

# Flip Wilson to the Rescue

by Allan Nicholson

The title of the film, "Uptown Saturday Night", coupled with the cast list which includes names like Bill Cosby, Flip Wilson and Richard Pryor, to mention a few, suggest to most of us a fast-moving, action-packed, and potentially very funny movie.

The anticipation is unfortunately much greater than the realization, in fact anticipation is the predominant feeling throughout most of the film as one is for the most part continually waiting for the really funny episodes to begin. With the exception of one scene in which Flip Wilson steals the show, the film is largely a disappointment.

What went wrong? The cast as previously stated is outstanding, each is a star in his own right and could easily stand alone, and the plot would appear to have great comic potential. Two lower class Negroes, played by Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby, go out for a night on the town and manage by slightly devious means to

gain entry into one of the city's most fashionable sporting houses. While enjoying an evening of outrageously successful gambling and unparalleled girl watching, they are robbed of a lottery ticket worth fifty thousand dollars. The plot centers largely around their attempt to regain possession of the ticket, in the process of which they become involved with an assortment of unsavory characters: a crooked private eye, Richard Pryor; a stereotype politician, Roscoe Lee Brown; a godfather type mob boss played by Harry Belafonte, and numerous lesser criminal elements.

To balance this evil there is the intermittent appearance of the local black minister, played by Flip Wilson, who engages in the usual moralistic and didactic sermons most ministers engage in, but with that entertaining and involving rhetorical style that is for the most part a black prerogative.

One of the failings I see in the film is that it seems to have been written and directed with a white audience in mind, and because of this suffers from the resultant loss of apparent spontaneity found in a black film such as "Cotton Comes to Harlem".

The opening scene takes place at the blast furnace in a steel plant but quickly switches to the clean, but decrepit, home of a lower class Negro who, with his wife, is wistfully reminiscing about past joys, complaining about their present hardships, and discussing the possibility of retiring to the South. The whole scene has a kind of black Yom Kippur next year in Alabama atmosphere about it. The action is extremely slow and the whole spectacle of aching backs and shabby furniture is a sobering sight to say the least.

Actor-director Sidney Poitier's timid and incredulous banjo-eyed stares when confronted with either danger or opulence, his numerous shots of and references to fried chicken and watermelon indicate he is unaware that Rochester and Scatman Carruthers have been replaced by people like Bill Cosby and Dick Gregory.

Poitier overlooks the fact that today's audience is more inclined to laugh with, than at, stars the caliber of those assembled in this film.

For the most part, the stars are given few real opportunities to shine. Richard Pryor has one small scene, and Bill Cosby seems to be cut off each time he begins to open up. The fact that Sidney Poitier directed the film undoubtedly accounts for his dominating practically every scene and, despite his ability as an actor, he is definitely not a comedian. The result of this is that most intended comic scenes end with the straight man delivering the punch line.

The exception to this

failure to shine is Flip Wilson, who plays the black minister. His sermon, entitled "Loose Lips Sinks Ships", is in my opinion the high point of the film and is in itself worth the price of admission. With its edifying message, its complete congregational involvement, its timeless relevance, and Flip Wilson's inimitable delivery, the sermon scene is a masterpiece - John Donne eat your heart out.

Perhaps the failure of the film lies in the too much of a good thing phenomenon. This theory, that if one is funny six will be six times as funny, is widely held by show business executives and, despite its being proven incorrect on numerous occasions, this zombie-like assumption refuses to die. The best example of the weakness of this progression theory is undoubtedly Bill Wilder's "Mad Mad etc. etc. World" effort put forth in the mid-sixties which employed virtually every name and technique known to comedy up to that time and still managed to fall flat on its face.

Possibly the superabundance of superstars is in itself responsible for the failure of this Uptown galactic extravaganza. It may well be that, like the true stars they metaphorically represent, there is a tendency for them to lose their unique brilliance when viewed in conjunction with other stars of equal radiance.

## Joplin is alive and well on film

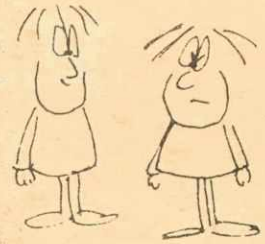
by L.T. Donovan

How could anyone forget her. Frank Crawley a 63 year old Canadian is keeping her alive on film. Travelling about the countryside in search of film clips and interviews; Crawley has succeeded in creating a 96 minute and 7 second movie of Janis Joplin.

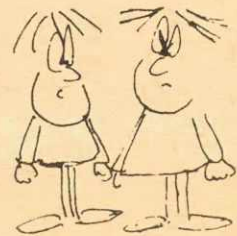
The film captures Janis in performance at Monterey Pop Festival; her first taste of stardom; in Toronto near the close of day; in Frankfurt, Germany; and at her final tour in Calgary. Because of Janis's colourful language expressed during bouts of anger at recording sessions, over arrests of band members, and in describing her lifestyle, the film has been "R" rated.

The film made it's debut at the Vogue Theatre in San Francisco, Janis's acclaimed city of freedom. Hopefully the show will soon reach general distribution so that all will be able to view it.

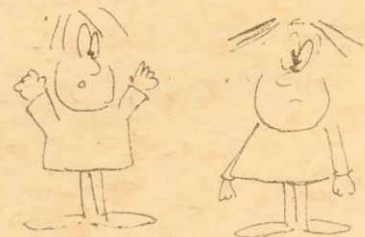
KATE MILLETT IS SPEAKING TONIGHT. ARE YOU GONNA GO?  
NAAA! THOSE STUPID FEMINISTS! ALL THEY DO IS PUT DOWN MEN. WHY SHOULD I HEAR HER PUT ME DOWN WHEN I CAN CALL UP MY OWN CHICK?



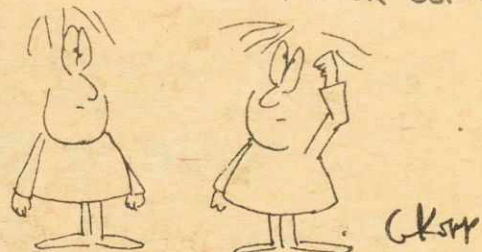
BUT DON'T YOU AGREE WITH A LOT OF THE GOALS OF WOMEN'S LIB?  
LIKE WHAT? YOU MEAN THEIR "FINAL SOLUTION"? I'M NO SELF-HATING CHAUVINIST!



NO! I MEAN THINGS LIKE EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND LEGALIZED ABORTION!  
SURE I WANT LEGALIZED ABORTION. SO WHAT? EVERYBODY'S IN FAVOR OF LEGALIZED ABORTION. IT'S LIKE BEING FOR APPLE PIE AND MOTHERHOOD!



BEING FOR ABORTION IS LIKE BEING FOR MOTHERHOOD?  
HMM. MAYBE I OUGHT TO GO TO THE SPEECH. I AM BEGINNING TO PERCEIVE THE CONTRADICTIONS OF THE IMPERIALIST WHITE-HETEROSEXUAL-MALE POWER ELITE...



### CINEMA SHOWCASE

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**PARAMOUNT cinema 1**  
1577 BARRINGTON ST.

**BIG BAD MAMA**  
1, 3, 5, 7 & 9

423-6054  
**PARAMOUNT cinema 2**  
1577 BARRINGTON ST.

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Adult

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**cove cinema**  
2112 GOTTINGEN ST.

**DR. ZAVIGO**  
7:30 p.m.  
Adult

**penhorn mall CINEMA 1**  
463-2597

**BURT REYNOLDS 'THE LONGEST YARD'**  
Daily: 7:00 & 9:00  
Adult Entertainment

**penhorn mall CINEMA 2**  
463-2597

**"UPTOWN SATURDAY NIGHT"**  
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General Entertainment

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