A look at ...

'In Cold Blood'

by Daniel Okrent

WHEN TRUMAN CAPOTE set out for Holcomb, Kansas, eight years ago to research his chronicle of a cold-blooded, motiveless mass murder, the automatic challenges were evident. Here was a man who had earned his reputation primarily for fiction, and he was attempting a basically journalistic effort. The book that resulted was clearly the product of a man caught up between these two basic forms of prose-some said that this was, in fact, the book's distinction and virtue—and never really managed to recon-

Richard Brooks' film is no different. Again, the maker of In Cold Blood is an individual versed in non-fiction idiom. His film, like Capote's book, teeters backs and forth on the rope bridge linking reality and creation. But the connection is generally quite smooth, and Brooks has actually accomplished more on celluloid than Capote did in print. What he has done is take the factual evidence that Capote so earnestly compiled, and weld it together into a glossy narrative that very effectively speaks a case for the need for solutions to the damage of social neglect. He builds a two-and-a-half hour metaphor, and only rarely taints it with maudlin effects or

PERRY SMITH and Dick Hickok kill Herbert Clutter, his wife and their two teenage children for no reason at all. Dick, lacking in conscience, but more so in mentality, and Perry, the bruised product of a broken home and broken life, end up dangling from an impersonal gallows. On their way there, though, director Brooks vividly paints two personalities with clear psychological problems, without the heavy-handed reliance on "Perry felt this way because . . ." that marred Capote's book.

Sure, there are points where Brooks belabors the obvious; his use of flashbacks to spell out the incidents of life that warped Perry Smith's mind are totally unnecessary. But when he lets his actors (two absolute unknowns, Robert Blake and Scott Wilson, whom Brooks picked because he wanted Perry and Dick to be Perry and Dick, and not movie-star faces in movie-star roles) play out their lives in conversation and action, there is an unobtrusive brilliance that shines through.

IN FACT, BROOKS has picked up where Arthur Penn left off. Indeed, he develops sympathy for Perry, at least, so much so that the poignant hanging scene is really throat-clutching (bad pun, good description). Actually, Perry and Dick are crude, harsh killers, just as much as were Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker. But we feel for the protagonists in both because they aren't really guilty; I am guilty and you are guilty and we all are very, very guilty. And so we emphathize with the killers, and bemoan the plight of our distorted society in pure bleeding-heart liberal fashion.

Not that we shouldn't. An artist like Penn or Brooks (both nominated-and both deserving-for the Best Director Oscar), who can produce a film that evokes gut reaction to a meaningful problem, should be lauded. The need for expressive art that transcends pure aesthetics and approaches editorial commentary is really clear, especially when this art does not speak to a selective audienec. This was the ill taint of How I Won the War, that is happily absent from both In Cold Blood and Bonnie and Clyde. They speak in pure vernacular, and not just to those tuned in on a specific wave-

Brooks' artistic and commentative talents combine beautifully just a few minutes before the final scene, when the doomed Perry Smith leans against the window of his dingy death row cell, and the rain that batters the window outside is projected onto his face in trickles of lighted tears. It tells the whole story that Capote worked on for six full years.

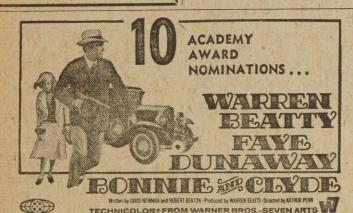
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IT LEAVES ONE CHILLED!" -Bosley Crowther, New York Times

Written for the screen and directed by Richard Brooks Positively no one under 16 admitted unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. [S.M.A.]



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Joni Mitchell Yang, Dylan Yin

but certainly important state-

ments out of the way first. Joni Mitchell is playing at the Canterbury House this weekend.

the way she uses them to convey you realize that human reality is such a full range of idea-emot- the best of strange experiences. ions. But if she looked like your grandmother and her voice House wrote upon an advertising justified by her songs alone.

rent is very immediate.

Comes for Conversation" is as Let's get the perhaps obvious good an example as any. It com-

to describe a frustrating drawn- of Friday evening with no small out relationship. But all through measure of excitement — and Seriously. There is so much the song the listener is thinking just a little fear. After all, the there. She is a beautiful woman things like "my God, that's the standing alone on stage. Her voice way it is, but why didn't I realize and her acoustic guitar are free, before that it was beautiful?" Her pure instruments in themselves; songs are the best of strange there is an additional beauty in experiences because they make

Someone at the Canterbury cracked and she only knew three sign for a radio show, "God is chords, her performance would be alive in Joni Mitchell." I wouldn't know, myself; I don't know the As a songwriter she plays Yang woman. I suspect very strongly to Bob Dylan's Yin, equalling him that God likes her for what she in richness and profusion of im- does in taking aspects of her own agery and surpassing him (until person—her voice, musical abil-'John Wesley Harding," perhaps) ity, charm (a word from the earin conciseness and direction. But ly fifties, but it fits) and aesthe sterility of analysis into cat- thetic sense, and using them to egories like these (what is "rich- formalize a tremendously insightness of imagery," anyway?) mis- ful vision of how it is to expe-

Stockholm: Thrill of Dorati

with an irony that is delicate, yet ducting a major concert perfornear-sociological in its exactness, mance. I anticipated the coming current vogue is toward the younger generation of conductors,

> youthful as he once was. My fears. I am happy to report, have proved groundless, for in the past decade Mr. Dorati appears to have lost none of the vigor, the bounce, and the drive which has characterized his technique on the podium.

> Before him lay the extremely well-drilled and uncommonly pre-Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra; behind him a fairly respectful, albeit scanty, Ann Arbor concert audience. The was pleasure for most present.

ses the prevading undercurrent of rience this human time and place, American and Swedish national the songs of either Joni or Dylan, to formalize it into an immediate anthems, Mr. Dorati led his band is chiefly an exploration in sound and in Joni's case that undercur- and affecting popular medium. of visitors in Hector Berlioz' The vision comes from Joni overture to "Benvenuto Cellini," the breathless quality already at-Perhaps one of the best words Mitchell, it is readily accessible to No great concert fare this parto describe it is joy. Not happi- you this weekend, and in terms of ticular work, but the thrill lay me at times almost sighless as ness as such, but the positive human experience, at least, it is in the delivery by the orchestra. well. unity of human experience. "He a free gift. I for one accept with From the opening strains, it was apparent that here was a group troductory passage, the compo-

and the Philadelphia Symphony as to listen to.

and Mr. Dorati is by no means as Dance") led us down yet another that I almost began to fear sweetness and tranquility person- they approached the smashing ified, particularly as Bartok per- climax. This was as close to what sonified. The dance piece is really I might refer to as incite-to-riot a set of developed variations on music as I have ever heard a single theme. Invigorating in its style, it bears resemblance to the path of contemporary developformer image only in that the ment of sonic experimentation dance ceases momentarily to re- than the one begun by Bartok turn to the tranquility of "In Blossom" before reaching its ra-

ther folksy finale. The highlight of the perforevening's work, as it turned out, mance for me was the choreographic suite "Sisyphus" by the Following the playing of the contemporary Swedish composer, Karl-Birger Blomdahl. This work and rhythm and, in addition to tributed to the Berlioz work, left

From an essentially calm in-

of musicians who possessed none sition gradually, gathers momen It had been eleven years since of the heavy-handed, almost tum, intensity, and musical combines grapes, cheese, rings, and I had last watched and listened pompous, temperament so complexity. Punctuated as it is by to the work of Antal Dorati con- mon among several of our con- the efforts of what appeared to temporary American orcnestras be full platoon of percussionists, the New York Philharmonic there is almost as much to watch

The final Dance of Life con-Bela Bartok's "Two Images" tains so many fascinating com-("In Blossom" and "Village binations of rhythm and tone musical road. The first of the whether or not Mr. Dorati could two almost unrelated pieces is actually hold his charges back as

The work is along a different

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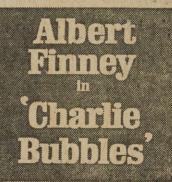
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