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Joe Piscopo was photographed by New Yorker Deborah Feingold

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goings on

BY STEVEN GINSBERG

**No Laughing Matter**

AFTER YUKKING IT UP in *Meatballs*, *Stripes*, and *Tootsie*, former *Saturday Night Live* star Bill Murray is now taking on his first serious role. He plays a young man coming to terms with the world in 1920's Paris in *The Razor's Edge*, based on the W. Somerset Maugham novel. Murray co-wrote the screenplay with director John Byrum (who wrote the putrid *Heartbeat*) and is shooting on locales in England, France and the Himalayas. And if the transition to drama doesn't work? "I promised to do a comedy if I mess this up," Murray says. It's a safe bet: he's already signed to do *Ghostbusters* with Dan Aykroyd. Aykroyd and Harold Ramis wrote the script (to be directed by *Stripes*' Ivan Reitman), which was at one time intended for Richard Pryor.

THE 1984 BIG BROTHER Calendar, the brainchild of Deborah Caulfield, David Crook and Michael Gershman, "celebrates" our real-life versions of George Orwell's nightmarish fiction. The calendar, which

unfolds as a generous 3x4 poster, details Nixon's crimes, HUAC's blacklist, Vietnam, and dozens of lesser-known but no less shameful American events. (Example: In November 1972, "Rep. William Moorhead reveals White House plan to install FM receivers that can be operated by government in every home, boat and auto.") Available in campus book shops, this calendar is a great gift for the truly paranoid or the merely worried. Coming next spring from the same trio (plus Robert Ellis Smith) is *The Big Brother Book of Lists*.

**Signing Up**

REMEMBER THE OLD DAYS in Hollywood when everyone had a studio contract? They're coming back. Paramount Pictures has in the last few months signed long term deals with Eddie Murphy (for a mere \$15 million and his own production company); *Staying Alive* co-star Cynthia Rhodes (for a six-figure salary and an option to do five films); *Winds of War* director Dan Curtis (for the opportunity to make features); and *Flashdance* producer Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer (for...?). Why the sudden urge for a stable of talent? "There are certain people whose creative vision we share and want to make movies with over a long period of time," a Paramount rep explained. And we thought they just wanted to make money.

**Old Lovers Never Die**

CHECK VERY CLOSELY and you'll find Diane Keaton in one of the many still shots contained in Woody Allen's latest film, *Zelig*. Keaton is seated at a table in a party scene with Allen's *Zelig* character and costar Mia Farrow. But it's doubtful you'll find Keaton in any of Allen's upcoming films. She'll be spending a good part of next year in Europe starring in the filmization of John LeCarre's novel *Little Drummer Girl*. After that it's the lead in *Modern Bride*, where she portrays a woman in her thirties getting married for the first time.

MIKE NICHOLS has committed to direct a film version of Nora Ephron's roman à clef *Heartburn*, the humorous story of a marriage breakup that is said to be based on Ephron's own stormy matrimony with Watergate hero Carl Bernstein. The novel centers on a Washington columnist and his wife, a kind of hip Julia Child who has her own cooking show. It also offers at least one recipe about every 20 pages — though none for popcorn.

**Bo-Zo**

POOR BO DEREK. First she finds out that her costar in her new movie, *Bolero*, Fabio Testi, has herpes (and after they did some major romantic scenes). Now she suffers the further indignation of having to retitle her film. *Bolero* has already been registered by someone else. But BoBo gets the last laugh this time. She's simply calling her epic — *Bo-Lero*. Get it? ... We thought you would.

**The Bible, Baby or Get Down With Thy Bad Self**

BECAUSE WE KNEW you must be wondering what self-possessed ladykiller Richard Gere could ever do to top himself, we're happy to tell you he's found a new niche — in the Bible. Gere will portray the biblical hero David in *The Story of David*, a saga that shoots next year in Europe. The adventure story takes David from innocent shepherd boy through fun times with Bathsheba and his reign as the King of Judah. But fear not. Though Bible heroes may seem lily white, insiders tell us that David liked to flirt and seduce to get his way. At least as portrayed here.

**It's Not All Glamour**

PRODUCTION HAD TO BE shut down for three weeks on *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, the sequel to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. It seems star Harrison Ford hurt his back on the set. But fear not. Ford was sent home from London to recuperate in L.A. with new wife Melissa Mathison (*E.T.*'s screenwriter). After three weeks of attention, and a program of swimming, Ford is said to be as good as new.

E.T.'S ADOPTIVE SISTER, Drew Barrymore, will next star as a pint-

sized pyromaniac in *Firestarter*, a film based on the Stephen King horror novel for *King Kong*'s producer Dino DeLaurentiis. Being the star she is, Drew, of course, won't set things aglow with an ordinary pack of matches. She uses telepathy powers. (Remember Sissy Spacek in *Carrie*?)

**Respect**

YOU JUST HAD TO be at Aretha Franklin's L.A. concert at the Beverly Theatre in Beverly Hills to appreciate it. Not only did the queen of soul do just 55 minutes, relying mostly on the vocal power of her background singers, she wore a blue glittery mermaid-type gown that was so tight we got to see what kind of navel she has (we always wondered). ... OK, you win. It's an "inny."

THE GUYS BEHIND the comedy hit *Airplane* are back in the saddle (or air) again in a new movie only being referred to as *Top Secret*. Again written by brothers Jerry and David Zucker (and a third writer, Martin Bruke), the film is shooting in London under the most confidential of circumstances. The only thing its distributor, Paramount, will say is that the film's subject is top secret and that we'll get to see it next summer.

JERRY HOPKINS, star biographer (*Elvis: A Biography*, *Elvis: The Final Years*, and *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, about Jim Morrison), has produced another — *Hit and Run*, the Jimi Hendrix story. Revealed in same is a bizarre kidnaping of Hendrix which was, amazingly, kept silent at the time. Hopkins' next subject (a live one, for a change): David Bowie.



Jimi Hendrix

ANNE BANCROFT, best known to contemporary audiences for roles in *The Turning Point* and *The Graduate*, should be known as a singer by Christmas. She is said to steal hubby Mel Brooks' remake of the Ernst Lubitsch classic *To Be or Not to Be* with her Polish rendition of "Sweet Georgia Brown." Actually, Bancroft is not a newcomer to music. She was the original choice (before Barbra Streisand) to do *Funny Girl* on Broadway and has won Emmies for her musical TV specials in the late Sixties.

**Comic Book Mentality**

FROM THE PRODUCERS of *Superman I, II* and *III*, get ready for — *Santa Claus*! A \$50 million version of a syrupy Santa story featuring at least one evil elf (what else?) is going to be shot early next year so it can be at theaters in time for Christmas, 1984. Personally, we'd rather have coal in our stocking.

Speaking of *Superman* stories, know how much Marlon Brando really made for 12 days work on the first two of the series (he was cut out of the second) — \$13-\$14 million, according to its producers Ilya and Alexander Salkind in a recent *New York Times* interview. But they've learned. Brando is nowhere to be found in the upcoming *Supergirl*, which we'll be treated to next summer (when does it stop?). Actually, we were figuring the leviathan Brando as a natural for Santa Claus. Save on padding, you know. Anyway, newcomer Helen Slater is in the title role battling it out with arch villainess Faye Dunaway.

**Amazing Meryl**

WHAT ELSE CAN Meryl Streep do? Sing. A single is supposed to be released in a few months with the two-time Oscar winner warbling "Amazing Grace," a number she does in her latest movie, *Silkwood*. Portraying Karen Silkwood, a woman who died mysteriously while unraveling the reasons behind unsafe conditions in the plutonium plant in which she worked, Streep apparently surprised skeptics and did a top notch job with the tune.

**No More Tomorrows ... Please.**

JUST WHEN YOU thought it was safe to like orphans again, producer Ray Stark has announced plans to make *Annie II*. The new picture stars now-not-so-little Aileen Quinn (who will be 13 years old during filming next year) in an "action adventure story with music." Boston-based independent filmmaker Jan Egleson directs. Why continue the story? For one thing, sources close to Stark say market research shows little girls and their mothers are interested in another *Annie* story. And — Quinn's exclusive contract with Stark was about to run out. At one point, the studio was even thinking of putting Quinn into the forthcoming sequel to *Eating Raoul*. Really.

**More News**

NOT ALL STORIES in the film biz have unhappy endings. Director Jonathan Kaplan's latest picture, *Heart Like a Wheel*, a compelling biography of female race car driver Shirley Muldowney, seemed all washed up after it bombed in its initial release down south (film executives aren't likely to release a film elsewhere if it doesn't do good business with the audience it's meant for). But because a few people at Twentieth Century-Fox liked the picture, they've thought up a whole new ad campaign. Now they'll be using an ad approach a la *Norma Rae* by painting Shirley as a woman who goes up against the system (profes-