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Dirty Hands
Neighborhood Theatres

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Romy Schneider appears on a lawn in a frieze of steamy nakedness, her buttocks a landing pad for the crimson kite of an eagerly rapacious neighbor. **Rod Steiger** enters grovelling; he might be in the climactic act of a Williams

play by way of Elia Kazan. The quicksilver plot twists and regroups and overwhelms the faint spoor of real guilt and betrayal beneath a farce of fake crimes. The process work is shoddy in key transitions, and the supporting roles are both nondescript and sapped of their individuality by the seemingly inescapable bane of weak dubbing in international co-productions.

Dirty Hands comes slashing out at you like a deranged parody of a **Claude Chabrol** crime-and-passion specialty. Although the director never got a handle on the material with anything near the consummate control he exercised in some of his recent New York releases—in the exuberance of *La Rupture* and in the rigor of *Just Before Nightfall*, which were also from the same pool of pot-boiler literature—he keeps chewing on it until it's ragged and messy and excruciating. Some of the same flaws appeared in earlier Chabrol attempts to go commercial and international, such as *The Champagne Murders* and *Ten Days' Wonder*, but *Dirty Hands* sprawls disastrously so far beyond Chabrol's squeezing that he should probably have chucked it fast by the boxoffice and not jeopardized his trademark of delirious swoons and ecstatic excesses.

T.A.