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TUESDAY

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN (1976)

Directed by Alan J. Pakula. Screenplay by William Goldman. Based on the book by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward. With Dustin Hoffman, Robert Redford, Jason Robards Jr., and Jane Alexander. **Thalia Soho: 2, 5:45, 9:35.** (Cofeature: *The David Frost/Richard Nixon Interview*)

All the President's Men is a low-key yet tense thriller, a homage to investigative reporters as contemporary heroes. Redford without pictorial gloss and Hoffman without bit-character mannerisms interact superbly in a

howdunit about a whodunit. The film is most exciting in its newsroom focus on wheedling, haranguing, and extorting newspapermen, as well as in the closely observed details of the thrillingly arduous, antlike process whereby grains of evidence overwhelmingly pile upon one another. It goes weak, however, in its rare, direct confrontations with the president's not-too-bright but seemingly invincible Men. The movie probably would have been more honest as a race to the Pulitzer, rather than a cautionary tale keyed to Gordon Liddy's darker fantasies about liquidating enemies of the administration. The paranoia, then, is dramatically flimsy; it's as automatically reflexive as cinematographer Gordon Willis's patented and inappropriate architectural claustrophobia. ■

Research: Jack Douglas



Closing in: *All the President's Men*