

"un-American activities" had his name on its list in 1951, and although he was not called to testify, he found there was no longer any work for him in Hollywood. In England, however, he was able to do some directing under an assumed name ("I paid someone to put his name on my picture"), after which English producing firms became courageous enough to allow him to sign his own name to his work. His reputation grew, and he now finds himself in the

position of regularly turning down Hollywood offers.

He is reluctant to return, and in fact says he will not return unless location considerations dictate it. "The worst disadvantage of Hollywood," he said, "is its hanging onto a conveyor-belt method of production. There are all these executives. They hire a director who, chances are, has no relationship to the script, after which the picture is made in committee and largely to a formula

that has worked in the past. And what is considered a good script in Hollywood is still, I'm afraid, a script that might as well be a play—where everything is explicit in the dialogue, and there is little left up to the visual, except where it is an embellishment and not basic to the concept.

"There is a kind of writing that so many of the Hollywood writers go in for, a breaking of a wide-angle shot down into shots no self-respecting director would willingly use. It amounts to a meaningless kind of self-deception, a deception that veins through the whole apparatus. The writers over here work differently—Harold Pinter, for instance. In the case of *The Servant* I worked very closely with him, but at the same time he was given all the creative scope and freedom in the world. He's done a new screenplay for me, one that takes up only seventy-seven pages (in Hollywood they'd send him back to double the length), but which has 377 scene numbers. None of these scenes tells me what the camera does, but each is evocative of an image. Very few writers here work only for the screen—Pinter, Alun Owen, Robert Bolt—they'll always go back to the theater in between their screen assignments. Evan Jones, who has done the screenplay for *Modesty Blaise*, is also a poet and a playwright. It always surprises me about Hollywood to learn that very few writers there have ever written anything but screenplays.

"Producers exist here, as they do in Hollywood—and I, for one, could do without about 90 per cent of them—but they don't dominate as they do in Hollywood. Actually, the situation in which the director has the primary power has developed here only in the last three or four years, and it's still somewhat shaky. But I think you can see the results—a *Tom Jones*, a *Dr. Strangelove*, *The Knack*. I doubt that any of them could have been made in Hollywood."

Losey admitted that *Modesty Blaise* started out as "a story that was the usual mixture of suspense, sex and violence nonsense." *Modesty Blaise* had begun as a comic strip, had flowered into a novel, and was now a movie. A press release handed me stated that Modesty Blaise was "the notorious adventuress who combines utter femininity with a magnetic attraction to danger and excitement" and was "about to make film history." Joseph Losey was a good deal less positive about what the film was going to turn out to be. The concept of the film had gone through a considerable amount of change since the project was first broached to him. "The thing that intrigued me most," he said, "was the idea of the subject in combination with Monica Vitti. The arrangements had already been made with her to star, and the picture was supposed to have been

From Hollywood with Love: It was one of those improbably foggy English mornings when I made my way on foot up the muddy, rutted dirt road that would lead me, or so I had been assured, to the clearing in a pine forest where producer-director-writer Bryan Forbes was shooting his latest film, *The Wrong Box*. It seemed an unlikely place, and certainly an unlikely time, to film a movie. Although only a few miles from London and civilization, the landscape was all but invisible in the fog that morning, trees and shrubbery glowed with beads of rain, and the mud that washed repeatedly over my shoe tops was as dark and unwelcome as cold espresso. But sure enough, there it all was at the top of the road, a vast gathering of actors out of the gay Nineties, a meticulously constructed head-on collision of two trains, a tangle of cameras and technicians, and, wading among them all, an intense young man in tweed jacket and muddy knee boots who peered skyward occasionally for the first hint of the sun, an awesome act of faith under the circumstances.

But thirty-nine-year-old Bryan Forbes (*The Angry Silence*, *The L-Shaped Room*, *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*, *King Rat*) seemed, surprisingly enough, far from discouraged. There was rehearsing to be done, a camera angle to be settled, the sheer joy of watching technicians tinker with the valves that let great storms of steam billow from the boilers of the wrecked locomotives, and, in the intervals, a magazine writer to tell his enthusiasms to. But the biggest surprise of all came when our talk turned to Hollywood, where London-born Forbes had just filmed *King Rat*. For several days I had been listening to Americans in London and Paris as they pledged enthusiastic allegiance to film-making abroad, but here, suddenly, was a Briton in love with Hollywood and offering an unabashed and persuasive minority report.

"I learned a great deal from Hollywood," Forbes told me. "For the first forty-eight hours I admit I was scared. The technicians and I circled each other warily. But after that I got 102 per cent cooperation. They not only embraced my ideas but improved on them. There's no place in the world with the technical expertise of Hollywood. All any director has to work with is a dream that he tries to get people to carry out, and you can come closest to your dream with the right technical help."

Hollywood people, Forbes went on, invite their own difficulties. "Hollywood," he said, "has a tremendous degree of professionalism, and I like professionalism. The film-makers who are troubled by conformity are those who want to conform—with the cocktail parties, the three Cadillacs, that kind of thing. The real bane of Hollywood isn't any compulsion to conformity but simply the producers. They're trampling everyone to death. They've all got a deskful of unusable, unshootable manuscripts—things like the story of a singing leper or a one-legged railway engineer. The old-time producers like Sam Goldwyn were all right; the new ones all think they can use slide rules."

But, producers and conformity aside, Forbes made it clear that he has nothing but respect and a high regard for Hollywood. "I don't see why Hollywood has to be synonymous with bad films," he said. "You can make lousy films in London."

We had talked for an hour, and at last the sun was beginning to wear the fog away and *The Wrong Box*, a macabre comedy starring John Mills, Sir Ralph Richardson, Michael Caine, Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, and Nanette Newman, was suddenly of more immediate concern than all the charms of Hollywood. Forbes took a satisfied look at the clearing sky and sloshed forth again into the puddles and the English mud, 5,500 jet miles from California.

—J.F.F.

under way last February. But she didn't like the script, nor did she like the director they had in mind then. I said I would do it, under various conditions, one of them being that I would get a new script."

Monica Vitti is more familiar to elite audiences around the world as the moody heroine of several films by Michelangelo Antonioni, with whom she consorts off screen as well as on. As Modesty Blaise she is a most unusual kind of adventurer—deadly and amoral, of course, but given to surprising changes of hair style and hair color, often in the middle of a scene. She lives in a high-styled penthouse and utilizes a computer to advise her on her complex activities. She has a buddy in adventure who is being played by Terence Stamp, and Dirk Bogarde is the arch-villain. Losey described Bogarde as "a free-lance villain whose main purpose in life is to get very rich."

Modesty Blaise may well be the first "op art" picture ever made. "I wanted to tell the story in primary colors," Losey said, "and the optical illusions in the picture go along with various other illusions. The basis of the original story is still there, but the dramatic credibility of it has been stretched to the fairy-tale point. I'm hoping that it will be a funny film, because we're working toward comedy, farce, even slapstick, and there is also quite a lot of satire for those who want to see it. It's definitely not James Bond, and I've made every attempt to minimize the violence. If anything, it's about the lunacy of violence, and it also indicates, I guess, the kind of disoriented society that results from the kind of thing now going on generally. I feel that one thing you can't do is make a send-up of another picture. This may have started out that way, but it isn't that way now."

At another studio, MGM's Elstree facility, Stanley Kubrick has a large-scale Cinerama project underway. It is called *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and he is hoping to achieve a visual experience of a unique kind. Fascinated by the possibilities of cinematic science fiction, he began exploring subject matter that might lead him to a film, and while doing this came across the writings of well-known sci-fi writer, Arthur C. Clarke. He met Clarke in New York, and the two began a collaboration on a story that would focus on developments in space technology some thirty-five years hence. The story was first written as a novel, in which Clarke would write a chapter, Kubrick would write one, and then each would kick the other's work around. The novel (still being tinkered with by Kubrick and Clarke, and for the obtaining of which there is much spirited interest on the part of publishers) then became the basis for the screenplay.

Kubrick, when I saw him, was still

putting four hours of each day into last-minute changes on both novel and screenplay. "Doing it as a novel first," he said, "made us concentrate less on scene than on the truthful working out of the many problems." He found a ready sponsor for the film in Robert H. O'Brien, president of MGM, who had long admired Kubrick's ability. "There was agreement all along the line," O'Brien said. "Kubrick represents a most unusual combination of qualities: artistic ability, management ability, and a sense of coherence. And, not least, a splendid sense of economy. When he came to see us he had not only a fully integrated story and a carefully planned-out method of doing it, but a remarkably accurate forecast of the budgetary needs, a reflection of his meticulousness."

Why England, instead of Hollywood? That, O'Brien said, was Kubrick's choice, and he had his reasons: he had technicians there he wanted to work with, closeness to certain locations out of England, and economy. Kubrick simply said: "Wouldn't most directors prefer to work in England?" He wasn't willing to explain further.

But it was plain to see that he was able to do it all his own way, as the virtual dictator of the production. He had a staff of thirty art directors and artists working on designs for space ships and space stations. More than that, he had the willing cooperation of some of the largest corporations in the world, which were providing him with data, advice, and designs. He had gone so far as to enlist the research scientists of NASA, IBM, duPont, Bausch and Lomb,



Walter Shenson—"We really are independent here."

Kodak, and General Mills; two rocket experts who had worked with Werner von Braun; and a construction team from Vickers-Armstrong—and most of it without fee. Basically what he wanted from these people was a projection of our current knowledge to thirty-five years from now. What would a space centrifuge be like in 2001? And what would so simple a thing as a chair, vintage 2001, look like? Clothes, synthetic foods, instrumentation—all had to be worked out, as authentically as possible, in terms of 2001.

He was not willing to give out the story, however. From the designs in the
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Saltzman & Broccoli—"We'll have a good bash at each other every now and then."

THE GREAT GALLIC WELCOME

By JAMES F. FIXX

PARIS.

NOT LONG AGO the international edition of the *New York Times* was moved to observe, in an outpouring that was about as close to wide-eyed wonder as it ever gets, that American films had taken over Paris. Under the headline "U.S. Films Dominate Paris Movie Houses," the *Times* man documented what even the most casual visitor couldn't help seeing for himself—that wherever one looked, from the moviehouses along the Champs Elysées to those in outlying neighborhoods, it was little short of an American movie invasion. *Mary Poppins*, *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines*, *Ship of Fools*, and even a pair of avant-garde films—all of them were playing right here in Paris, along with perhaps the most American film of them all, a noisy romp retitled *Au Secours!* that starred four shaggy young men from Liverpool and their million-dollar warbles for help. "If French moviegoers were to boycott American motion pictures," remarked the man from the *Times*, "they would be spending most of their time at home."

There seemed little danger of that. Wherever the American films were playing, whether in the original English or dubbed in French, business was booming. The lines at box offices were satisfyingly long, and at the Champs Elysées moviehouse where the Beatles were in full cry, the young go-go set was all but stopping traffic. Parisians, it was clear, saw nothing surprising in the fact that at the very time they were under such heavy bombardment from American

film-makers, only one new French film had come to town—and a gangster comedy at that. (It would have been uncharitable to point out to them that their gangster film, *La Metamorphose des Cloportes*, had been helped along by American money and, to compound the indignity, released by an American company.)

The lack of surprise was no doubt at least partly attributable to the fact that since mid-July Parisians have been systematically conditioned to the idea that American film-makers are extraordinarily involved with their city. At the pleasure of Americans they have seen their newly brightened buildings blackened with soot, have had to wait in their Citroens and Peugeots while police held up traffic, have seen tanks and armored vehicles rumble along streets, have heard the chatter of gunfire, and have even found themselves welcoming men in Nazi uniforms back to town. All this has come about because of a single fact of which all Paris, from the man on the street to those in the high councils of government, is inescapably aware: the city is the setting, and in a very real sense the star, of an astoundingly ambitious film called *Is Paris Burning?*

Director René Clément, who is running the show, has called it "an exhilarating madness," and no one who has been close to it is likely to disagree. I had a chance the other day to watch the madness in action when Clément and company were filming a scene in Commonvilliers, a hamlet not far from Paris. The main street was clogged with trucks and tanks, all of them artfully begrimed with mud, the town square was jammed with men wearing World War II uniforms, and at the edges of the crowd stood virtually the entire population of Commonvilliers—children, men, housewives, shopkeepers, household pets. It was a Saturday morning, and I overheard one Frenchman say, "There's probably not a single bed made in this town today." Nor were many of the village's usual activities apt to take place that day. When a dog started to bark, a woman was quickly dispatched to lead the animal out of earshot. And when one luckless inhabitant, far up a street, took hammer in hand to do a little carpentry, one of the film's technicians was sent at once to silence him.

There was little resentment at such inconveniences, however, for in French

eyes it was all for a cause, and the cause was the re-creation, mammoth in its scope and painstaking in its exactitude, of the liberation of Paris in 1944. The story, based on the best-selling book by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, is one to stir the soul of any Frenchman, and there are few Frenchmen today whose souls have not been stirred, for better or worse, by the film version. First of all, there are the stars who have come to Paris—Jean-Paul Belmondo, Simone Signoret, Yves Montand, Gert (Goldfinger) Frobe, Orson Welles, Leslie Caron, Kirk Douglas, Glenn Ford, Charles Boyer, and Anthony Perkins among them. Then, too, there has been the shooting, which has taken place in nearly every historic corner of Paris—at Notre Dame, at Les Invalides (where cameras for the first time were allowed to go down to Napoleon's tomb), at La Place de la Concorde, in the Bois de Boulogne, on the Champs Elysées. All this, combining the sights and sounds of two decades ago with the glamour of the contemporary film, has moved Frenchmen to excitement and to reminiscence, so much so that on the very first day of shooting—at a Resistance garage not far from the Arc de Triomphe—100 Paris policemen were needed to hold the crowds back.

BUT what the average Parisian sees, no matter how keenly he observes the progress of *Is Paris Burning?*, is only a fraction of what has really been going on. For a good part of the film's drama has taken place well out of camera range. That drama, engineered largely by a portly producer named Paul Graetz, is a startling measure of the power and influence of the film medium around the world, and particularly in this capital of European production. The minor miracle wrought here by Graetz is an eloquent testament to the sort of welcome film-makers have come to expect from Paris.

No sooner had film rights to *Is Paris Burning?* been acquired than it became apparent that this could be no ordinary film. For one thing, it had to be shot in Paris—but not in the Paris of 1965. This meant that streets had to be cleared of modern automobiles and of people in modern dress, that the buildings, recently cleaned of their grime under Cultural Minister André Maulraux's sprucing-up program, had to be dark-



William Wyler in Paris—"There's always more going on in Hollywood."