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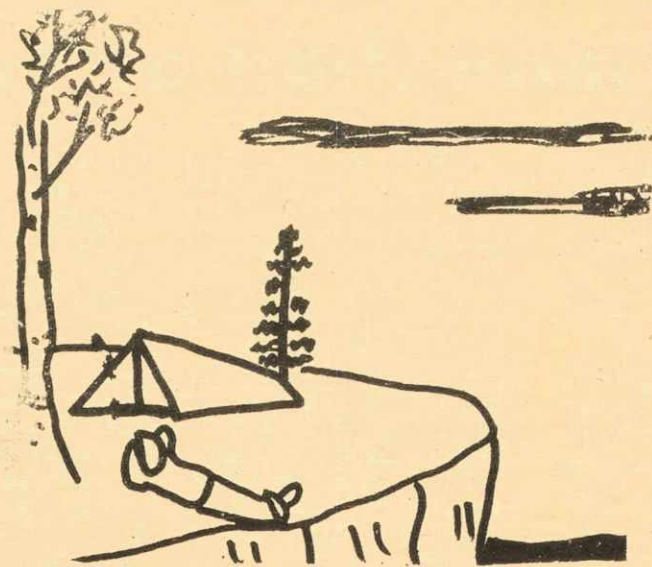
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# Outdoors

by Kevin Moore & Alexia Barnes

"The life in the mountains, is threatened with danger. From too many people, too many machines."

JOHN DENVER

THE ANIMALS NOBODY LOVED is the title of the worst National Geographic special to date. This movie is concerned with the animals out west that are being killed off with emphasis on the three type species, the coyote, the mustang, and the rattlesnake. In parts, the movie could only be said to be terrible.

Technically it was fair. The narration was spoken well by Hal Holbrook but was written by Nicholas Noxon and it was bad, not in a grammatical sense but in content and attitude. More of that later. The filming was average with typical footage of sunspots seepage such as that found on high budgeted television shows. Indoor footage was poor and the whole film had that yellowish tinge that comes over — even the best color televisions. There were no sweeping landscape scenes, no startling animal poses, nor any plant close-ups that would have added to the viewer's diversity in content. There was also a noticeable lack of in/out of focus shots and other camera angles that add variety to the film. It was simply shot and produced on a level slightly below the above mentioned television series. The main photographic highlight was the following of a rattlesnake sidewinding over

wind-furrowed sand into the sun.

The rattlesnake was described as an animal hated and destroyed by most but with a few trying to save it but without too much hope for permanent success because the locals have annual meetings of THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RATTLESNAKE HUNTERS where one can earn a Certificate of Bravery, equivalent to a Dalhousie BA, for killing a rattlesnake. These meetings are accompanied by dinners; were naturally snake meat is served, side shows, a snake charm beauty queen, and a snake auction where one can buy his own snake for food, belts, or souvenir. The movie frowned on this but only mentioned it once and didn't elaborate, on either the role of the rattlesnake in the local ecology or that it has killed very few men especially in the last few years with the possession of effective antitoxins.

The movie moved onto the mustangs telling how they were going to drive the ranchers off the range because of competition with the cattle over water. The horses being much better at locating and more movable to water holes. Recent laws and Billy Jack are saving the once declining hers and as the movie seemed to promote, they have now grown to such sizes that poor ranchers like the Cliffords will go bankrupt if they don't start killing them again. There were no herds in the movie over twelve horses. There are few who can seriously believe that the small numbers of mustangs are actually much of a threat. The kill "instinct" towards the horses is summed up by the small town paper editor, "If we can't use them, they ain't worth a damn." and the counter along with traditions of the old west and freedom, "Everything has a right to life. That's a God given gift."

Although the movie seemed to support the ranchers, it could be said that they straddled the fence but with the coyote, there is no doubt. The movie supported the ideas that the coyote was the mass murderer that the ranchers want people to believe. The film looked down on the laws forbidding poison on federal

lands and only setting of simple traps. It disregarded the fact that in most areas, poison is permitted on private land, and is still carried on in tenfold excess. **Slaughter The Animals, Poison The Earth** by Jack Olsen gives details on actual amounts of poisons used and the sheep that are actually lost each year. It is the complete opposite to the movie.

A shotgun shell/cyanide filled "coyote-getter" should be renamed "little-boy getters" but the name would not have been completely descriptive either; the cyanide loaded cartridges are also old man getters, dog getters, Girl Scout getters, cow getters, fox and marten and wolverine getters. They are getters in fact of anything that has the natural curiosity to reach down and tug lightly... on the trap.

Aerial poisoning all year round, appropriate off road vehicles in their proper season, and individuals place meat baited with cyanide, arsenic, thallium, strychnine, and 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) to kill the coyote. The latter poison remains in the dead animal's system unchanged and kills the next animal to feed on the victim and the next animal after than in mortal chain reaction. "I've found all kinds of birds dead at 1080 stations, eagles, magpies, Canada Jays, Clarke's Nutcrackers, woodpeckers..." "If they can wipe out whole species way back here in this part of the Rockies, they can wipe them out anywhere."

Even as the numbers of animals drop, "the Fish and Wildlife Service's animal budge for killing and poisoning rises inversely in magnificent adherence to Parkinson's Law." The book talks of the exaggerated stories of the ranchers, the willingness of the ranch-controlled government poisoners, and the massive killing program carried on. Olsen after meeting both sides has put forward proof that was bluntly hidden in the National Geographic Special. In the final assessment, it was an ill-thought movie. **THE ANIMALS NOBODY LOVED.** "One day I caught a couple of coyote pups and I thought they were cute... So I put the pups down and I stomped on their heads."