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"WHEN YOU COMIN BACK, RED RYDER?"

PRODUCTION NOTES

The filming of the screen version of Mark Medoff's outstanding play, "WHEN YOU COMIN BACK, RED RYDER?," started April 10 on locations in the El Paso area and Las Cruces, N.M. It was filmed entirely outside the studios, and a roadside diner at Fabens, Texas, was purchased to serve as the focal point of the story that has been written for the screen by the playwright. The screen version involves an expanded story line that is climaxed by a highly dramatic ending not seen in the stage version.

Credit for bringing the play to the screen is shared by a number of people, with Marjoe Gortner serving as the prime mover. After seeing the play in New York in 1973, he started exploring the possibility of obtaining the film rights that already had been optioned by a Chicago financier. Following a series of complex negotiations that extended over a period of years, he was successful in obtaining the property and entered into an agreement with Indianapolis real estate tycoon Mel Simon to finance the film under the banner of Mel Simon Productions, the largest independent motion picture organization currently active in Hollywood.

The film marks the first time Gortner has functioned in the dual role of producer/star, and he signed screen veteran Paul Maslansky to serve as line producer.

For the all-important selection of the director, the producers turned to the distinguished Milton Katselas, who has more than 30 Broadway plays

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to his credit, plus the screen versions of plays such as "Butterflies Are Free" and "40 Carats." He also directed the film, "Report To The Commissioner." Katselas was selected because of his demonstrated ability to make the transformation of a play to the screen while maintaining the most effective elements of the two media.

The selection of the cast also projects the concept of combining stage experience with the screen. Academy Award nominee Peter Firth was signed for the role of young Red Ryder after establishing his brilliance in both the stage and screen versions of "Equus." Tony Award winner Hal Linden ("The Rothschilds") was picked for the key role of Richard, marking his first major motion picture portrayal that followed his highly-successful "Barney Miller" television series. To play his wife, the classical violinist, Clarisse, the producers selected the talented Lee Grant, whose career has extended to not only the stage, screen and television, but to directing films as well. Pat Hingle, another veteran performer in all three media, was signed to serve as the old cripple, Lyle.

Gortner's fascination with the character of the suicidal and sadistic Teddy was responsible for his determination to bring the play to the screen. As the central character in the story, he gets the opportunity to demonstrate his abilities as a dramatic actor seen earlier in productions such as "The Marcus-Nelson Murders," the feature production that served as the pilot for the "Kojak" series, and "Earthquake," in which he portrayed the psychotic National Guardsman.

Other members of the cast include Candy Clark, the young actress introduced as the ding-a-ling blonde in "American Graffiti," and most

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recently seen as Robert Mitchum's co-star in "The Big Sleep." She plays Cheryl, Teddy's hippie girlfriend caught up in his self-destruction. For the role of Ceil, Red Ryder's pathetic mother, the actress selected was Audra Lindley, who is marking her first dramatic screen role after a long career in films and television. She is currently appearing as the randy landlady in the hit series "Three's Company." Newcomer Stephanie Faracy, whose screen credits include "Straight Time" with Dustin Hoffman and "Heaven Can Wait" with Warren Beatty, was set for the role of the plump waitress, Angel, who loves Red. Bill McKinney plays the owner of the diner.

Behind the cameras were a talented group of technicians, including Jules Brenner as director of cinematography, Richard Chew as editor, and Ted Haworth as production designer. To provide the concept of the group of people being trapped in the isolated diner in the middle of New Mexico, set designer Mark Poll and set decorator Bob Benton combined their talents. In order to use the existing diner purchased for the principal set, it was necessary to rip it apart and rebuild it so that the walls could be removed when necessary for the placement of the cameras.

The film, a Melvin Simon Presentation of a Marjoe Gortner Production, will go into release in the fall of 1978.

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