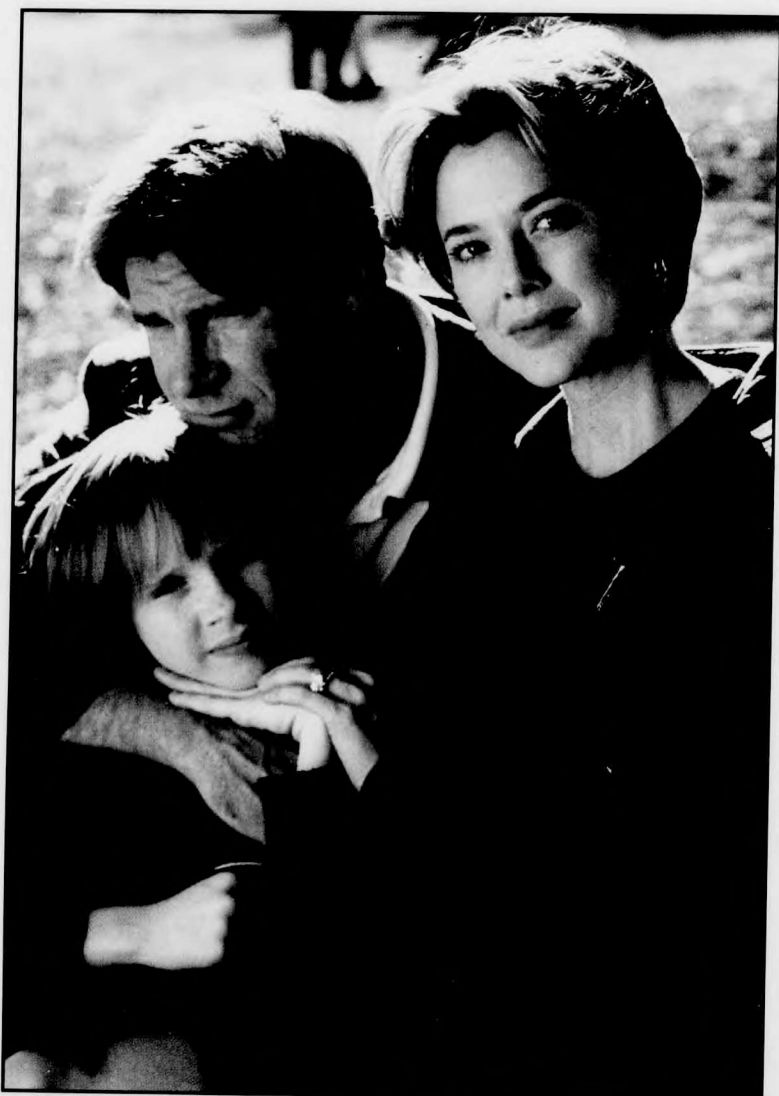


# REGARDING HENRY

## MIKE NICHOLS AND HARRISON FORD IN A WELCOME REUNION



Connecticut before attending the University of Chicago.

There he met Elaine May, and the two eventually dropped out of school to follow their theatrical ambitions. A flair for improvisational comedy soon led them to a three-year nightclub engagement in Chicago.

"I learned two things from improvising that turned out to be invaluable in directing," Nichols once told *The New York Times* reporter Barbara Gelb about his days performing comedy sketches with Elaine May. "One was to be confident with an audience. Being in front of an audience every night for three or four hours, you learn to think, I can take care of you guys." The other, he added, was to look for "the event in any scene — a central bit of action that would make dialogue come alive."

There is no reason to think any of this will change with **Regarding Henry**, Nichols's latest cinematic observation on the human condition. Harrison Ford plays a rich, successful man who has a beautiful wife, an adorable daughter — and no heart. Then a tragic event changes everything. In the aftermath, Ford's character is given an

opportunity to start over, to gain a new friend, and to rebuild his family relationships.

Shot on location in New York City, **Regarding Henry** marks the first reunion of Nichols and Ford since *Working Girl*. The picture costars Annette Bening, recently a best-supporting-actress nominee for *The Grifters*, and Bill Nunn, who starred as the defiant "Radio" Raheem in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*.

Nichols's methods are highly personal. In rehearsal he often clarifies things for his cast by referring to incidents in his own life. "Partly, I do this because it's all I know," he explains, "and partly because I want to encourage them to pour *their* lives into what they're doing."

Still, he says, a director is always flying blind. He laughingly compares directing to sex: "You never see anybody else doing it, so you're never sure you're doing it right."

If three decades of memorable films count for anything, Mike Nichols is doing something right.

**Regarding Henry** opens this summer.

— Allen Gerrard



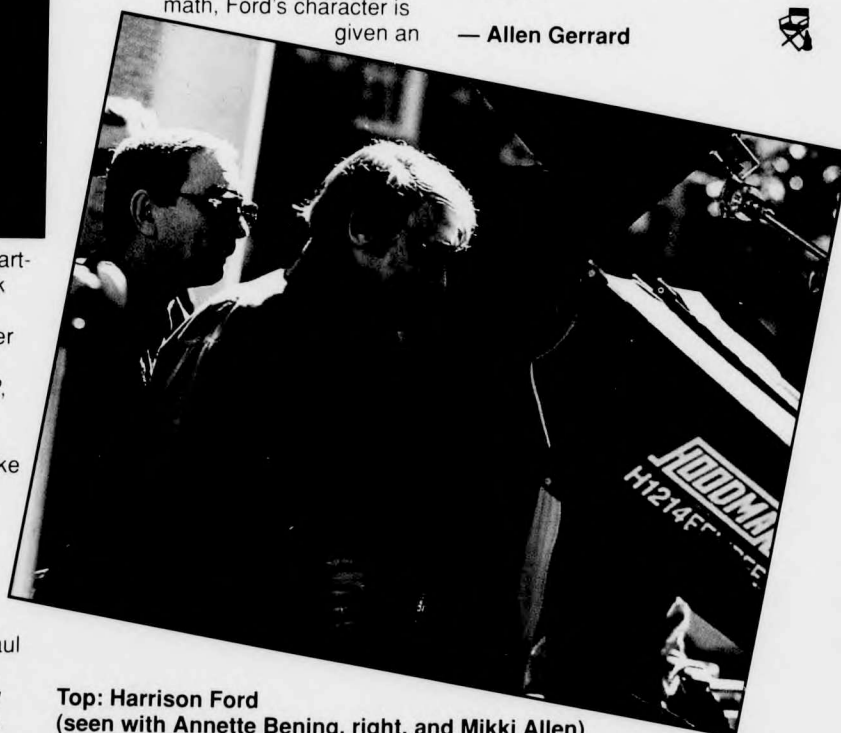
**B**efore there was Mike Nichols the director, there was Mike Nichols the stand-up comedian. Not that he was your average comic.

For one thing, Nichols and his partner, Elaine May, ended up with their own Broadway show, a rarity for comedians. For another thing, their show wasn't just funny. In fact, what distinguished Nichols and May from many other comics was that, often, some serious social observation lay at the root of what struck Nichols and May as funny.

In the 31 years since that Broadway debut, the only thing that has changed, really, is that instead

of making jokes, Mike Nichols started making movies. But his attack — what you might call laughing your way to the truth — has never altered. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The Graduate*, *Catch-22*, *Carnal Knowledge*, *Silkwood*, *Heartburn*, *Postcards from the Edge* — to review the films of Mike Nichols is to review a history of social and personal change viewed from a highly amused, slightly horrified perspective.

Born in Berlin, Germany, in 1931, Nichols was the son of a Russian-Jewish physician, Dr. Paul Peschkowsky. Fleeing the Nazis, the Peschkowskys settled in New York City where they adopted the name Nichols. Mike went to private schools in Manhattan and



**Top: Harrison Ford (seen with Annette Bening, right, and Mikki Allen) plays a rich man who is forced to reexamine his life. Above: (from left) Giuseppe Rotunno, director Mike Nichols and Ford.**