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## SR GOES TO THE MOVIES

### Peyton Chase

**I**F NAMES alone were a guarantor of an excellent movie, *The Chase*, a production of Columbia Pictures Corporation, would have to be ranked among the best. Merely glance at the impressive line-up:

Producer: Sam Spiegel, generally regarded as the best of the category; a man whose films include *Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Suddenly Last Summer*.

Director: Arthur Penn, noted for his direction of the successful stage and screen versions of *The Miracle Worker*; films include *The Left-Handed Gun* and *Mickey One*.

Writer: Lillian Hellman, considered America's leading woman playwright, Pulitzer Prize-winner and all that. (Her screenplay is based on the novel and play by Horton Foote, no slouch himself.)

Star: Marlon Brando, almost universally thought of as America's finest actor, despite considerable evidence to the contrary.

Cast: Includes E. G. Marshall, Jane Fonda, Janice Rule, Robert Redford, James Fox, and Henry Hull. While none of these can ensure a picture's box-office success, they tend, on the whole, to bring to it an aura of "class."

Having seen *The Chase*, I must sadly report that all of the above "names" have failed us. They have managed to turn out an exaggerated, violent, unintentionally ludicrous account of a Southwestern town losing its collective mind, the lurid events all telescoped into a twenty-four-hour period during which the following occurs:

A young man, formerly a resident of the town, breaks jail, heads homeward, now suspected of being a murderer along the way.

The sheriff (Marlon Brando) tries to find the convict, first in line of duty, then to save him from mob violence.

The town tycoon (E. G. Marshall) attempts to tamper with the sheriff's dedication, meets failure.

A young vice president of the tycoon's bank becomes guilt-ridden over having foisted a bad reputation on the convict.

Meanwhile, his wife (Janice Rule) carries on drunkenly with another of the bank's vice presidents.

That vice president's wife is an utter drunk and, knowing what her husband is up to, looks around for sexual activity of her own.

The son of the tycoon (James Fox) not only drinks too much, but is not in love with his beautiful wife (Diana Hyland), and loves instead the wife (Jane Fonda) of the convict.

Decadent parties take place all over town, residents insult Negroes who walk the streets, an old fellow (Henry Hull) snoops around with his wife, a malicious gossip. Led by one of the bank vice presidents, otherwise respectable citizens beat up Sheriff Brando to within an inch of his life. Brando makes a remarkable recovery, tries to protect the convict in a junkyard, which is set afire by a hell-raising mob. Having completely failed to maintain law and order and to protect the convict, Brando manages to give the impression that decency has at last won the day.

That's a brief summary of the events, and, if you like incident, be assured there's a good deal more in the film. The film also has a lot of the kind of primitive social consciousness people used to think of as bold and courageous in the Thirties. May we expect some good acting? Well, Brando is about up to his recent par through the first half, but seems to

be overcome by the general hysteria as the film proceeds. (Argie Dickinson, as his wife, by the way, is one of the few members of the cast who manages to give a restrained, reasonable facsimile of a human being through her performance.) Sex-crazed through the whole film is Janice Rule, who gives the role not only her all, but a good deal more. Net effect: parody. Same for E. G. Marshall (and he, with Henry Hull, gets most of the unintentional laughs). Jane Fonda gets an interesting acting twist by combining an Eastern finishing-school accent with what I guess is small-town Texan. James Fox, a British actor, has the most unusual Texas accent of all—slurred, sort of. As the convict, Robert Redford has several poetic moments, and runs a lot. Miriam Hopkins as his mother—well, best to avert one's embarrassed eyes from the screen when she's on. The moral of the film is that a dull, depraved, corrupt town will behave in a crisis just like a dull, depraved, corrupt town.

—HOLLIS ALPERT.