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RECORDED PICTURE COMPANY
AND
ZENITH
PRESENT

A NICOLAS ROEG FILM

INSIGNIFICANCE

STARRING

GARY BUSEY
MICHAEL EMIL
THERESA RUSSELL

WITH

WILL SAMPSON

as the Indian

AND

TONY CURTIS

as the Senator

IN COMPETITION
CANNES '85

HE NEEDED ONE FIGURE
TO COMPLETE THE EQUATION.
SHE HAD IT.

INSIGNIFICANCE

Music by STANLEY MYERS Associate Producer JOYCE HERLIHY Executive Producer ALEXANDER STUART
Written by TERRY JOHNSON Produced by JEREMY THOMAS Directed by NICOLAS ROEG
Sound track album available on Island records and tapes



A ZENITH
PRODUCTION



INSIGNIFICANCE

A ZENITH PRODUCTION
in association with
THE RECORDED PICTURE COMPANY

THE CAST

The Ballplayer	GARY BUSEY
The Senator	TONY CURTIS
The Professor	MICHAEL EMIL
The Actress	THERESA RUSSELL
The Elevator Attendant	WILL SAMPSON

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	NICOLAS ROEG
Producer	JEREMY THOMAS
Executive Producer	ALEXANDER STUART
Screenplay by	TERRY JOHNSON
Associate Producer	JOYCE HERLIHY
Director of Photography	PETER HANNAN
Production Designer	DAVID BROCKHURST
Costume Designer	SHUNA HARWOOD
First Assistant Director	MICHAEL ZIMBRICH
Sound Mixer	PAUL LE MARE
Editor	TONY LAWSON

PRESS

Denise Breton,
25 Rue du Faubourg St. Honore,
75008 Paris

IN CANNES

Hotel Carlton
Room 545

Black and white stills available by number from Denise Breton.



*— Because of being famous,
everywhere I go people fall
over themselves to be with
me, like a troupe of clowns
chasing an old automobile.*

The Professor

*— Because of fame, everything
I do develops into a ridiculous
comedy.*

The Actress

INSIGNIFICANCE

*Short Synopsis
and
Production Notes*

A New York night in 1953. Fans crowd the sidewalks and the famous hide out in bars. Four 20th Century icons are dropped into a melting pot of the sexual and the cerebral.

INSIGNIFICANCE is not burdened with any literal truths. Its characters are fictional, albeit suggestive of famous people.

Accepted notions are reversed. An Actress demonstrates the Theory of Relativity. A Professor shows off his legs. A Senator's sweaty impotence is shoved up against a Ballplayer's psychotic tenderness.

But locked inside them all are other things. Memories. Childhood and compromise. Bubblegum heroes and profound fears. Hiroshima nudges against New York. 1953 slides into 1985.

NICOLAS ROEG is one of the world's most gifted and original film-makers. With just six films he has redefined the frontiers of cinema language almost singlehanded. INSIGNIFICANCE is a further exploration of his singular vision of humanity and its attendant mysteries. This is the first time he has worked from a source as complete as a play. The fearful symmetry and the improbable conflict at the heart of INSIGNIFICANCE offer him an unaccustomed framework on which to stretch his imagination. The crosscurrents of time and space flow through the hotel room as devastatingly as they did in 'Bad Timing'.

JEREMY THOMAS is the Producer. From Skolimowski to The Sex Pistols, Thomas has consistently fuelled his projects with almost superhuman energy. His position as the most enterprising and exciting British independent producer is unassailable. INSIGNIFICANCE is his third film with Nicolas Roeg.

TERRY JOHNSON is the Writer. His agile imagination has encompassed everything from dead myths to live dodos . . . INSIGNIFICANCE is his first film.

INSIGNIFICANCE recreates archetypes from a source of inspiration then defuses the myth to reveal the people underneath. It was essential to avoid a lookalike parade despite the fact that the characters suggest figures of American mythology. Although shot in England (with a week on location in New York), it was logical and desirable to cast American actors in the roles.

TONY CURTIS plays The Senator. His collaborators have included Jack Lemmon, Marilyn Monroe, Burt Lancaster, Henry Fonda, Billy Wilder, Stanley Kubrick and Elia Kazan. He has Hollywood written on his heart.

THERESA RUSSELL plays The Actress. In just eight years, she has achieved the reputation of being one of the most sensual and original actresses on film. She has played a gangster's girlfriend, a Watergate wife and the daughter of the richest man in the world. This is her first comedy.

MICHAEL EMIL plays The Professor. He made his debut in a two-hour film talking about his favourite subject. He has since moved from sitting duck to Karen Black's boyfriend. He brings to his role a well-adjusted neurosis and an encyclopaedic knowledge of sex.

GARY BUSEY plays The Ballplayer. He describes himself as 'a Rocker'. Apart from acting, he has sung and fought bears for a living. In his career he has played a surfer, a geek and Buddy Holly. His versatility, like his demeanour, is occasionally awesome.

WILL SAMPSON plays The Elevator Attendant. A Muskogee Indian, he is a painter, artist, rodeo rider and doer of many things. After a year's search, he was located for his first film, "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest". Like the Chief, he has never looked back.

INSIGNIFICANCE is produced by Jeremy Thomas for Zenith Productions and The Recorded Picture Company. It was filmed in London and on location in New York.

INSIGNIFICANCE

Full Synopsis

A sticky night in New York, 1953. Above a street grating, an Actress feeds a hungry crowd a glimpse of her underwear as her skirt billows up around her ears. But everything is relative. They see God. She sees a bunch of jerks.

In a New York bar, a fat, sweaty Senator watches baseball on TV. But his grubby mind is on higher matters — such as persuading an old, barefoot Professor to testify against the Communist Menace.

The middle of the night, and the Actress visits the Professor's hotel room, to convince him of her own unique grasp of the Theory of Relativity. He shows her the difference between knowledge and understanding. He also shows her his legs. And despite his age and protestations, they almost share a bed together.

But time bends. And just as she cannot shut out the compromised past which made her what she is, he cannot escape the horror his work has spawned. Hiroshima nudges against New York. And someone bangs against the hotel room door.

It's her husband, an ex-Ballplayer with his own claim to fame: he has featured in thirteen bubblegum card series, as opposed to the Professor's one (Chewy Fruits Great Scientific Achievements). Because the Professor initially answers him in German, he can only conclude that his wife has finally slept with the delicatessen!

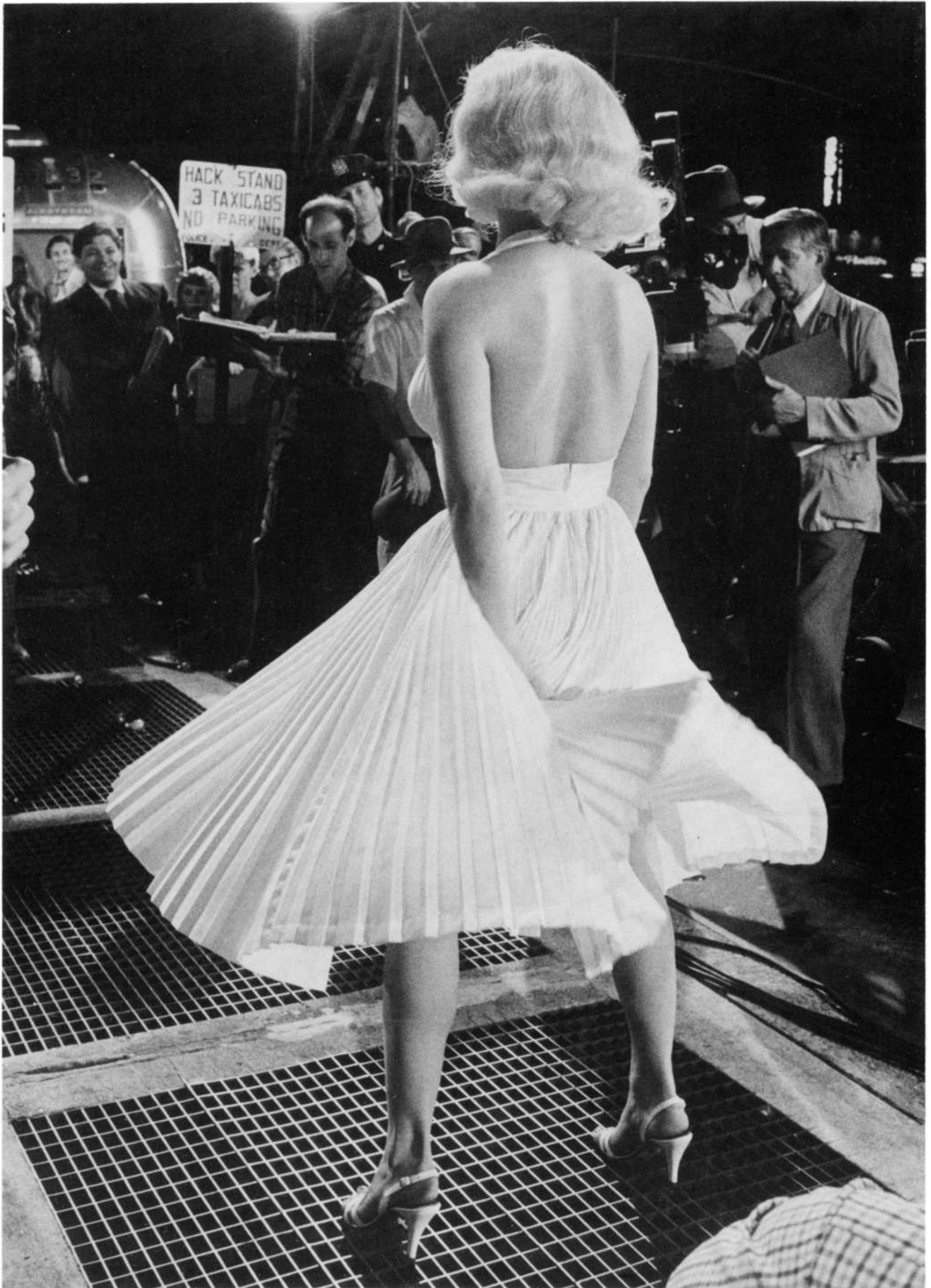
The Actress frustrates the Ballplayer utterly. There is a tenderness between them which the outside world would never understand. The trouble is, they don't either! She wants a child. He wants the one they already had. She is haunted by a smear of blood. She thinks she might be pregnant. . . .

Dawn hits New York, and the Actress is unconscious in the Professor's bed. The Senator returns with a warrant and mistakes her for a prostitute. He wants to take the Professor's calculus. The Actress won't let him. But the Professor simply throws the pages out of the window, to rain like stray thoughts over indifferent streets.

The Senator has struck the Actress, and she miscarries. Her marriage to the Ballplayer is over, anyway. The Professor meets a Cherokee elevator operator who tells him that he is the centre of the Universe.

But the Professor doesn't want to be the centre of anything. He has destroyed his work four times already — each time he finished. He is haunted by the knowledge that the bomb burned children.

The Actress assures him it could never happen again — not unless they could find a way to blow up the people and leave the real estate standing. The awful truth of her answer is devastating. The Professor freezes. The room flies apart. A wild hot wind lifts her skirt. Hiroshima and New York are side by side.



*"The story of life,
death, sex
and the universe
. . . relatively
speaking."*





TONY CURTIS The Senator

Short Biography

Tony Curtis is Hollywood.

His more than fifty films have demonstrated his capacity to surprise. His collaborators have included Jack Lemmon, Marilyn Monroe, Burt Lancaster, Henry Fonda, Billy Wilder, Stanley Kubrick and Elia Kazan.

He once named an oil company after a shell.

Films include:

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS	1957 — Alexander Mackendrick
THE DEFIANT ONES	1958 — Stanley Kramer
SOME LIKE IT HOT	1959 — Billy Wilder
SPARTACUS	1960 — Stanley Kubrick
THE BOSTON STRANGLER	1968 — Richard Fleischer
THE LAST TYCOON	1976 — Elia Kazan

TONY CURTIS The Senator

Long Biography

Born Bernard Schwarz in 1925, Tony Curtis is a man of two names but many talents. En route from Bronx kid to pin-up he has worn suits, sandals and a dress; has swashed a buckle here and spat a epigram there. A man who is to Hollywood what Einstein is to Relativity.

And now he plays The Senator in INSIGNIFICANCE working for the first time with Director Nicolas Roeg.

Having been raised in Hell's Kitchen and cut his teeth on the streets of Manhattan's Lower East Side, he entered the US Navy as a submariner. After perfecting his Cary Grant impersonation watching GUNGA DIN on board, he was invalided out following an accident that temporarily paralysed both his legs. But his sense of humour remained intact.

A master of comedy both light and dark, he escaped from chains and coffins in HOUDINI (1953), struck fire for Burt Lancaster in SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS (1957), and performed the funniest drag act on screen in SOME LIKE IT HOT (1959). A pretty face and more besides. THE DEFIANT ONES (1958), THE BOSTON STRANGLER (1968) and LEPKE (1974) showed him winning his spurs as a serious actor.

As The Senator in INSIGNIFICANCE, he stretches his elastic talent even further.

TONY CURTIS has worked with the finest directors in cinema, from Kubrick to Kazan, Wilder to Carol Reed. Now he takes on his most challenging role in Nicolas Roeg's INSIGNIFICANCE. As the greasy, unscrupulous Senator, Curtis takes everything he has learnt in and about Hollywood and condenses it into a performance of sinister and dynamic energy. Based on a notorious '50s figure, The Senator displays certain aspects of one Sidney Falco in THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS.

"I think the similarities to Falco lie in the intensity of the man and in his glibness," says Curtis, "in his ability to change and take anything that is given to him and turn it into something positive for himself. I am not that involved politically and never have been. I don't remember too much about the period. There was a lot of acrimony and anger, disappointment and bitterness amongst a lot of people pertaining to Hollywood. But it wasn't just Hollywood.

"INSIGNIFICANCE takes four mythical characters and plays them off against each other.

"There is no similarity between us and them. It isn't the real stuff. It is twenty or thirty years later, it has different connotations. The '80s are different from the '60s and the '50s so it is hard to approximate that time. What is easier to do is to take these people out of their time and put them together because they weren't together. It is that interesting combination that makes the material work so nicely."

Heroes and villains. Comedy and drama. Tony Curtis has switched from light to dark and back again. The dividing line does not exist for him.

"Doing a comedy or doing a drama is the same thing. The emphasis may be on another syllable but that is all it is. You are as close to a joke as you are to a drama."

INSIGNIFICANCE is a case in point. A film without the boundaries of comedy and drama.

"That is a very interesting aspect of the film. We have brought some comedy to it because the ironic thing about drama is that it is funny. It's bloody funny. You can't play people just cut and dried heavies or comedians. They must have a little flavour of both together."

Tony Curtis acts, writes, paints and was once given away in a competition. He knows all about Hollywood madness. The lady who won him wanted a refrigerator. Enough material there to fill several volumes of autobiography. But he has always resisted, preferring to relate his experiences in fiction like KID ANDREW CODY AND JULIE SPARROW.

"If you are dealing with biography you have to deal with reality and a lot of people are nervous about reality. It is someone prepared to talk about what happened in their lives and showing other people in a good light or a bad light. I'm not interested in showing people good or bad. If there is some pertinent part of my life that is what I want to express. As far as painting and making objects like collages is concerned, they are another way of expressing myself and are not necessarily made to sell. I make them because I have to make them."

Tony Curtis has seen both sides of the glittering coin of Hollywood and sometimes walked along its edge. A true survivor, he brings to the screen a treasure chest of experience that few are heir to.

"You know you don't learn in education what it's like to be in the gutter and what it's like to be in the marketplace. You learn that in living. Living experience is enough to do that."



THERESA RUSSELL — The Actress

Theresa Russell brings a great sense of excitement to the screen.

She is widely acknowledged as one of the most sensual and original actresses in film.

Working opposite actors such as Robert de Niro, Dustin Hoffman, Art Garfunkel and Gene Hackman, she has created strong but often misused women willing to take their lives to emotional extremes.

This is her first comedy.

Films include:

THE LAST TYCOON	1976 — Elia Kazan
STRAIGHT TIME	1978 — Ula Grosbard
BLIND AMBITION	1979 TV Series
BAD TIMING	1979 — Nicolas Roeg
EUREKA	1983 — Nicolas Roeg
THE RAZOR'S EDGE	1984 — John Byrum

THERESA RUSSELL — The Actress

Long Biography

Tough and fragile. Diamond and porcelain. Theresa Russell has an exceptional and unusual ambivalence. Her shimmering vulnerability is wrapped around a spine of durable steel. She is a true screen paradox. A cynical innocent.

Which makes her perfect for The Actress in Nicolas Roeg's INSIGNIFICANCE. A woman trying to hold herself together as the world around her rips itself apart.

She was born in San Diego, California, on March 20, 1957. Her first ambition was to be a large animal veterinarian. Instead of training to cure giraffes of laryngitis she knocked on the door of Lee Strasberg's Studio to discover if she could make it as an actress. Two years later, after going through the hoops of agents and producers, she landed a role in Elia Kazan's THE LAST TYCOON (1976). Without an agent.

She has since played opposite the screen's most exciting male talents. Dustin Hoffman in STRAIGHT TIME (1978), Martin Sheen in BLIND AMBITION (1979 — TV) and Gene Hackman in EUREKA (1983). In Nicolas Roeg's BAD TIMING (1979) she tore the screen apart with a portrait of feral sensuality unmatched in the cinema.

She plays The Actress in INSIGNIFICANCE. An idol who has stepped down from the plinth.

"I resisted playing her as just a dumb blonde. I tried to achieve moments where everybody knows she is putting it on for the outside world. It's a complete facade."

In eight years of work in the cinema, Theresa Russell has become one of the screen's most sensual and strikingly original performers. She has consistently sought and located an emotion level deep within herself to produce characters of substance and shadow, women whose lives exist on the brink of experience. Now she is having fun. INSIGNIFICANCE is something like a comedy.

"I love it. I'm really thrilled about it. I thought it was going to be a lot more difficult. Actually, it's not. You feel a bit left-footed for a while because I'm so used to being intense and dramatic. Comedy is great fun but it feels really strange until you get the measure of it."

Apart from the challenge of playing her first role in a comedy, she also had to cope with the task of demonstrating the General Theory of Relativity to The Professor.

"My stepfather explained Relativity to me when I was nine. He was an amateur astronomer and he did it through the stars. One night he took me out and said 'Do you see those stars up there? By the time the light from them reaches you they are already going to be gone.' He told me how light takes time to travel. He didn't say it takes one hundred and eighty-six thousand, two hundred and eighty-two point two miles per second, but he gave me the general idea. So I did understand it before I read the script, but I would have explained it like that because that is the way it was told to me."

Trains and balloons are fun.

She is also the youngest member of the cast. Born within three years of the sixties, she has no actual memory of the fifties.

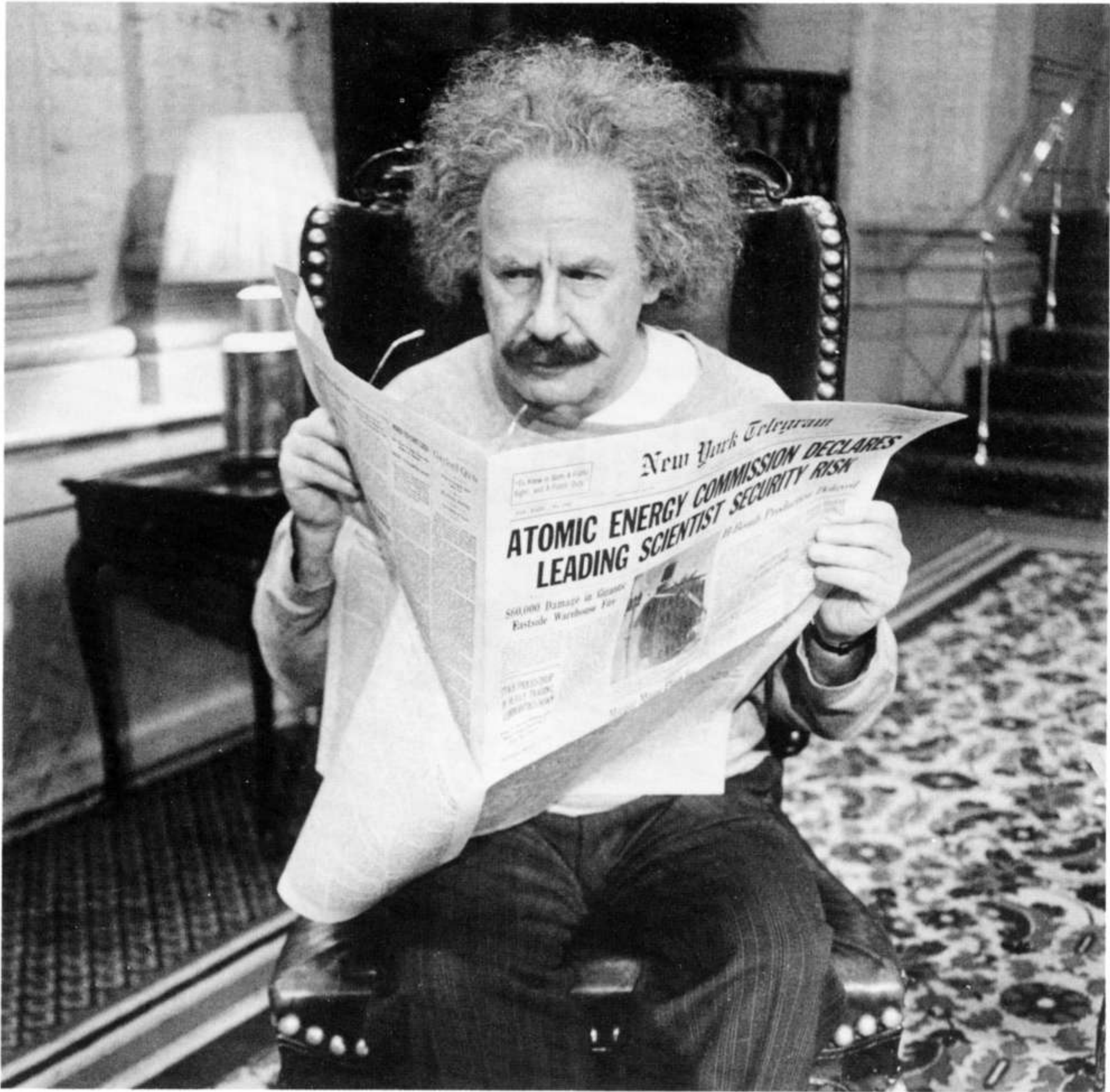
"I always remembered how I hated fifties movies. They all seemed so bland then."

It is difficult to reconcile Mom's apple pie with burned children. The strange loves and comic reversals in INSIGNIFICANCE are underpinned with reminders of the dawn of the nuclear age.

"The complete horror and beguilement about even discussing the matter with a serious face is beyond me. Having a son has reinforced my feelings obviously. Before it was anger and frustration. Now I have the added ingredient of sadness. A very deep sadness. Because the joy of life is absolutely phenomenal in him."

INSIGNIFICANCE is more than just a nuclear age comedy. The Actress is more than just an icon. Beneath the platinum hair and dazzling smile that invites every man, there lurks a girl trying to survive a man-made myth and a man-made horror. Her unborn child awaits the light and spontaneous combustion. INSIGNIFICANCE is the death of life and the birth of hope.

"I just hope it will make people who don't normally think about such things really think about them. Really serious things are said in such a lighthearted and funny way that people will be laughing at themselves if they hold these beliefs."



MICHAEL EMIL — The Professor

Short Biography

Michael Emil has an obsession with numbers.

His three films to date have all been directed by Henry Jaglom, and have captured a freewheeling New York neurosis which no amount of vitamin pills could cure.

In his last, he dated Karen Black.

Films include:

TRACKS	1976 — Henry Jaglom
SITTING DUCKS	1980 — Henry Jaglom
CAN SHE BAKE A CHERRY PIE?	1984 — Henry Jaglom

MICHAEL EMIL — The Professor

Long Biography

Michael Emil is an exceedingly healthy man. He can do seventy-five press-ups in a row and hang upside down for hours. He once talked for two and a half hour's non-stop about sex. Henry Jaglom filmed it.

As The Professor in Nicolas Roeg's INSIGNIFICANCE he prefers to sleep in the bathtub.

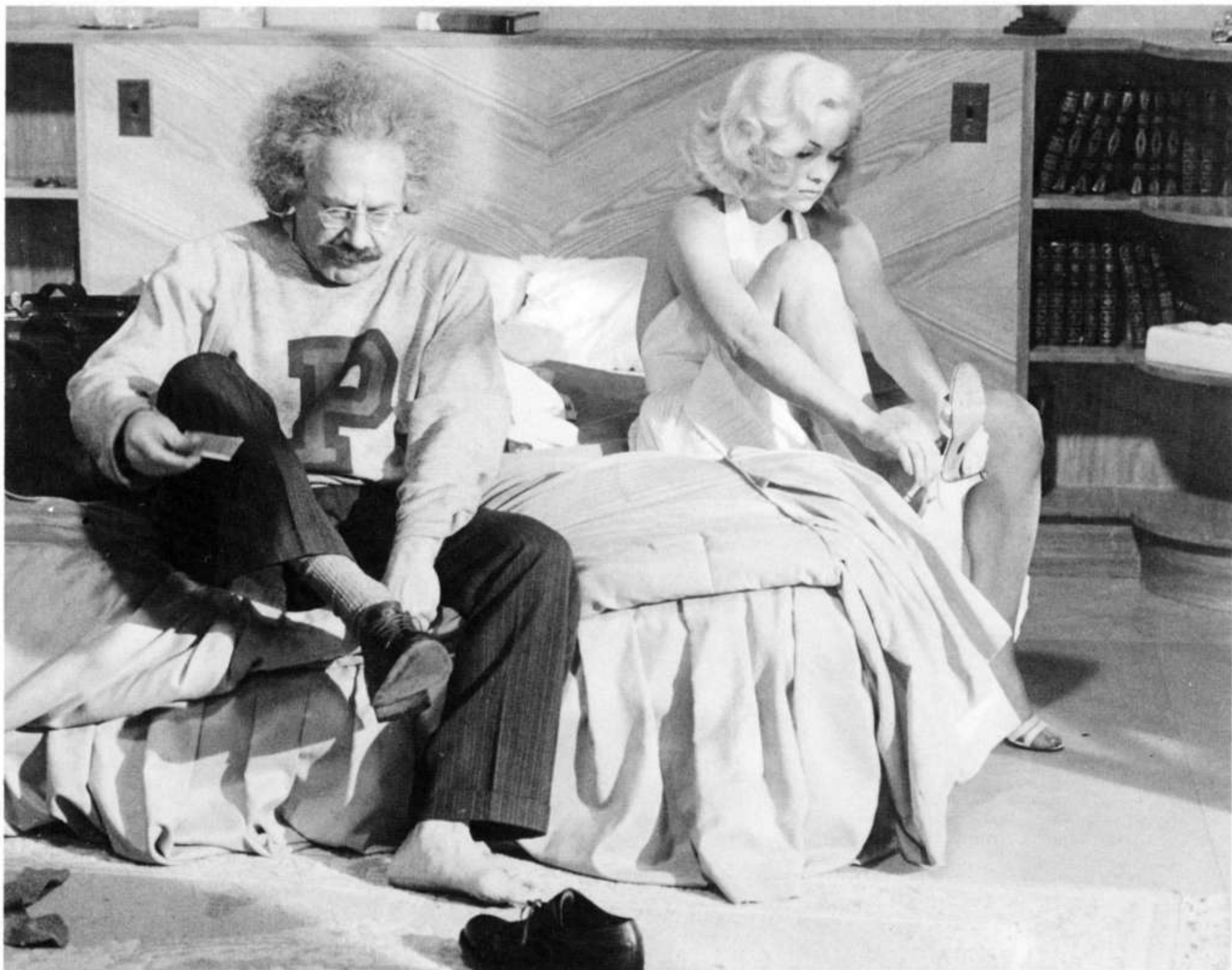
INSIGNIFICANCE is his fourth film and his first in a disguise. The New York neurotics he played in the previous films were largely based on his own persona.

Born in Danzig, Poland, he arrived in New York at the age of seven. Schooled in the city he grew up with two conflicting aims; to be a successful businessman and an artist. After living in Israel for a number of years he visited Los Angeles where Henry Jaglom asked him to produce a movie. He agreed. Later, when Jaglom met him in Israel, he was interviewed on film for two and a half hours.

That was the beginning. In TRACKS (1976) he argued with Zack Norman. In SITTING DUCKS (1980) he was running from the mob with the same man. In CAN SHE BAKE A CHERRY PIE? (1984) he had fun with Karen Black and an electro-cardiograph. All three films were directed by Henry Jaglom.

Now he dons a wig, glasses and sandals to play The Professor in INSIGNIFICANCE. He substitutes sex for science. His guilt is incalculable.

Piles of calculus litter his hotel suite. A famous actress wants to go to bed with him. He rolls up his trousers and has nightmares of a remembered holocaust. Calculus and dreams alike fly out of the window. After four films and a burgeoning cult following, Michael Emil creates the character of The Professor in INSIGNIFICANCE.



"When I heard that Nicolas Roeg was interested in me for this movie I was very excited because I happened to have loved every single movie of his. They all had a very powerful imagination and something that was very effective."

INSIGNIFICANCE is Nicolas Roeg's first comedy. It is Emil's fourth. With just four films and a little sporadic training behind him, he was worried about his ability to cope with the significant role of The Professor.

"I wondered how difficult it would be. If I was playing a lawyer or a criminal or a psychiatrist or a businessman or something, I could easily have been with some slight variation in my background or personality it would have been easy. But to be a famous Professor in the world is something totally and incredibly different. And on top of that a kind of comic Professor because the whole thing is a comedy. Yet looking at Nic Roeg's movies I thought that this is a real challenge for me and if I was going to prove myself then this was the occasion to do it."

He turned down a major role in a big budget film to work on INSIGNIFICANCE.

"Now that I have done it I am convinced it was absolutely the right choice for me."

Emil brings to the character of The Professor a personal paradox that reflects perfectly the internal dilemma of the scientific genius and logical man.

"I always had a conflict in my personality in that intellectually and logically I was a businessman but emotionally I was like an artist."

He is an irrepressible talker. His favourite subject is himself and his abundant neurosis. Yet for a man so full of obsessions as he claims to be about sex, health and the body in question, he is a remarkably well-adjusted man. More so than The Professor, who spends years working on a complex calculus only to destroy it each time he completes it. For The Professor, time has stopped at 8.15. . . .

"I am a person who is always worried about something. I worry about getting old and decrepit. I pride myself on being very physically fit and very strong and very sexually capable; able to enjoy all the things that young people do. On the other hand I am aware of the objective reality of age."

The Professor doesn't want to be the centre of anything. His calculations can only mean more destruction, more devastation. His responsibility is absolute. He could literally stop the world turning. It's a tough act to perform. Michael Emil does it with ease.

"Everyone told me not to go to acting school. They warned me it would take away my natural ability. I decided to go anyway. Then even the teacher didn't want to teach me for the same reason."

GARY BUSEY — The Ballplayer

Short Biography

Gary Busey doesn't often wear glasses.

His roles usually have about an equal mix of wildness and winning charm. But it was his portrayal of rock 'n' roll misfit Buddy Holly that attracted enormous attention for his ability almost to transform himself physically into a character.

He has worked with Dustin Hoffman, Theresa Russell, Barbara Streisand, Michael Cimino and Clint Eastwood.

Films include:

THUNDERBOLT AND LIGHTFOOT	1974 — Michael Cimino
A STAR IS BORN	1977 — Frank Pierson
STRAIGHT TIME	1978 — Ulu Grosbard
BIG WEDNESDAY	1978 — John Milius
THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY	1978 — Steve Rash
THE BEAR	1983 —



GARY BUSEY — The Ballplayer

Long Biography

Gary Busey's roles usually have about an equal mix of wildness and winning charm. With a buzzsaw voice and a ballplayer's build his qualities are more tangible than ethereal.

He was born in Goose Creek, Texas, on Black Duck Bay thirty miles east of Houston in 1944. His mother is Irish and his father is a Delaware Indian from Oklahoma. A mighty powerful combination. The family migrated north and landed in Tulsa when Gary was in the fourth grade and a committed rocker.

He studied everything in theatre from The Greeks to The Absurdist, from Shakespeare to Samuel Beckett. By night he sat behind the drumkit of his rock and roll band. He took the band to California where he studied drama under James Best.

He has appeared regularly in films and television for fifteen years. His portrayal of Buddy Holly in THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY (1978) attracted enormous attention for his ability to transform himself physically into a character. Previous credits include THUNDERBOLT AND LIGHTFOOT (1974), A STAR IS BORN (1977), STRAIGHT TIME (1978) and BIG WEDNESDAY (1978), the greatest surfing movie ever made. He played a geek in CARNEY (1979) and a cowboy in BARBAROSA (1980) opposite Willie Nelson. In THE BEAR he stars as legendary football coach, Bear Bryant, who died in 1983.

He has worn big hats more often than glasses in many television series and made-for-TV movies.

He was the last man to die in GUNSMOKE.

Now Gary Busey plays The Ballplayer in Nicolas Roeg's INSIGNIFICANCE. It is the first time he has worked in England.

"The script arrived and it said, 'England'. It said 'London, New York' and it had these four great characters. It said, 'Nicolas Roeg'. That was enough for me. I was on my way. I've been wanting to work with someone like him for years. Since I started I have always wanted to work with one of the masters."

Like the rest of the cast, Busey also found the quality of the script an opportunity he couldn't refuse.

"I sure liked the way it was written. The screenplay was lovely. It was like Absurd Theatre. One of my main textbooks a few years ago was Zen and the Art of Archery. It talked about how to put yourself in a place of purposelessness. INSIGNIFICANCE hit the centre of the target each time."

A decade or so ago, Busey might have found himself cast as the perennial heavy in westerns on screens both big and small. Thanks to more imaginative casting these days, he has worked his way through an astonishing variety of characters. Now as The Ballplayer in INSIGNIFICANCE, he gets a chance to explore his larger-than-life persona even further. The has-been star of thirteen bubblegum card series and misrouted husband of The Actress, The Ballplayer is a lamb in wolf's clothes, a sad and forlorn reminder of a once glorious past.

"It seems like the things you do for money don't work out quite as nice as the things you do for fun or love. This turned out to be quite a roller-coaster ride. Jeremy Thomas, the producer, said something pretty neat. He said that he believes that whoever ends up coming to the project — those are the ones who are meant to be involved. It's like water seeking its own level."

He refers to himself as 'a rocker'. Most of his memories of the fifties are couched in rock and roll terms. When he began playing drums in High School in 1960 his heroes were Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Fats Domino and Buddy Knox. He formed a group called The Rubber Band in 1964 and has been playing and touring ever since. He continues to compose rock and roll songs of haunting vulnerability.

His musical stage name is Teddy Jack Eddy.

One of the wellsprings of Busey's talent is his boundless energy. His razor-sharp repartee and machine-gun verbals can be harnessed to any high-octane vehicle — he more or less created his own dialogue in D.C.CAB (1983 a.k.a. STREET FLEET) — though he can restrain his talent for adlibbing with the right script. INSIGNIFICANCE was such a script and he puts in a performance of persuasive power.

With nearly twenty films behind him, many for first division American directors like Michael Cimino, Roger Corman and John Milius, Busey now finds himself in the curious position of playing an American sports hero in a British movie. Yet The Ballplayer in INSIGNIFICANCE, despite his mythical status, is one of the most affecting performances of his career.

Armageddon may come to New York but Hollywood babbles on.

"There are only three things you need to do if you want to make it in Hollywood: learn how to make your own salad, learn how to fall in slow motion and learn how to cry. If you can do those three things you can make it in showbiz."

"And never trust a man with three first names."

WILL SAMPSON — The Elevator Attendant

Short Biography

Will Sampson is a Muskogee Indian.

His triumphant performance at the end of ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST was one of the most affecting moments in a memorable film.

Now he's Cherokee — and travelling vertically.

Films include:

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST	1975 — Milos Forman
THE OUTLAW JOSEY WALES	1976 — Clint Eastwood
ORCA — KILLER WHALE	1977 — Michael Anderson
WHITE BUFFALO	1977 — J. Lee Thompson



WILL SAMPSON — The Elevator Attendant

Long Biography

Will Sampson is a Muskogee Indian. The Muskogee People originated in Georgia where there are many creeks and streams. For many moons the people of the Muskogee tribe have been known as Creek Indians. In 1832, the Muskogee were removed from their homeland to Oklahoma along a route that is known to them as The Trail of Tears.

Born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma in 1933, Sampson is a man of myriad talents. A painter and artist, he has at various times taught art, ridden rodeo broncs and trained race-horses.

In 1975 he made his screen debut as the Chief in Milos Forman's ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST. He has worked non-stop in films, television and the theatre ever since and has become a leading consultant on films involving the American Indians.

In Nicolas Roeg's INSIGNIFICANCE Sampson plays the enigmatic and inscrutable Elevator Attendant.

His film appearances include ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST (1975), THE OUTLAW JOSEY WALES (1976), ORCA — KILLER WHALE (1977) and WHITE BUFFALO (1977). Television viewers have seen him in series like VEGAS, FROM HERE TO ETERNITY, THE YELLOW ROSE and a variety of Movies of the Week. In the theatre he has played in ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST at Burt Reynold's Dinner Theatre and BLACK ELK SPEAKS in Tulsa and on tour. He will shortly be seen in the film version of BLACK ELK SPEAKS, playing the title role.

Will Sampson changes tribes from Creek to Cherokee for his role in INSIGNIFICANCE. The Cherokee believe that wherever they are, there is the centre of the Universe. As the Elevator Attendant, he travels vertically across several planes. His silent wisdom might be compared with that of the Chief in ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST.

"They're on a parallel. He has all the answers. Somehow he has lost his tradition for a moment but regains something at the end."

The film world had to wait some time to find him. When ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST was being cast a friend who announced rodeo shows suggested him to the producers as the perfect Chief. They searched for him for a year and found him in Washington State. The rest is history.

"It was a great way to start out. At the top. Academy Awards all over the place."

Despite almost ten years' constant work as an actor, he has turned down many roles.

"If I found the scripts were in any way detrimental to the American culture I turned them down. I turned down a lot that were very bad."

Cultural and racial attitudes may be changing but the redskin lives in the minds of many.

"It is changing but it is very slow because of the impact of the early stereotypes of cowboys and indians and the way they are represented. It's embedded in the national consciousness. Books and history are highly inaccurate. Audiences are more intelligent now. Writers are more concerned with accuracy now. It is gradually coming around."

INSIGNIFICANCE marks his debut in a British film and for director Nicolas Roeg.

"I thought INSIGNIFICANCE was unusual and good. It bordered on comedy yet had a serious message. It has all the elements of a really good film."

Appointed to the board of directors of the Screen Actors' Guild a year ago, he has recently formed the American Indian Registry for Performing Arts. Affiliated to the SAG, it lists writers, actors and directors as well as security guards, television executives and cameramen. It is a project in which he is well pleased.

"It is a great step in correcting the stereotyped attitude that Indians can't act or do anything."

Will Sampson can act. Without reservation.

NICOLAS ROEG — The Director

Short Biography

Nicolas Roeg's last film was EUREKA.

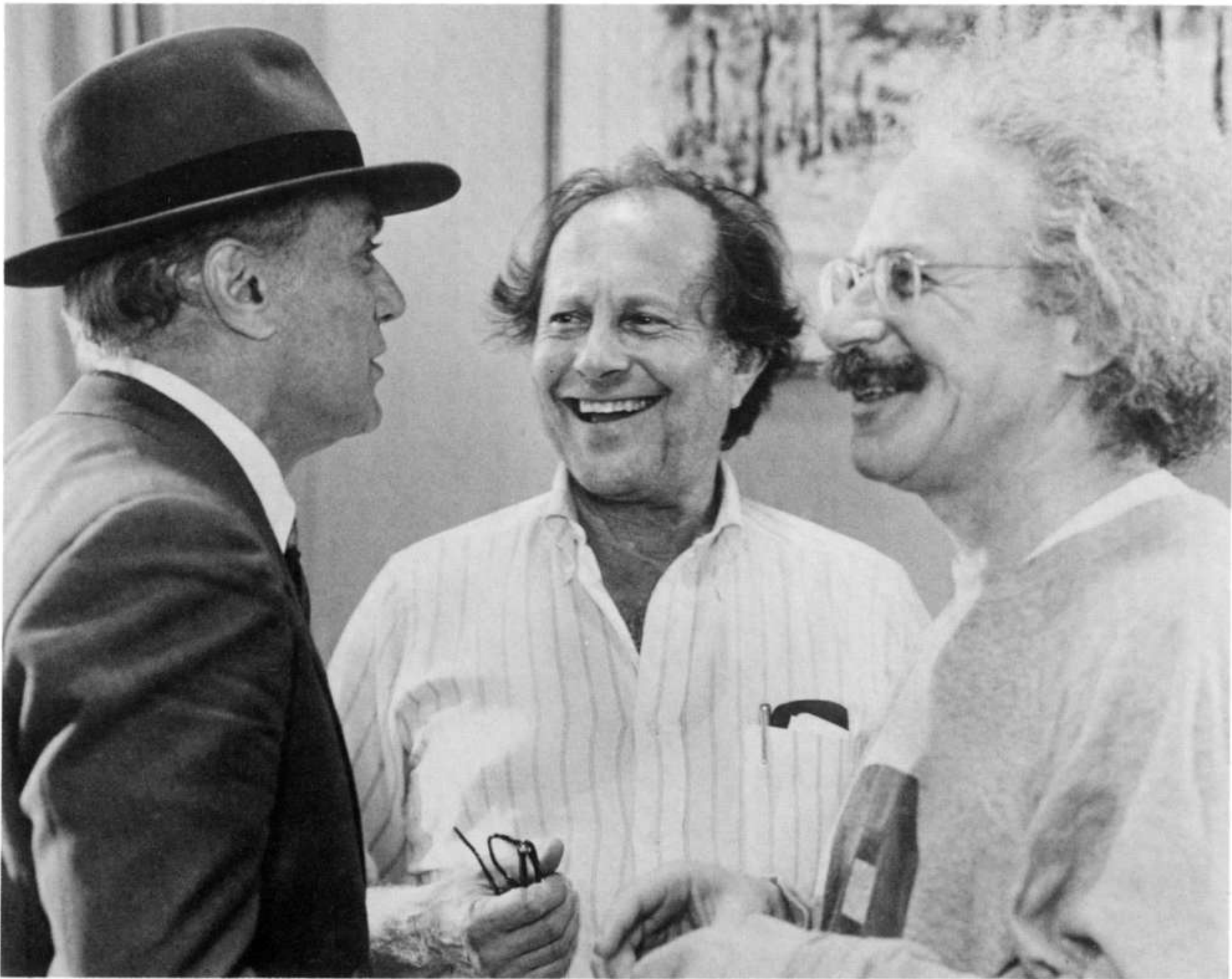
It was a further exploration of the themes which have characterized his other films: love, truth, ecstasy and death.

His choice of performers has always been fascinating: Mick Jagger, David Bowie, Donald Sutherland, Art Garfunkel, Theresa Russell, Julie Christie, Jenny Agutter, Gene Hackman, Rutger Hauer, Mickey Rourke.

All his films are extraordinary. All are continually finding new audiences.

Films:

PERFORMANCE	1970 Co-directed with Donald Cammell
WALKABOUT	1971
DON'T LOOK NOW	1973
THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH	1976
BAD TIMING	1979
EUREKA	1983



NICOLAS ROEG — The Director

Long Biography

NICOLAS ROEG is not just a filmmaker. He is an alchemist. His sorcery is unmatched in modern cinema, a unique vision of the forces that govern the real world. INSIGNIFICANCE is his seventh film. It is a further exploration of the themes which have characterized his other films: love, truth, ecstasy, death, science and sex.

Savagery and civilisation, second sight, sexual obsession, the plight of an earthbound alien; these and other subjects have been touched by his wizardry, explored through his elliptical prism. INSIGNIFICANCE is another footprint on the shores of the irrational and the unknown.

The cinema is his canvas, his cauldron, the route to his grail. At 18 he worked as an assistant editor for MGM. He rose from clapper boy to lighting cameraman on films like LAWRENCE OF ARABIA (1962), FARENHEIT 451 (1966), FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD (1967) before co-directing one of the most seminal films of the sixties: PERFORMANCE (1968), a riddle of identities and sex; a dance of urban death.

Questions were asked. Is there life after death? (DON'T LOOK NOW, 1973). Is there sex after death? (BAD TIMING, 1979). Is there life after gold? (EUREKA, 1983).

INSIGNIFICANCE looks at the past and questions the future.

If all things must pass, what is it that endures?

EUREKA was a symphony. INSIGNIFICANCE is chamber music.

"It was something that came at the right time for me. The overall thought of the piece is that everything is passing. Nothing is forever. The only thing that is forever is hope."

Hope endures. The quartet of characters in INSIGNIFICANCE are real and not real. Unknown as human beings, their identities as myths are already half-forgotten.

"The excitement of these people is fading in its particularity. In about one hundred years' time they won't mean anything at all. And the idea that nothing will mean anything is an inviting thought."

The Actress, The Ballplayer, The Senator, The Professor; these are dying icons. They are characters inhabiting myths. And myths, like people, are temporary. They borrow life until time or disaster ends it. INSIGNIFICANCE encourages us to laugh at serious matters. At man-made chaos. Time exists. Chaos and madness has been manufactured by human hands. As The Actress plays with trains to demonstrate Relativity, Roeg plays with ironies to demonstrate truth.

"I like the way they say lightweight things. The Professor sees the truth in a very simple way. The Indian is simplicity itself. All great ideas are simple."

Like splitting the atom. INSIGNIFICANCE is a Chinese puzzle. A mystery that once opened, reveals more mysteries.

"It is about having very little control of things. It touches all kinds of pomposity. Simple truths are reversed and put into the mouths of what appear to be clever people and wise things in the mouths of apparently dumb people. It is all about chance. It changes all their lives."

Chance would be a fine thing. If people understood how to use it. In all of his films, Nicolas Roeg has taken chance, taken chances, and spun theories like dice concerning destiny, the world, man, myth, and magic. He investigates the elements that govern man's fate from PERFORMANCE to assist him in his quest: Mick Jagger, David Bowie, Donald Sutherland, Art Garfunkel, Theresa Russell, Julie Christie, Gene Hackman, Mickey Rourke.

David Bowie once called him a sorcerer.

Now he takes Theresa Russell, Tony Curtis, Gary Busey and Michael Emil on his journey through the maze of fictional reality in INSIGNIFICANCE.

Sparks fly upward. INSIGNIFICANCE walks the line from creation to cremation. It explores the selling of science and sex; the differences between intrusion and communion, the acquisition of knowledge and the pursuit of understanding.

"Basically it is about nothing and forever and not to look back but only to look forward and hope."

JEREMY THOMAS — The Producer

Short Biography

Jeremy Thomas is unique as a producer.

His films are international in the most intelligent sense, and are bound together by an energy and an obsessive vision which is in no way at odds with the individuality of their directors.

His approach seems to point the way forward.

He likes movies.

Films

MAD DOG	1976 — Philippe Mora
THE SHOUT	1977 — Jerzy Skolomowski
THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE	1978 — Julien Temple
BAD TIMING	1979 — Nicolas Roeg
EUREKA	1983 — Nicolas Roeg
MERRY CHRISTMAS MR. LAWRENCE	1983 — Nagisa Oshima
THE HIT	1984 — Stephen Frears



JEREMY THOMAS — The Producer

Long Biography

JEREMY THOMAS is a man of independent mien.

He has been producing films for a decade. Since his debut with Philippe Mora's Australian outlaw allegory, MAD DOG (1976) he has carved himself a unique niche in the British Film Industry.

INSIGNIFICANCE is his eighth film. And his third with Nicolas Roeg.

The son of director Ralph Thomas, he was weaned on celluloid and schooled in filmmaking from an early age. He makes movies because he likes them.

His association with Skolimowski, Oshima and Nicolas Roeg is a testament to his energy and international vision.

His movies traverse frontiers of theme as well as nation. After MAD DOG (1976) came the aboriginal mysticism of THE SHOUT (1977). In the celebratory wake of THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE (1978) came the first of his films for Nicolas Roeg, BAD TIMING (1979), and EUREKA (1983). He then scored a first for the industry with the Anglo-Japanese co-production of MERRY CHRISTMAS MR. LAWRENCE (1983) before going on to make THE HIT (1984).

With INSIGNIFICANCE, Jeremy Thomas crystallises his unique talent for drawing on unusual and exciting sources. Like all of his projects, it has a life and identity all of its own.

"It was a left-of-field project. We liked the play very much but it needed a year or two to gestate into reality. When I read the play I found the ideas very amusing. It has the possibility of something very exciting."

Jeremy Thomas is good at spotting possibilities. And when his hunches are proven right, the film industry sits up and takes notice. INSIGNIFICANCE is a case in point. With its extraordinary cast, its unique narrative momentum and its ground-breaking content, it is one of the most exciting films of the eighties. And a project that only a truly independent spirit like Thomas could have organised properly. He is the nearest thing to a creative force behind his films apart from the director, yet he allows his directors absolute creative freedom.

"The director is the key man. Very few of one's favourite films are not directed by a key man. They are all directed by people who go on to make great films or have made a great film. That's why I'm very keen to remain a director groupie as a producer."

At 35, Jeremy Thomas is a young veteran of the film industry. An enthusiast of the old school, his approach seems to point the way forward. While films are his lifeblood, he has other obsessions. One might assume he was educated in the Three M's: Music, Movies and Motorcycles. He makes films for the same reason he listens to his stereo and rides on two wheels. He makes films because he likes them. And it is a passion that he shares and communicates with his directors.

"It would be satisfying to originate from the beginning but there is a stronger commitment if a director has an idea that he is really passionate about and you can join in that passion on day one. Directors like Oshima and Nicolas Roeg should make films on themes they are passionate about and they just coincide with what interests me as well."

His distinctive career and his position as an uncompromising independent producer has given him the opportunity to tackle projects of greater depth and challenge than most producers. He has achieved the respect of the industry at no expense to his creative freedom. Jeremy Thomas would have it no other way.

"The projects I am interested in doing through necessity make me stay within the independent sector and I am happy to maintain that."

He is also happy to maintain his relationship with Nicolas Roeg. INSIGNIFICANCE marks the hat-trick of films they have made together, an impressive movie triumvirate that marks the first stage in a long term partnership. Their collaboration has proved artistically rewarding for them both.

ALEXANDER STUART — The Executive Producer

Biography

Alexander Stuart has not been involved in producing before.

He has written one novel, GLORY B., and one feature ORDEAL BY INNOCENCE.

He may write others.

Films:

ORDEAL BY INNOCENCE	1984 — Desmond Davis
THE MAN WHO SHOT CHRISTMAS	1984 — Diane Patrick (short)

TERRY JOHNSON — The Screenwriter

Short Biography

Terry Johnson has a wit and a love of magic rare among contemporary writers.

Like a conjuror, his plays produce ideas out of hats, painlessly saws legends in half and generally has fun with serious concerns.

His work, and INSIGNIFICANCE in particular, has been hailed by critics as introducing a major new talent.

This is the first film he has written.

Plays:

AMABEL	1979
DAYS HERE SO DARK	1981
INSIGNIFICANCE	1982
UNSUITABLE FOR ADULTS	1984
CRIES FROM THE MAMMAL HOUSE	1984

TERRY JOHNSON — The Screenwriter

Long Biography

TERRY JOHNSON has a wit and a love of magic rare among contemporary writers. Like a conjuror, his plays produce ideas out of hats, painlessly saw legends in half and generally have fun with serious concerns.

His third play, *INSIGNIFICANCE*, was hailed by critics as introducing a major new talent. Born in the nuclear age, he is a writer of alarming originality. His warmth and wit are underscored by the dark images of primitive poetry.

INSIGNIFICANCE is his first film screenplay.

His plays include *AMABEL* (1979), *DAYS HERE SO DARK* (1981), *INSIGNIFICANCE* (1982), *UNSUITABLE FOR ADULTS* (1984) and *CRIES FROM THE MAMMAL HOUSE* (1984). His work is the product of exciting and dangerous vision. Language slides through his plays like a sea of adders.

Together with Nicolas Roeg, he has brought the same black humour and coruscating rhythms to *INSIGNIFICANCE*.

Terry Johnson won the New Standard's Most Promising Playwright Award in 1983 and was voted Most Promising Playwright by *Players* magazine.

Both awards were for his play *INSIGNIFICANCE*. Now he has translated his most successful play into a film. He worked closely with director Nicolas Roeg to create a piece of cinema rather than a filmed play.

"He is very good to work with because he is dangerous and he keeps you on the spot. He is a very serious man and you have to be as serious. Neither of us wanted to expand it in any sense. Any superfluity would have been wrong. But there are occasional explosions into different areas that you can't have on stage — areas of the characters' pasts. If we expand at all we expand inwards into the memory."

He was intrigued by the prospect of explaining the Theory of Relativity so that anyone could understand it.

"I had to learn it. I was scared stiff of it. But when I stopped learning it from a scientific point of view and started learning it from an actress's point of view it's a cinch. If people can actually realise how simple these sacred cows are, especially intellectual sacred cows, then little doors open up all over the place."

It is the perfect combination. Nicolas Roeg the alchemist, the visual sorcerer and Johnson the verbal conjuror, the wizard of the word.

"In a cinematic way Nicolas Roeg is bringing a lot of the theatrical power to it. Everything revolves around a basic understanding of what it is about that he and I share. That was luck. We started off our meetings talking about the relationships and concluded them talking about Hiroshima and the portent of the film in human terms today."

Johnson's work is literate graffiti. The high art of slogans written with a thermic lance. He is a trickster, a joker and he makes us laugh at serious matters. But beneath the jester's motley lurks a writer of muscular power. The games he plays are played for keeps.

"*INSIGNIFICANCE* is an erotico-political drama. It works on two levels. It is nice to see your work find itself over a few years and I think this piece has done just that. I think this screenplay is the best piece of work I have done. I think *INSIGNIFICANCE* will be very strong. Very strong."

THE CAST

Professor.....	MICHAEL EMIL
Actress	THERESA RUSSELL
Senator.....	TONY CURTIS
Ballplayer	GARY BUSEY
Indian Elevator Man.....	WILL SAMPSON
Driver	PATRICK KILPATRICK
Assistant Director	IAN O'CONNELL
Actor	GEORGE HOLMES
Director of Photography	RICHARD DAVIDSON
Technician.....	MITCHELL GREENBERG
Autograph hunter	RAYNOR SCHEINE
Gaffer.....	JUDE CI COLELLA
Charlie	LOU HIRSCH
Bud.....	RAY CHARLESON
Bar Drunk.....	JOEL CUTRARA
Ballplayer's Father	RAYMOND BARRY
Young Ballplayer	JOHN STAMFORD
Prostitute.....	DESIREE ERASMUS
Young Professor	DAVID LAMBERT
Young Actress.....	CASSIE STUART
Actress as a Child	MEACHELL DUNSMOOR
First Theatrical Agent.....	DANIEL BENZALI
Second Theatrical Agent.....	R. J. BELL
Japanese Woman	SHINOBU KANAI
Young Senator.....	DAVID MONTAGUE
Stunt Co-ordinator	TERRY FORRESTAL
Stunt Double for the Actress	TRACEY EDDON

TECHNICAL CREDITS

Production Manager	SIMON BOSANQUET
Production Co-ordinator	ROXY GLASSFORD
Supervising Production Accountant.....	RON SWINBURNE
Production Accountant	BRIAN GIBBS
Accounts Secretary.....	BETTY SWINBURNE
Location Manager (London)	RACHAEL NEALE
Assistant to Producer	SEVILLA DELOFSKI
Producer's Secretary	LISA GRANDITER
Unit Runner	TOM HUGH-JONES
First Assistant Director	MICHAEL ZIMBRICH
Second Assistant Director	ZSUZSANNA MILLS
Third Assistant Director	LEE CLEARY
Script Supervisor.....	MARY HOLDSWORTH
Casting Directors.....	LUCY BOULTING, MARJORIE SIMKINS
Camera Operator	BOB SMITH
Follow Focus	COLIN DAVIDSON
Camera Assistant.....	MARK CRIDLIN
Photosonic Technician	ANIL DEVANI
Camera Grip.....	JOHN PAYNE
Sound Recordist	PAUL LE MARE
Boom Operator	MARTIN TREVIS
Sound Maintenance	TED BALL
Sound Trainee	HUGO RITTSO-THOMAS
Art Director	ARTHUR MAX SHAFRANSKY
Assistant Art Director	HUGO LUCZYC-WYHOWSKI
Set Dresser.....	DIANA JOHNSTONE
Draughtsman	LESTER SMITH
Scenic Artist	ERNEST SMITH
Production Buyer.....	KAREN BROOKES
Construction Buyer.....	REG RICHARDS
Chief Electrician.....	REG PARSONS
Costume Designer	SHUNA HARWOOD
Wardrobe Master.....	RAYMOND USHER-COOPER
Wardrobe Assistants.....	ALISON WYLDECK, BRANDON EVERETT
Make-up Artist.....	CHRISTINE BEVERIDGE
Hairdresser	JAN ARCHIBALD

TECHNICAL CREDITS (continued)

Stills Cameraman.....ALEX HENDERSON
Special Effects Chief.....ALAN WHIBLEY
Special Effects AssistantRICHARD ROBERTS
Property MasterMAXIE McDONALD
First Assistant EditorCHRIS THOMPSON
Second Assistant EditorCHRIS COOK
Dubbing EditorALAN BELL
Dialogue EditorGEORGE AKERS
Assistant Dubbing EditorJACQUES LEROIDE
Publicity.....SARA KEENE

NEW YORK

Production LiaisonJOEL HINMAN
Location LiaisonRENEE SHAFRANSKY
Production Co-ordinator.....TAMARA BALLY
Assistant DirectorJOE REIDY
Key Second AssistantANN EGBERT
Additional Camera OperatorED LACHMAN
Boom OperatorBRENDA RAY
Wardrobe Assistant.....SUSIE MONEY
Set PropertymanTOM REEVE
Set ConstructionSTEPHEN SHAPIRO
Chief ElectricianJOHN KRAUSS
Key GripJIM GREUBEL
CastingPAT GOLDEN
StillsDACOTAH

Actress Calendar by DAVID HOCKNEY

Music Co-ordinatorRAY WILLIAMS
Jazz Orchestrations byGERRY BUTLER
Electronic Music byHANS ZIMMER

“JUPITER VARIATIONS”

Arranged by.....GIL EVANS
Solo Trumpet.....LEW SOLOFF

“AMERICA” by Stuart Arbright
(Courtesy Uproar Records)
“WHEN YOUR HEART RUNS OUT OF TIME”

Words & Music & Sung byWILL JENNINGS

“WILD HEARTS”

Words & MusicWILL JENNINGS/ROY ORBISON
Sung by.....ROY ORBISON
Produced byDAVID BRIGGS/WILL JENNINGS

“LIFE GOES ON”

Words.....WILL JENNINGS
Music.....STANLEY MYERS
Sung byTHERESA RUSSELL

Music recorded at LANSDOWNE RECORDING STUDIOS,
ABBEE ROAD STUDIOS and LILLIE YARD

Re-recorded atDE LANE LEA SOUND CENTRE, LONDON
Sound RecordistHUGH STRAIN
Cameras & Lenses by.....JOE DUNTION CAMERAS LIMITED
Lighting byLEE ELECTRIC (LIGHTING) LIMITED
Titles & Opticals byGENERAL SCREEN ENTERPRISES

“INSIGNIFICANCE” originally performed
at THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE LONDON,
on the 8th July, 1982

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*"The overall thought of the piece
is that everything is passing.
Nothing is forever.
The only thing that is forever
is hope."*

NICOLAS ROEG

*"I always remembered how I hated fifties movies.
They all seemed too bland then. It wasn't
until I understood about McCarthyism in the States
that I realised why."*

THERESA RUSSELL

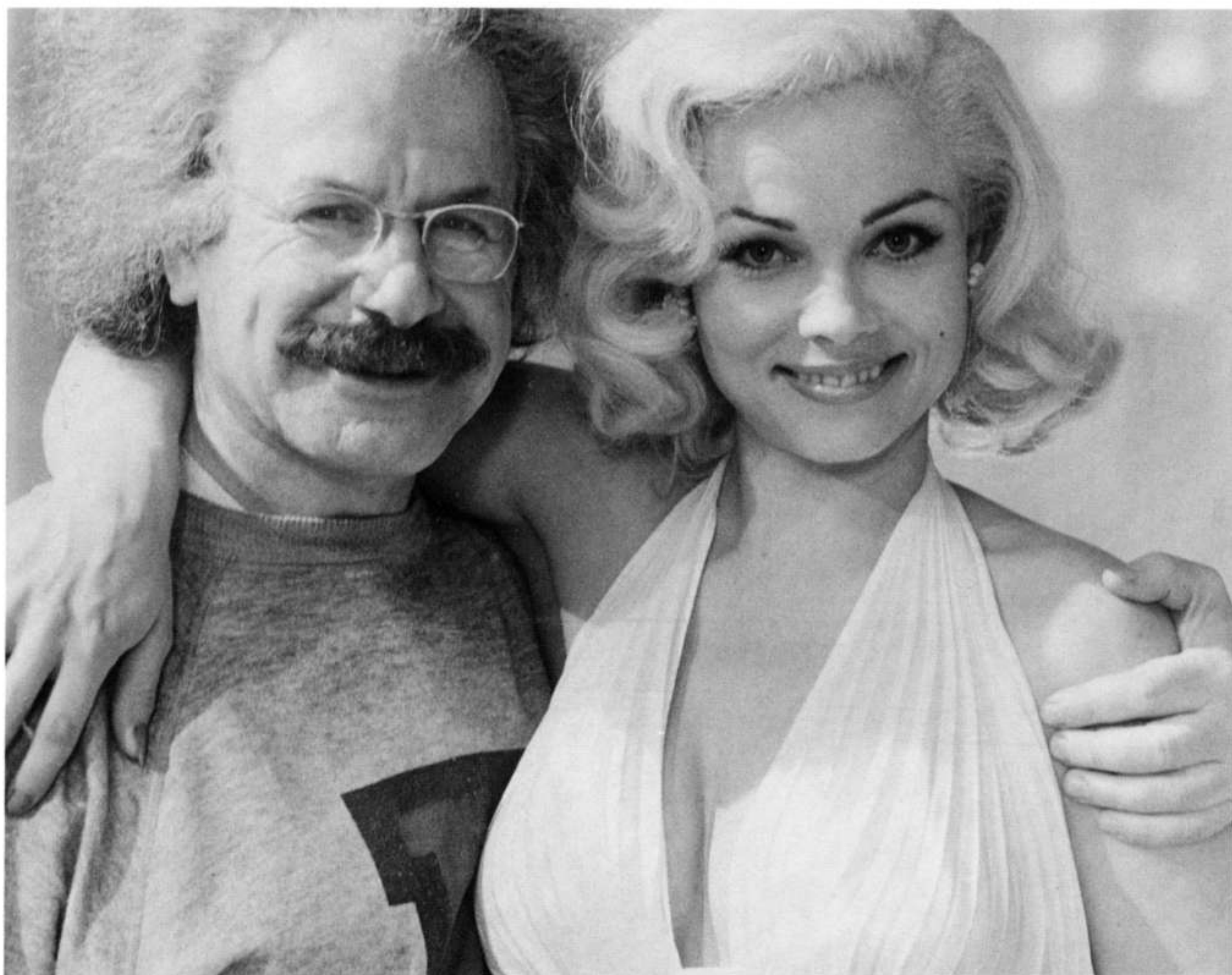
*"He is very good to work with because he is
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on the spot. He is a very serious man
and you have to be as serious."*

TERRY JOHNSON

on working with Nicolas Roeg

*"It's bloody funny.
You are as close to a joke as you are
to a drama."*

TONY CURTIS





...BYE!