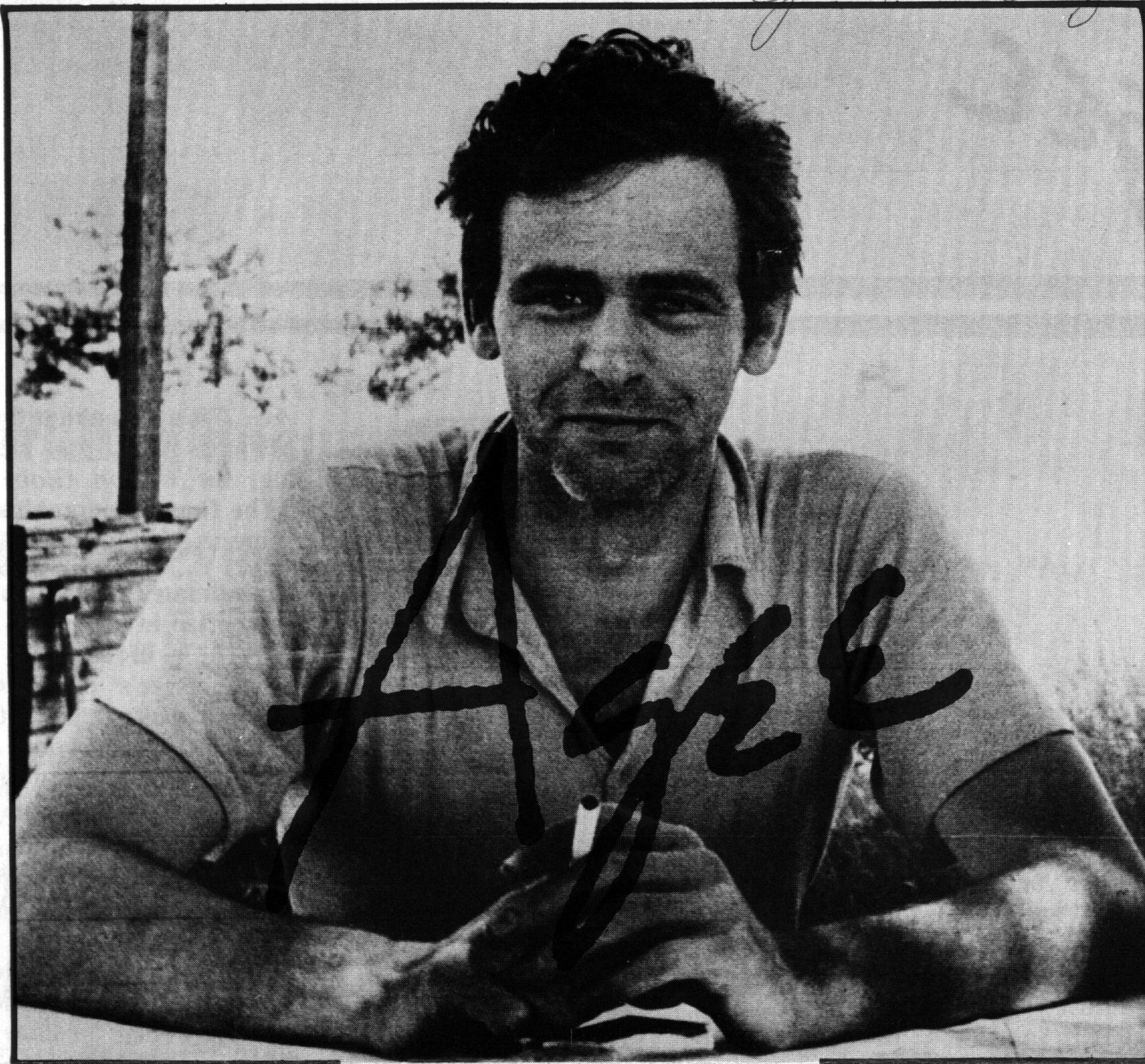


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James Agee



A FILM ON THE LIFE OF JAMES AGEE

**WITH John Huston, Robert Fitzgerald, Walker Evans,
Dwight MacDonald, Mia Agee, Father James Flye, Olivia
Wood, "Annie Mae Gudger", "Margaret Ricketts", Alma
Neuman, Robert Saudek, and President Jimmy Carter.**

A FILM by ROSS SPEARS

**CINEMATOGRAPHY ANTHONY FORMA
MUSIC KENTON COE**

**VOICE EARL MCCARROLL
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER JUDE CASSIDY**

Agee

“We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child.”

This line in James Agee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Death in the Family* opens one of the most familiar and best loved passages in contemporary literature. Agee's work was not always so well known.

At the time of his death in 1955, James Agee was already a legend, both as a superb writer and as a unique individual, but this reputation extended only to a small circle of writers in New York and movie-makers in Hollywood, and to the few select readers who had managed to find rare copies of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. A fellow writer at *Time* wrote that “he was one of the few men of great gifts—and they are really pitifully few—who are even more distinguished as human beings.”



With the publication of *Death in the Family* in 1957, Agee's reputation began to grow. In quick succession Agee's masterpiece *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was reissued; two volumes of *Agee on Film* were published, and his short novel, *The Morning Watch*, was reprinted.

Not long afterward, the *Letters of James Agee to Father Flye* was published, offering one of the most profound portraits of a writer in our culture. In the late 60's *The Collected Poems* and *The Collected Short Prose* appeared, indicating the scope of Agee's talents. In his short, luminous career he had worked as a novelist, journalist, poet, short story writer, film critic, and screenwriter.

AGEE is a film about the life and work of James Agee. Five years in the making, the *Boston Globe* has called it “The finest biographical treatment of James Agee now in print.”

An intimate, dramatic portrait, *AGEE* tells, often in humorous terms, the rich story of a life devoted to the written word. Agee's own words are used throughout, together with photographs by Walker Evans and Helen Levitt, rare archival film, dramatizations of Agee's work, tapes of his voice, and scenes from his films, including *The African Queen*. Agee himself appears in a comic scene from *The Bride Comes To Yellow Sky*.

AGEE features James Agee's most intimate companions, including his three wives, and several of the outstanding artists and critics of our time—John Huston, Walker Evans, Robert Fitzgerald, Robert Saudek, and Dwight Macdonald. Father James Flye, Agee's remarkable teacher and lifelong correspondent, appears throughout the film.

The film tells of the making of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* and features two of the subjects of that book, “Annie Mae Gudger” and “Margaret Ricketts”, in a sequence that *The New Republic* called “worthy of Agee's own best journalistic instincts.”

AGEE is well-suited for general audiences, as well as university, high school, and library use. It is not only a compelling film, it is the most complete source of information available about one of this century's finest American writers. *AGEE* transforms first-hand witnesses and primary source material into a genuinely powerful and uniquely entertaining film document. The *Los Angeles Times* credited *AGEE* with “undeniable dramatic power and palpable biographical impact—a documentary tribute to a prose prince of film.”

“A sparkling documentary!” *Boston Globe*

“Startling, revealing, absorbing!” *Washington Post*

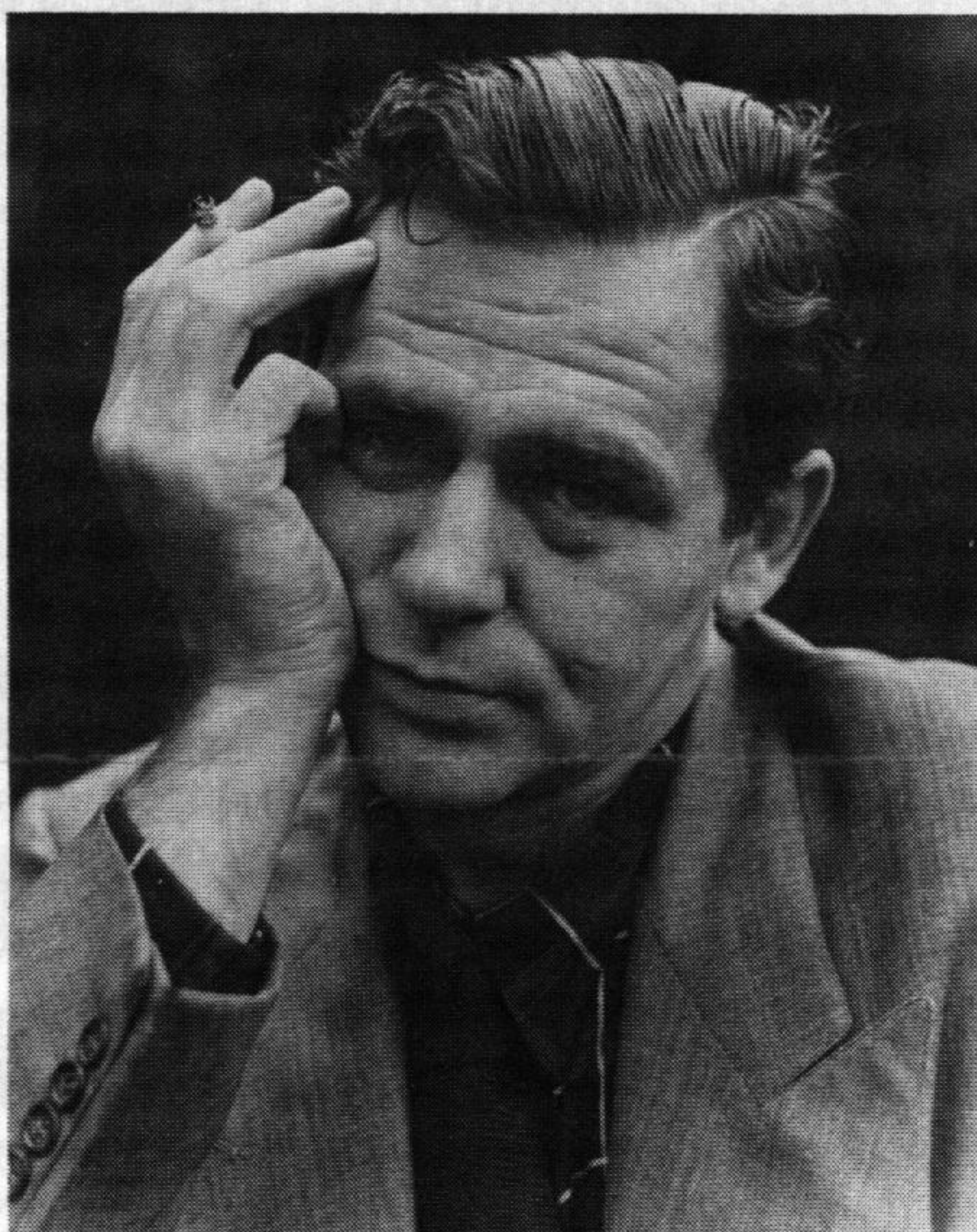
“Writers have had very little luck as the subjects of documentary films, so it’s a double pleasure to see how successfully *AGEE* clears its hurdles and crosses its goals. It gives, in unprecedented depth, the sense of a lived life which is so difficult to achieve in any visual art. When the life in question was one of the richness of James Agee’s, then one has an index to the resonance and value of Spears’ film. I can imagine that lovers of great prose will be watching it long years from now with delight and instruction.”

Reynolds Price
Author, *A Long and Happy Life*
Professor of English,
Duke University

“*AGEE* is a perfect monument to its subject...a film that combines craft, artistry, and narrative drive, for these are the very qualities James Agee sought after and so brilliantly celebrated in the cinema of his time.”

Media Digest

16 mm. color, 88 min.



“As one toiling on a book on the life and works of James Agee, I confess to such admiration and pleasure in the film *AGEE* as might impel another print biographer to throw up his hands and retire. The film is done with such art that I find myself not depressed, but inspired.”

Erik Wensberg
Agee biographer

“This film fits right into the American Literature curriculum and is essential to the study of Southern writers. It also relates handily to journalism, poetry, the short story, and is an excellent motivation for composition classes.”

Nellie McNeil
English teacher,
Science Hill High School

“The voices, the soundtrack full of Beethoven, so loved by Agee, the quiet visual procession supplying witness and analysis of him, affection for him—it all amounts to a fine tribute to a hectic, pained, buoyant, decent, exceptionally radiant life, which managed to offer us songs of real distinction and power.

A moment of sentiment would permit us to imagine that somewhere in the universe the smile of James Agee, so large and winning, must surely be registering its pleased reaction to a particular message from one of us still on this side of things.”

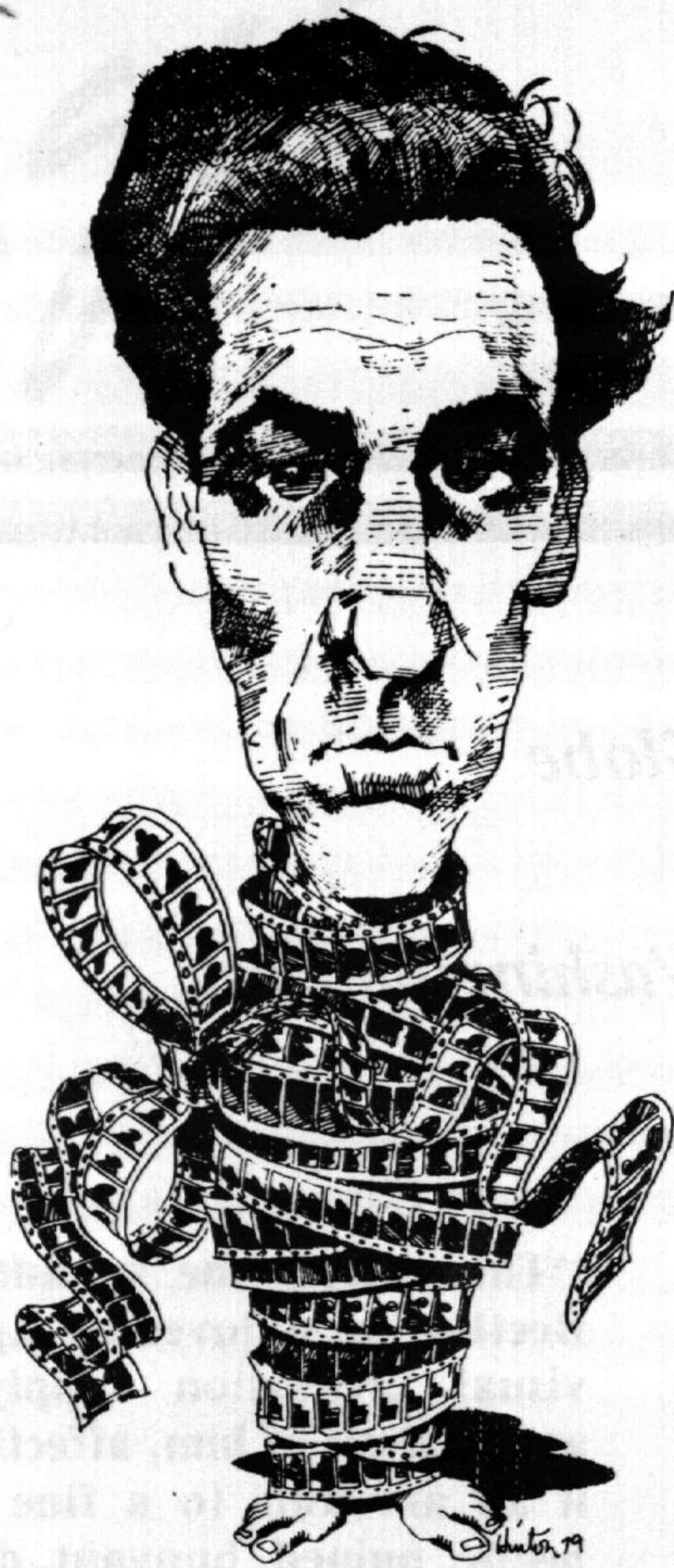
Robert Coles
New Republic

“The most popular of the individual shows at the Sinking Creek Film Celebration was Ross Spears’ presentation of his feature documentary *AGEE*. The interviews are compelling, and the narrative sections beautifully shot and directed. The rousing ovation from the teary-eyed crowd was well-deserved.”

Filmmakers Monthly

“I’ve seldom seen a film which reaches more deeply into the soul of the subject. A splendid, insightful, sensitively produced document on a brilliant and complex man. I found it unforgettable.”

Mary Jane Coleman
Director,
Sinking Creek Film Celebration



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AGEE has been screened at theatres, universities, libraries, museums, high schools, film festivals, and art centers across the country and in Europe, including:

- ★ Museum of Modern Art
- ★ AFI Theatre, Kennedy Center
- ★ The White House
- ★ The Public Theatre, New York City
- ★ Sinking Creek Film Celebration
- ★ Robert Flaherty Film Seminar
- ★ Donnell Library
- ★ Northwest Film Study Center
- ★ High Museum, Atlanta
- ★ Virginia Highland Festival
- ★ Festival dei Popoli, Florence
- ★ Arnhem Filmweek, Holland
- ★ Harvard, Duke, Temple, New School
- ★ Pacific Film Archives
- ★ American Film Festival

PRICE LIST

RENTALS:

High Schools, Senior Citizens \$ 90
College, Library, Museum \$130

If admission is charged \$130 vs. 50%

Additional screenings 50% of single rate
Additional days 75% of single rate

PURCHASE \$985

Single rental price may be credited to print purchase if made within 90 days.

FILMMAKER APPEARANCE:

Ross Spears, producer and director of *AGEE*, is available for speaking engagements with the film. Please contact us for further information.

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

RENTALS: Rentals must be ordered in writing. Please order at least five weeks in advance. Be sure to state the following:

- Title of the film you want
- Exact date you will show film
- An alternative date (at least three weeks later)
- Name and address of person/place to ship film
- Name and address of person/place to be billed
- Purchase order when applicable

You will be sent a confirmation upon receipt of your order.

If you telephone a rental request you must follow up with a written confirmation marked: confirming order, telephone call dated_____.

Rental rates for standard film distribution are for one showing and one day only. If you need a film for a longer period, state this when ordering and arrangements can probably be made.

Please cooperate and return print promptly so that the next renters will not miss their showing. If print is mailed later than the next business day after show date, an additional daily rate will be charged.

Film must be returned rewound on its original reels and in its original shipping case or customer will be charged for replacement.

Print should be returned by UPS or parcel post/special handling unless otherwise notified. Insure film for \$400.

The Renter is responsible for return shipping postage and INSURANCE.

Cancellations must reach us at least three weeks before show date. Otherwise, we will have to bill you for the full rental.

SALES: Purchase of a print is often useful if you plan to show a print a number of times. The rental fee will be deducted from the sale price if we receive your purchase order within 90 days of your show date.

PREVIEWS: Free previewing is a privilege usually extended only to public libraries. While we realize that many institutions have a set policy against paid previews, we generally request a \$10 handling fee which is deductible from the purchase price if you decide to buy.

We only preview to serious potential buyers.

Preview prints will be sent for a five day evaluation period only. In cases where a longer period is absolutely necessary, accompany request with an explanation of the requirements. Please order previews **at least six weeks** in advance. We will do our best to schedule at your convenience, but be specific about evaluation dates and alternates.

DAMAGED FOOTAGE: Customers are responsible for the care of the film in their possession. Print damage beyond reasonable wear will be billed at the prevailing laboratory rates with a minimum charge of \$20.00.

To avoid the risk of film damage and additional charges always make sure your projector is working properly before threading film into it and have an experienced, responsible projectionist on hand.

PLEASE NOTE: Rentals and Sales are for educational and non-theatrical 16mm optical projection only. Film may not be rented, loaned for a fee, leased, or sub-licensed to others. Our film is protected by U.S. Copyright. It may not be duplicated, reproduced (by videotape or any other means), televised, or transmitted in whole or in part without specific written authorization from the James Agee Film Project.

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