

man of astounding talent and mischievous bent. "Cocky and contented," *Photoplay* called him. He won a Hollywood contract by using all his accumulated Army leave time to venture to the German location of director Douglas Sirk's *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*. There he won a small part, that of a neurotic army officer. He also got busted, around the same time, for arranging a gag in which he and some cohorts invented a mythical American film star named Rex Wayne and—through elaborate play-acting—made that imaginary actor front page news at the Berlin Film Festival of 1957.

Jim Hutton's career peaked with a string of light comedies. He was memorable alongside a very young Jane Fonda in *Period of Adjustment*, a 1962 release. He and Maryline Poole Adams, Tim's mother, divorced when Tim was three.

Most of Tim Hutton's growing up was in Connecticut and in Berkeley, California. He lived with his mother, quite apart from show business influences. Exception came when young Tim and friends staged a barnyard production *Oliver*. "It was great," Hutton recalls. "I got to sing. I had this little, high voice."

When he was sixteen, Tim Hutton moved to Los Angeles to live with his father. He enrolled at Fairfax High, where he took the role of Nathan Detroit in a production of *Guys and Dolls*. He visited his father now and again on the set of *Ellery Queen*, a TV mystery series starring the elder Hutton. Then the two starred together in a dinner theatre production of *Harvey*. Finally, Hutton the younger decided acting was definitely what he wanted. He dropped from high school, scored a General Equivalency Diploma, and auditioned for made-for-TV movies. His widest notice came for *Friendly Fire*, co-starring Carol Burnett and Ned Beatty.

Beatty praised Hutton to writer Bruce Cook for *American Film* magazine. "I myself tend to be an actor who makes broader choices," said Beatty, "so I appreciate an actor who can do the same thing making more subtle choices, working more or less internally."

Robert Redford, who directed *Ordinary People*, has said that he saw something that was natural in Hutton, rather than something that was acting. The two spent a lot of time taking walks together, tossing a football around, establishing intuitive trust. Similarly, Hutton and George C. Scott built a rapport through the early days of *Taps*' shooting schedule. They held marathon chess games, all of them won by Scott. Chess spread like a fever, lasting long after Scott had filmed his short segment. Just before I walked in on Hutton, twelve of the young cadet extras were at the same long table, intent on six separate chess matches.

"George doesn't like to sit down to play just one game," Hutton says. "You keep going with him until you've played five, six games in a row. It's really intense concentration. I never beat him. But by the time he left I was playing chess better."

The Stones tape has given way to Weather Report. Hutton is mouthing percussion accents to "Birdland."

The press agent arrives at this point, holding three naked cigarettes upright. "These are from your usual nicotine supplier," he says, and re-assumes his horizontal position.

"You know," I comment, "Johnny Carson and Chevy Chase also have

backgrounds in drumming. They've said that it helped build their timing."

"Really?" Hutton's face flashes with a nanosecond of delight, then levels off again. He genuinely likes to converse, but he doesn't like the feeling of being set up to talk about himself personally. "I brought some drum pads along and set them up in my hotel room so I can play along with the tapes. I wanted to bring along a snare and a floor tom, but I think that would drive people crazy. Anyone want a Snickers?" he asks, offering from a small stash of candy bars on the table.

"Do you have any particular notions of what your strong points in acting

are? Say, timing for example?"

"Um . . . I don't know. It's sort of tough to be objective about that. I just sort of work from instinct. And not really from any method I've learned."

Instinct plus research, make that. Hutton is a voracious reader when preparing a role. For *Ordinary People* he read *The Catcher in the Rye*, *A Separate Peace*, *East of Eden* and a book on psychological problems of the children of wealthy parents. He also spent time talking with patients at mental hospitals for teenagers, even posing as a "trial" patient for a day. He says the experience was "moving," especially when other patients un-self-consciously

checked his wrists for suicide-attempt scars.

Taps motivated Hutton to read *American Caesar*, a biography of General George S. Patton, Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*, and other books focused on authority and conflict. In addition, he spent four weeks living at Valley Forge Academy before filming began. I ask if *Taps* is a story of social processes or a private, individual story.

"I'd say it was more private," Hutton comments. "Moreland doesn't know anything more than this private world he lives in. He doesn't have any broad scope, any overview. So it's more private, a world in which he is the com-

mandant.

It appears almost certain that Hutton's influence will extend beyond the gates of this fictional military academy. But exactly where it, and his career, will go, Hutton isn't prepared to guess. "I don't know," he says at the interview's close, "I can't really think in the future, never really have been able to. 'Cause it's a very moment kind of thing, from role to role. I mean, *Ordinary People* and the success of that film has given me the opportunity to, I'm sure, for the next couple of years, find work. But beyond that, I don't know. I mean, things just sort of happened. I was very lucky."

ON SCREEN

Reds

starring Warren Beatty, Diane Keaton, Jack Nicholson; written by Warren Beatty and Trevor Griffiths; directed by Beatty.

Radical journalist John Reed was born in Oregon and was buried in the Kremlin. That quantum leap in geography and the political polarity it implies sum up Reed's extraordinary life. Although he was dead just a few days after his 33rd birthday, his life was crammed with more adventure than most people ever know or want to know. He went to Harvard, wrote plays, organized with the Wobblies, became a journalist, lived with one of the richest and most controversial women of her day (Mabel Dodge), wrote poetry, broke hearts, traveled with Pancho Villa and immortalized the Russian Revolution in *Ten Days That Shook the World*, a piece of reportage that is now more notable for its drama than for its truth. John Reed was a star of his generation and a legend in his own time.

Warren Beatty first discovered Reed more than ten years ago and became obsessed with putting his story on the screen. He ultimately spent more than two years in production on *Reds*, and between \$33 and \$40 million. The film lasts three hours and nineteen minutes and is a kaleidoscopic vision of Reed and his times. The film is audacious and often startlingly successful, while at the same time faint-hearted and predictable.

Beatty, who wrote the screenplay along with British playwright Trevor Griffiths (with reported assistance from Elaine May and Robert Towne), chose to focus on Reed's affair and marriage to Louise Bryant, a temperamental and tempestuous woman who craved the spotlight but was never certain she could win it on her own. When she met Reed, she not only found a lover, but a ticket to the fame and fortune (not in the monetary sense) she coveted. She was, without too much of a stretch, Bianca to Reed's Mick.

Diane Keaton plays Louise, and at times it's a very daring and amazingly subtle performance. She's not afraid to let the audience think she's frivolous and unlikeable. She never stoops to woo the audience. By the end, when her maturity and commitment to Reed are tested in the extreme, her anguish and strength are all the more compelling. At times Keaton seems a bit too

modern; some of her political spoutings sound as if they were left over from Woody Allen's *Love and Death*.

Beatty is a fine producer and an interesting director, but he's a limited actor. He's best at playing men who are so slow that life eats them up (*Bonnie and Clyde* or *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*), or California golden boys who belong in bed (*Shampoo*). He doesn't begin to convey Reed's compelling intelligence or his clarity of thought; he's much too anxious to please. Beatty never shows us Reed's darker side, his selfishness, his devils. The complexity of the man is missing.

Also, and this is most curious of all, the sexual chemistry between Beatty and Keaton is all but non-existent. They never ignite on the screen, although we keep expecting them to. This has been sold as a movie not unlike *Doctor Zhivago*; although it's a far better movie, it doesn't tug at us the way that film did. In fact it isn't until *Reds* is just about over that Keaton and Beatty manage to break our hearts, particularly in the one totally apocryphal element in the movie—Bryant's trek across Finland and Russia to find her ailing lover.

This is not to say that *Reds* is without sexual chemistry, but it's supplied by Jack Nicholson, who shows up briefly as playwright Eugene O'Neill. Nicholson's scenes with Keaton are the best written in the movie, and although she doesn't give off much raw passion, Nicholson gives off so much we forget the imbalance.

Beatty has also shown his courage by inter-cutting his drama with straight-to-the-camera testimony from people who lived through that same era. Like Marcel Ophuls in *The Sorrow and the Pity*, Beatty has let people who knew Reed and Bryant talk about them. Some remember everything all wrong and some have an axe to grind, but the device is riveting. The major objection is that Beatty never identifies these people and it just isn't fair. Some faces may be recognized, such as Henry Miller or George Jessel; but how many people know Rebecca West by sight or Roger Baldwin, the founder of the ACLU?

All in all, *Reds* is a movie to see. It'll give quite a history lesson to most audiences, as radical Americans are not exactly well represented in mainstream history texts, and it has a scope and daring that few Hollywood movies have these days. Betty has crammed his movie with people and places, ideas and emotions; although he's not always successful in making them coalesce, he's on a very right track that

few filmmakers these days ever bother to mount.

Jacoba Atlas

On Golden Pond

Starring Henry Fonda, Katharine Hepburn and Jane Fonda; written by Ernest Thompson; produced by Bruce Gilbert; directed by Mark Rydell.

Simple stories often make the best films. Ernest Thompson's *On Golden Pond*, adapted from his play of the same name, is a simple story, well told, and it speaks of life. In Mark Rydell's care, the story has made an excellent transition to the screen.

Norman Thayer, Jr. (Henry Fonda) and his wife, Ethel (Katharine Hepburn), have returned to spend the summer at their rustic home on Golden Pond in rural New Hampshire. Norman's 80th birthday is approaching and in celebration of the event, daughter Chelsea (Jane Fonda) arrives from her home in California with current flame Bill (Dabney Coleman), a dentist, and his son, Billy (Doug McKeon). The two lovers dash off to Europe, leaving this 13-year old in octogenarian hands, a situation that begins badly but ends warmly. Chelsea returns alone (Bill had to rush home to aid a patient) and has a reconciliation of sorts with her father, with whom she's been at odds all her life. As summer ends, the couple, in pretty fair shape for two old birds, pack up and head home to Boston for the winter.

Superb performances from Fonda and Hepburn as a pair who've been together for around 50 years, and still care deeply for each other, make *On Golden Pond* a special event. Fonda is stunning as the cranky, complaining Norman. He's got a right to be mad: he's old, he's losing his memory, he's got angina, he feels death constantly hovering about. "You're old and I'm ancient," he tells Ethel in a fit of pique. "I'll show you the bathroom, if I can remember where it is," he says to Billy, overhearing remarks about his fading memory. During a particularly feisty exchange on death, Ethel says, "Don't you have anything else to think of?" to which he responds, "Nothing quite as interesting."

Yet for all its sentimentality, the film is often hilarious. Norman gets the best lines and Fonda is delightful, throwing out one dry, crackling line after another, all delivered without a twinge of a smile. In most cases, clichéd instances of melodrama have been admirably avoided by Thompson

and Rydell, though the relationship between Norman and Billy is sometimes a little too dear. And Ms. Fonda's playing of Chelsea doesn't seem to ring true. But the flaws are slight and the lead performances remarkable.

Zan Stewart

Buddy Buddy

starring Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau; written by Billy Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond; based on a play and story by Francis Veber; produced by Jay Weston; directed by Wilder.

Veteran director and writer Billy Wilder fell short in the making of *Buddy Buddy*. Rather than being an outrageous comedy, the film is merely an outrage. It's sad to see such a pro (*Some Like It Hot*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Seven Year Itch*) plod haplessly about like a fly trying to run a 50-yard dash through a vat of peanut butter.

Walter Matthau plays a highly-paid underworld hitman, who has rubbed out two victims, one by bomb, the other by poison. He's about to make the final kill in his illustrious career. Enter Jack Lemmon, a distraught husband whose wife (Paula Prentiss) has run off with the director of a sex clinic (Klaus Kinski). As Matthau stands poised from a hotel window with his high-powered rifle about to blow away the target mobster, Lemmon in the room next door constantly distracts the assassin by loudly, and ineptly, attempting suicide. That is the plot in a nutshell—although a trash bag might have been a better place for it.

While Matthau barely manages to muddle through this farce with the tired mugging and deadpan delivery we've seen so many times before, Lemmon fares far worse. His histrionic antics wear thin, calling to mind a combination of the stuttering Mel Tillis crossed with a tired Daffy Duck. Prentiss and Kinski often look about as animated as cigar store indians.

The real fault lies with the writing of Wilder and cowriter I. A. L. Diamond. These two old pros show a lack of originality as they trod over well-worn comedic territory. Tired jokes about policemen, sex, drugs and hippies (*bippies?* Good grief!) inhabit this listless and tasteless script.

The one thing that is amazing about the film is that it manages to fail on so many different levels. *Buddy Buddy* is about as dated as last year's calendar, and just as useless.

Bill Braunstein