wouldn't answer that question, would you?").

Critical reviews of the movie that got the Associates' going were almost irrelevant after the fact, but could best be described as schizophrenic. Suffice that everyone like something a lot in the film, though the "something" ranged from the photography (camera always seeing through something — haze, smoke, grass, leaves, window curtains), acting (Newman, a cool jester; Redford, a cool customer; Ross, a cool chick), screenplay ("a modern fairy tale," in the words of the Director) to the fascinating old movie-screen credits and the entr'acts that made a bridge from the American West to the not-so-terribly-alien-after-all Bolivian scene.

Scratchy and sepiaed as they were, the yellowing film that flanked the credits and the tourist-stereopticon photos of the Bolivian journey set the tone of the film: gay as an outlaw's good time, fancy as a lace shirt worn only once, evanescent as a premiere in New Haven. J. S.

THE MAKING OF "BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID"

Movie-watching is a strange business. A man makes a full-length film for us, the audience, to enjoy. We participate happily for 90 minutes or more in another life, in another time, in another place. Then we turn, with equal relish, to a documentary on the making of that film which will destroy the carefully wrought illusion of the former by laying out its innards and exposing its bolts and screws for our inspection. Perhaps the recognition of our cleverness in knowing what is "really real" is as satisfying as that hour or two during which we take active part in the illusion.



Seminar, "The Making of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," l to r: William Goldman, Paul Newman, Standish Lawder, George Roy Hill, Hollis Alpert. Absent Robert Redford.

"The Making of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" recapitulates in 40 minutes not only the major sequences of action from "Butch Cassidy," but all of the basic elements of feature film production. This documentary is narrated by Paul Newman, Robert Redford, William Goldman and George Roy Hill. Hill, the film's director, begins by relating how he came to cast Newman and Redford in their respective roles, then how the first week's shooting went. He continues with some remarks about casting Katharine Ross and then moves into a discussion of his choice of a cameraman. All of this narration accompanies carefully edited sequences of the actors mentioned therein. The visual sequences expand upon the remarks of the narrator. Actual sequences from "Butch Cassidy" are intercut throughout with material shot for this documentary. The film continues with Hill's narration predominant, showing the intricacies of setting up and executing all of those pieces of action which appear so effortless on the screen. In the course of this showing and telling the reasons for doing things in particular ways are revealed. These are perhaps the most interesting bits of information — they are the "artist's choices" in the film medium.

For those who believe in the marriage of form and content the "Superposse" sequence is exemplary. The "Superposse" is composed of four men who track Butch and The Kid for a major portion of the film. They never come very close, but they are always there, ominous, portending doom. Hill tells how, after much deliberation, he chose a 500 millimeter zoom lens to shoot the Superposse. The unique effect of the telephoto lens was perfectly suited to his stated intention to maintain the Superposse as an omnipresent "presence." We see them galloping toward us, obviously moving fast, but due to the peculiar quality of the telephoto lens, not seeming to cover much ground. They are always coming, they never arrive. The tension generated increases in geometrical progression and the Superposse strains our expectations as mercilessly as it pursues Butch and The Kid.

There is a great deal more that could be mentioned—the uses of music, the uses of historical pictures and research materials, techniques of animation, techniques of directing actors, camera techniques, etc. Like all good films this documentary finally leaves the reviewer no choice but to tell the reader to go

and see the film. It also requires the reviewer to whole-heartedly encourage both the continued efforts of the filmmakers and the continued exploration of this particular genre of film.

The men to whom credit is due are Robert Crawford, who wrote, directed and edited and Ronald Preissman, who was cinematographer and producer. W. B.

GEORGE HILL'S GIFT TO YALE

Does Pat Nixon ever do the dishes at the White House? How long since Henry Ford put in eight hours on one of his assembly lines? We wouldn't know about that — but we can report that, shortly before the world premiere of his latest film, director George Roy Hill rolled up his shirt-sleeves and helped open up a mountain of crates just in from California.

The shipment contained a unique gift that Mr. Hill (Class of 1943) was bestowing upon Yale — the complete production record of his "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." Until now, once a film was finished, such records were scattered to the winds. Bits and pieces might wind up in personal and corporate file drawers, but much of it would be carelessly lost or deliberately destroyed.



Setting up "Butch Cassidy" exhibition, l to r: George Roy Hill, Charles Moses, Howard S. Weaver, Dean C. Albertus, Yale News Bureau

Here, for the first time, is preserved intact the complete record of the creation of a

motion picture, starting with the many drafts of the script on which William Goldman labored for several years.

Then come the logistics — cost estimates, shooting schedules, weather forecasts, terrain drawings for the extensive location photography.

Also included in this invaluable gift are set designs, models of key sets, an artist's conception of how various shots should be framed, and costume sketches by Edith Head complete with swatches of fabric.

Photographs abound — those actually used in the montage depicting Butch, Sundance, and Etta in New York, together with candid shots of horse-play on the set.

Perhaps the most instructive material lies in the memos that piled up before, during, and following production — an endless exchange between writer, director, producer, and studio head, covering basic concept, casting, selection of a cameraman, trials and tribulations during shooting, budget problems, mid-stream ideas for changes, notes on the rough cut, reactions to the preview, more changes, and notions on how best to induce the public to view the film when at last it was finished.

The literary style of these memos range from formal language to gamey expressions with the zing of a revolver shot. When a sampling of the latter variety was included in the "Butch Cassidy" exhibit in the Old Print Room of the Yale Art Gallery, one viewer was moved to exclaim, "Jeez — Imagine dictating **that** to a secretary!"

The Yale Film Associates congratulates Mr. Hill on his foresight in rounding up this amazing array of material, and for his generosity in presenting it to his alma mater for the edification of present and future students of the cinema. And Y.F.A. is proud that on April 17 Mr. Hill will use the highlights in an illustrated talk to its members. S.M.B.

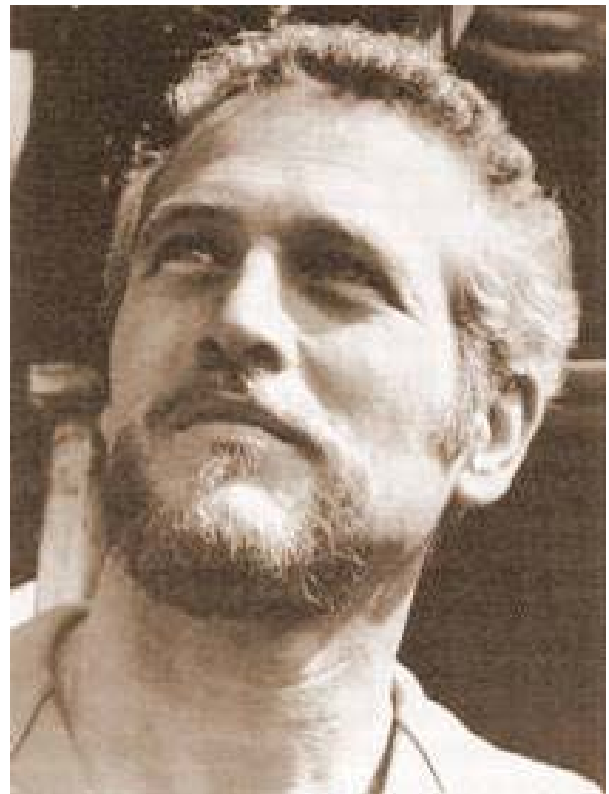


Photo by C. Brewster

CUTAWAY SHOTS

Fifty-one American institutions of higher learning now have formal film departments that grant degrees . . . VARIETY November 12, 1969

From an editorial in the New Haven Register, Sept. 24, 1969 . . . "Movies, with some exceptions, may not be better than ever but there is no doubt that the younger generation, or a large part thereof, has an intense interest in them. Filmmaking is a serious pursuit on campuses throughout the country. Considering the impact of movies on life in these United States, it might be well for institutions of higher learning to encourage studies for improving the quality of films."

*Reproduced from the original Yale Film Associates Newsletter
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"The Making of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," September 1 to October 25, 2009,
at the Whitney Humanities Center gallery and in support of the fortieth anniversary 35mm screening
of the film October 23.*