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September 21, 1972

MEMORANDUM TO: JULIE EISENHOWER  
FROM: PAT BUCHANAN  
SUBJECT: MOVIES

WESTERNS

In the category of Western films, my view is that the greatest ever made was "Shane"; it is a classic with Alan Ladd and Jack Palance as the hired gun in a role he never equalled. Very simple in plot, but the one movie I have seen five times.

Of the westerns of ten years ago, the lengthy epic "Big Country" starring Gregory Peck and Charlton Heston was first-rate entertainment - Peck playing a sea captain who went to a giant ranch to marry the daughter. Burl Ives, Heston, Peck and I believe Carrol Baker, and Jean Simmons complete the cast. Long film but an excellent one. Both your parents would enjoy greatly either of the two above, I think. Both are devoid of the excessive sex and violence of some movies.

Modern Westerns: "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," with Paul Newman, and Robert Redford is part comedy, but thoroughly enjoyable. Theme is basically two outlaws of the old school confronting imminent defeat at the hands of modern technology. One of the most enjoyable I have seen in a while.

"True Grit" with John Wayne is also part comedy, another G-rated film, which is most enjoyable, relaxing entertainment.

"The Wild Bunch" is the first of the Sam Peckinpah films, with considerable violence and shoot-em-up. Starring William Holden, with some other first-rate actors, it is clearly an adult film. Lots of violence, lots of blood, and some outrageously earthy scenes, it might be something the First Lady would not enjoy.

Here is how I would rate them.

WESTERNS

- \*\*\*\*\* 1. Shane
- \*\*\*\* 2. Big Country
- \*\*\*\* 3. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid
- \*\*\* 4. True Grit
- \*\*\* 5. The Wild Bunch

COMEDIES

- \*\*\*\* 6. It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World
- \*\*\*\* 7. The Pink Panther
- \*\*\* 8. Pillow Talk

The first two of these films, especially, "Mad World," if you have not seen it, is a side-splitter. The funniest movie I have ever seen when it first came out. It must be seven-to-ten years old now, as I saw it in St. Louis. But it should not be missed. "The Pink Panther" is the best of the Peter Seller ones, with Inspector Clouseau, of the Deuxieme Bureau. "Pillow Talk" and the others are the Rock Hudson-Doris Day series -- almost identical in theme, and very humorous. With Doris Day as Miss Apple Pie and Hudson as the lady-killer and usually Tony Randall as the super-rich insecure side-kick of Hudson. Very light -- nose of these movie is in bad taste.

FOREIGN FILMS

- \*\*\*\* 9. The Battle of Algiers
- \*\*\*\* 10. "Z"
- \*\*\* 11. The Confession
- \*\*\* 12. The Conformist

The "Battle of Algiers" is "the" film of the American violent Left. Brilliantly done, a French film, it is the story of the initial revolt in Algiers and how it was suppressed. Like all foreign films it is sympathetic to the Left, though both this and "Z" are clearly masterpieces. "Z," is about Greece, a right-wing murder of a socialist and popular figure and the investigation of it. Worth seeing, although the bias is there.

"The Confession" is about a liberal Czech Communist and what becomes of him and his colleagues when the Stalinists displace them in yet another purge. PJB thought it first-rate. "The Conformist" is a little brutal -- about a young man playing ball with the Fascists and what comes of it. Violence and sex in here fairly strong.

GENERAL FILMS

- \*\*\*\*\* 13. Hud
- \*\*\*\* 14. To Kill a Mockingbird
- \*\*\*\*\* 15. In the Heat of the Night
- \*\*\*\*\* 16. The Hustler

These films are between five and ten years old, the newest being "In the Heat of the Night." Everyone of them is worth seeing; some of them like "In the Heat of the Night" should not be missed. They are classics. "In the Heat of the Night", set in a Mississippi town, stars Sidney Poitier and Rod Steiger. Both "Hud" and "The Hustler" star Paul Newman, the latter about a dissolute pool shark includes as well, the star of "Patton", George C. Scott and Jackie Gleason.

SPY MOVIES

- \*\*\*\* 17. 17. The Spy Who Came in from the Cold
- \*\*\* 18. The Ipcress File

CRIME & DETECTIVES

- \*\*\* 19. ] Dirty Harry
- \*\*\*\* 20. The French Connection
- \*\*\* 21. Bullitt

The "French Connection" should be seen. On "Dirty Harry", this is really rough and brutal -- the redeeming factor is the Clint Eastwood the Detective, is the sympathetic figure and the criminal, a totally contemptible fellow, wears a peace sign on his belt. "Dirty Harry" is a raw film -- Bebe and your father would enjoy it more than the First Lady. "Bullitt" is a hard-nosed film, with the greatest auto chase ever seen on the screen. Worth seeing. A night of escapist entertainment.

### GOLDEN OLDIES

- \*\*\*\* 22. The African Queen
- \*\*\* 23. Room at the Top
- \*\*\* 24. Elmer Gantry
- \*\*\* 25. The Apartment
- \*\*\*\* 26. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
- \*\*\* 27. Some Came Running
- \*\*\*\* 28. On the Waterfront
- \*\*\* 29. A Thousand Clowns
- \*\*\*\*\* 30. Bridge on the River Quay

The last one "Bridge on the River Quay" ranks among the top ten in anyone's list of movies, with Alec Guinness, and British soldiers and officers in a Japanese prison camp. Has to be seen.

The other top ones from the Fifties are Humphrey Bogart and "The African Queen," with Katherine Hepburn, also "On the Waterfront," Marlon Brando's first great film which a recent viewer contends is as good as ever. These are among the classics of post-war films.

"A Thousand Clowns" is a very light and enjoyable film about a social dropout and his way of life, which was very big with students in the first years of the sixties. Worth seeing.

"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" stars Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman, again, with Burl Ives and this is a southern-set film which moves fast and is a good evening's entertainment.

The others as I recall them, were all good films -- and would not consider any of them a loser. Perhaps the weakest of the lot is "Some Came Running."

### EPICS

- \*\*\* 31. Tora, Tora, Tora
- \*\*\*\* 32. Lawrence of Arabia
- \*\*\* 33. Ben Hur
- \*\*\*\* 34. Judgment at Nuremburg
- \*\*\*\* 35. Ryan's Daughter
- \*\*\*\* 36. The Longest Day

You know all about "Lawrence of Arabia" and "Ben Hur", both of which are good films, with Lawrence the superior of the two. "The Longest Day" is the invasion of Normandy, which was a tremendous success

when it first came out; and has some good moments in it; and again for a long evening, it is a good film. "Judgment at Nuremburg", with Maximilian Schell, Spencer Tracy and Burt Lancaster, was when I saw it, among the best I had seen up to then. Deals with the trial of Nazi war criminals.

"Ryan's Daughter" is the newest -- about a British officer in Ireland and his affair with the young wife of an Irish school teacher. Raw in parts -- not unlike the rawest section of "Zorba the Greek" -- but magnificent photography of the Irish coast, and one of the films of David Lean most highly regarded.

All these films are long.

#### MUSICALS

- \*\*\* 37. West Side Story
- \*\*\* 38. Oliver
- \*\*\* 39. 1776
- \*\*\* 40. Fiddler on the Roof

While I am enthusiastic about musicals as a general rule, "Oliver" was a fine show, and of course "West Side Story" -- but almost everyone who sees "Fiddler on the Roof" is immensely favorable. It is still at the Uptown Theatre.

#### OTHERS

- \*\*\* 41. Citizen Kane
- \*\*\* 42. Becket
- \*\*\* 43. Taming of the Shrew
- \*\*\*\* 44. Mary Queen of Scots
- \*\*\* 45. Topan
- \*\*\* 46. Topkapi
- \*\*\* 47. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
- \*\*\*\* 48. Cool Hand Luke
- \*\*\* 49. Pride and Prejudice
- \*\*\* 50. Straw Dogs
- \*\*\* 51. The Magus

Of these, I saw "Cool Hand Luke," again with Paul Newman which I thought was excellent. Rife with religious symbolism, it is at the same time an enjoyable film.

"Straw Dogs" is the most recent Sam Peckinpah effort, which is one of the most violent being shown currently, including a rape scene. Story of an English town gone berserk -- starring Dustin Hoffman, who

in the end wipes out half a dozen of the worst types you have come across.

Have heard good things about, but did not see, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," but believe this is another, like "Dirty Harry", where Clint Eastwood does his thing.

"Topaz" is a piece about a French CIA type during the period of the Cuban missile Crisis; was on television the other night, worth seeing.

"Mary Queen of Scots", though not historically accurate or precise, is a good study in character development with Glenda Jackson and Venessa Redgrave. "Becket" is also first-rate study of England in "those" days.

"Citizen Kane," perhaps the oldest film on the list, ranks in some estimates with "Gone with the Wind," although this is the only pre-war film on the list.

If I had to pick fifteen sure winners from this list, they would be:

1. Bridge on the River Quay
2. Hud
3. The Hustler
4. In the Heat of the Night
5. Shane
6. It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World
7. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid
8. Big Country
9. The Battle of Algiers
10. "Z"
11. To Kill a Mockingbird
12. The French Connection
13. On the Waterfront
14. Judgment at Nuremberg
15. Mary Queen of Scots