

Whole Sections Hatched Out of Hamlet for Video Show; Production Sieved

By WILLIAM EWALD

New York—UPI—There is really only one way to approach Tuesday night's CBS-TV "Hamlet" and that is to write two reviews.



This is the first review: Given 78 minutes of playing time, director Michael Benthal and his production team made the only choice open to them in deciding for a hot-rod version of the play. They hatched out whole sections, stripped down the remaining parts and juggled its structure.

In some instances they succeeded handsomely—Ophelia's mad scene had some bite; the

graveyard scene had a real sense of chill; there was a marvelous stylized elegance about a scene in which Hamlet is cornered by the king's men after murdering Polonius; and the final duelling scene had movement and thrust.

It was all a little like watching an oddball Peter Gunn-Zorro-Wells Fargo show.

Second Review

But then we arrive at the second review: The fact is Willie Shakespeare did not really intend to write a Peter Gunn-Zorro-Wells Fargo play. What he was trying to create was a great and artificial cosmos, diseased and out of joint, peopled by citizens of complexity and richness, all of them spinning around a young man of whirling perplexity, a labyrinth of a man trapped within the disorder of himself.

This all may sound very untidy. But Hamlet is not an untidy play. It is an intricately knitted sive and adaptors unravel it at their own peril.

It is a play of language as well as a play of action. The network of lines assigned to players are not hurdles to be cleared, but the stuff of the action. They are knots of words, both pulling toward and against each other, picking into character and making sense of the course of the tragedy.

When we lose sections like "How all occasions do inform against me and spur my dull revenge," like the "Priam's slaughter" speech of one of the players and subsequently, "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I," we are losing part of the viscera of the play.

And granted that Rosenzweig and Guldenshtern, those tedious semi-people, had to be dropped, why the loss of Fortinbras? Fortinbras, the action man, points up the inaction of Hamlet and more important, in the final scene he serves as a springboard to pitch us outside the play's burned-out world and back into ours again. He is essential to the viewer's perspective of the action.

Forced Through Sieve
What DuPont Show of the Month gave us Tuesday night, as a result of its mutilations, was a "Hamlet" forced through a sieve, a small-grained "Hamlet" without its grit, its nap, its fiber.

As for the players, the present Old Vic is not a very strong company. Its playing lacks brilliancy and depth. Margaret Courtenay as Gertrude, Oliver Neville as Claudius, Joseph O'Connor as Polonius were competent. Barbara Jefford, a little overripe for Ophelia, played her mad scene well. John Neville's Hamlet was a small-scaled Hamlet, but perhaps he can't be blamed since he was so busy moving between his chalk marks.



GOOD WILL AMBASSADOR—Commandante Camilo Cienfuegos, 26-year-old leader in the Cuban (rebel) army, has his beard checked over by hat-check girl Joyce Query at a restaurant in New York. Cienfuegos and nine other Castro army men are in the U.S. on a good will tour to woo American tourists to Cuba again, now that peace has been restored.

Design For Murder Fashioned in Trial Of Elizabeth Duncan

Ventura, Calif.—UPI—District Attorney Roy Gustafson

fashioned a design for murder today to prove that Mrs. Elizabeth Duncan "shopped around" for killers to murder her pregnant daughter-in-law.

Fierce maternal jealousy was skillfully threaded into the fabric of the case by the prosecutor as the motive for the bizarre killing.

Another thread was money which, Gustafson said, Mrs. Duncan offered to four or five persons before finding two hirelings willing to kill for pay.

Gustafson opened his case against the 54-year-old matron Tuesday with testimony by two Santa Barbara women who said they had been offered from \$1,500 to \$2,000 to commit murder.

They were carhop Barbara Jean Reed, who once lived next door to Mrs. Duncan in Ventura in 1948, and 19-year-old Diane Romero.

Mrs. Romero was scheduled to undergo cross-examination today.

Before recess Tuesday, she described her association with Mrs. Duncan, accused of hiring Augustine Baldonado, 25, and Luis Moya, 21, last November to kill Olga Duncan, 30.

Mrs. Romero testified she met Mrs. Duncan in September, 1958, when the matron's 29-year-old attorney son, Frank, was representing her husband, Rudy Romero.

During the course of their meeting, Mrs. Romero said Mrs. Duncan offered her first \$1,000 and then \$1,500 to do away with a woman who was "threatening her."

The young woman testified that Mrs. Duncan wanted to hit Olga on the head, put her in the bath tub and pour lye over her. "I was humoring Mrs. Duncan," Mrs. Romero testified nervously.

"I didn't think she was serious but when she spoke to my husband I became worried."

Earlier, Mrs. Reed said that Mrs. Duncan had offered her \$1,000 to throw acid in the face of one of Frank's girl friends and help kill her.

Mrs. Reed said Olga Duncan's name was never mentioned. She said Mrs. Duncan referred to her rival for her son's affections as "that woman" or "that b—."

The carhop said Mrs. Duncan's offer was made in the matron's Santa Barbara apartment. She testified that Mrs. Duncan wanted her to go to the woman's apartment, throw acid in her face and help roll her into a blanket to be held by the mother-in-law of the victim.

Then, she said, Mrs. Duncan wanted to take the body to the mountains and throw it over a cliff.

Close Friend of Daughter
Mrs. Reed said she was once a close friend of Mrs. Duncan's daughter, Patricia, who died in 1948.

She said the mother-in-law called on her friendship as a reason for her to go through with the plan for murder.

Another witness, Mrs. Dorothy Barnett, manager of an apartment house where Frank lived briefly with Olga after their marriage last June 20, said Elizabeth Duncan once visited Olga's apartment when she was not home.

Mrs. Barnett described a highly-emotional scene during which, she said, Mrs. Duncan rushed into the room and pointed to the bed.

"See, only one pillow," Then throwing open the closet, she pointed out none of Frank's clothes were there as proof that Olga was "living in sin."

"She's not going to have him. I will kill her if it's the last thing I do," Mrs. Barnett quoted Mrs. Duncan as saying.

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Statehood Bill In Subcommittee

Washington—UPI—The drive for Hawaiian statehood opens in the Senate today before a territories subcommittee.

Interior Secretary Fred A. Seaton was invited to appear as a witness favoring early admission of Hawaii as the 50th state.

Subcommittee chairman Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) said he hoped the Senate would pass the bill before the Easter recess. The Senate's Hawaii bill has 55 cosponsors, more than twice as many as in the last Congress and more than enough for victory if it reaches a vote.

Jackson said he wanted to complete the statehood hearing today and hand a bill to the full Interior and Insular Affairs committee for action before the end of next week.

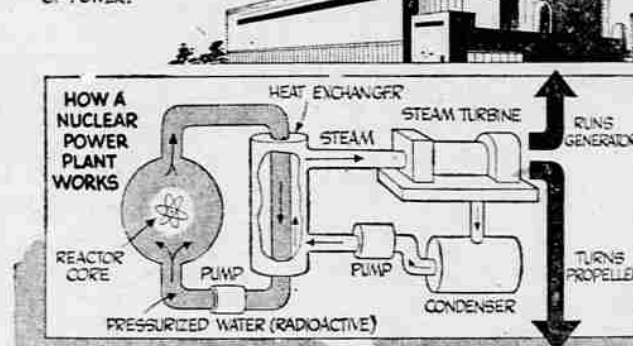
The House Rules committee opens hearings on statehood Thursday. Proponents hope for House approval by Easter, March 29.

Portland—UPI—The Multnomah County Central council has supported six bills before the Legislature which are designed to improve conditions for migrant workers.

Science Notebook

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Mexican Rail Lines Threatened

Mexico City—UPI—The Communist-led National Railway Workers union threatened to tie up Mexico's rail system today with a nationwide strike that rival unions called part of a Russian-led plot to overthrow the government.

Dementrio Vallejo, Communist leader of the railway union, ordered the strike at noon unless the government-owned system grants workers' demands for higher pay and company-financed housing.

National Railways Director Benjamin Mendez said granting the demands would ruin the nationalized rail network, which, he said, already was operating at a loss.

A spokesman for the rival anti-Communist United Labor Bloc said it had "proof" of the existence of a Russian-inspired Communist plan to overthrow the government through subversion of labor institutions.

POWER PLANT PARTNERS

Vienna—UPI—Austria and Communist Czechoslovakia will be partners in building an electric power plant on the Danube river, it was announced here Tuesday.

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