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Author as Screenwriter



Buffalo Bill and the Indians

USA 1976

Director: Robert Altman

Production Company: United Artists/David Suskind
Production

Producer: Robert Altman

Screenplay: Alan Rudolph, Robert Altman, based
on play by Arthur Kopit

Cinematography: Paul Lohmann

Editors: Peter Appleton, Dennis Hill

Sound: Richard Portman, Jim Web, Chris
McLaughlin

Music: Richard Baskin

Principal Cast: Paul Newman, Joel Gray, Kevin
McCarthy, Harvey Keitel, Geraldine Chaplin

120 minutes

Overtly political theatre in the United States has always had a rough time of it with the American critics, so it is a pleasure to report that the merits of perhaps Arthur Kopit's best play, **Indians**, triumphed over the innate prejudices of the reviewers and the theatre-going public. It is an even greater pleasure to report that the people who made the movie version of this play (led by director Robert Altman, they retitled the work **Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson** – which is saying a mouthful) remained true to its spirit while scarcely using a single word of the original playtext. The final pleasure to report from this bouquet is that the playwright, far from being disturbed by the filmmaker's disregard of his text, enjoys the film and approves of the cinematic translation.

Arthur Kopit, who was born in 1937 in New York, has written a number of important works for the stage, including "Wings" and "Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad: A Tragifarcie in a Bastard French Tradition" (which is a Joe E. Brown mouthfull!). His most recent work is "Nine" which for some months now has been the hottest show on Broadway and won Tony Awards for Best Costumes, Best Direction, Best Featured Actress, Best Score, and Best Musical.