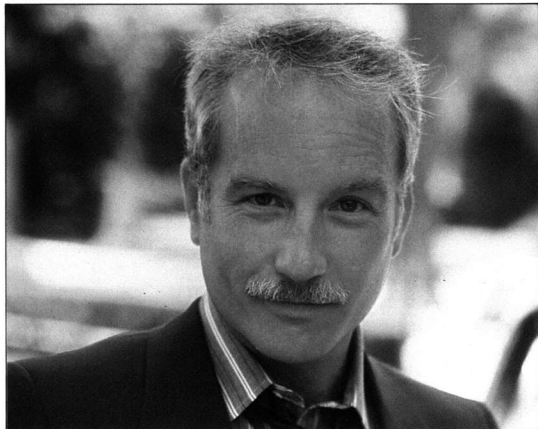


# MOON OVER PARADOR

## STARS RICHARD DREYFUSS



Richard Dreyfuss (above) and (below left) with Paul Mazursky on the set of *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*

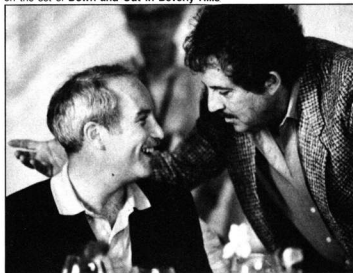
**N**ewly successful director Paul Mazursky modestly balks at the idea that he was somehow

Richard Dreyfuss' personal career savior. But he does subscribe to the notion that the two belonged together in a strange, karmic way, if only because fate seemed to be working against them for so long.

In 1975, Mazursky had been impressed with the young, talented but wildly temperamental Dreyfuss and his roles in *American Graffiti* and *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* and set about landing him for his movie *Next Stop Greenwich Village*. However, Dreyfuss had just done *Jaws* and his agent wasn't returning phone calls.

Years later Mazursky's *An Unmarried Woman* and Dreyfuss' *The Goodbye Girl* were shot within blocks of each other in New York and Mazursky started nagging Dreyfuss to appear in his next film *Willie and Phil*.

"Richard says 'If you get Robert DeNiro to play Willie, the WKSJ-TV play Phil, the Italian.' I said 'What are you, crazy?'"



Mazursky recalled for the *Toronto Sun*.

"At this point I said 'Ah, the hell with it. Richard Dreyfuss and I are never going to work together.'" He would never have predicted that, by 1988, the two would have two films together under their belts — *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* and the just-released *Moon Over Parador*.

What Mazursky didn't know, or perhaps didn't believe, was that the young Dreyfuss was a runaway train of self-destruction throughout the '70s and early '80s, addicted to percodan, cocaine and alcohol. His erratic behavior — which included walking off the set of *All That Jazz* and being replaced by Roy Scheider — culminated in a car

crash in 1982 in which Dreyfuss drove his Mercedes into a tree.

Unlike the character he played in *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* Dreyfuss wasn't paralyzed.

Indeed, he recovered fairly easily from the accident and had an open door to picking up the pieces of his career. Still, his actions weren't completely cool and calculating. Even sober, he backed out at the last minute on a role in the multi-million dollar CBS mini-series of Jeffrey Archer's book *Kane and Abel* disgruntled with the script.

Then came Mazursky's *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*. "He came into my office," Mazursky told *Esquire* and — to use the word 'tumble' might be an exaggeration — but he really wanted to be part of the project." Ironically, Dreyfuss first read for the part of the drunk and bombed. "He was too structured" the director says "I didn't believe he drank."

The rest we all know. *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* — with a risky cast *People* magazine called "a leper colony that worked" — became a box-office smash, firmly establishing Mazursky as a 'money' director and Dreyfuss as a major star.

In fact, despite the years of not quite connecting there's a great deal in Mazursky's and Dreyfuss' styles that would match. The director has made a career playing concerts on the audience's emotions — whether trumpeting America in *Moscow on the Hudson* or decrying its most venal excesses in *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*. Dreyfuss — even at a remarkably distinguished age 40, markedly less manic than before — is still capable of acting as a raw nerve and bringing emotions from the page to the screen with the intensity of a fire hose.

*Moon Over Parador*, a quirky turn on the *Prince and The Pauper* theme, sees Dreyfuss as an itinerant actor who stumbles into a job masquerading as a junta-borne Latin American dictator. Amid the spoof, we can expect the usual Mazursky moral sense and electric Dreyfuss approach.

It's not a totally reflexive style. Dreyfuss is a relentlessly reader and intellectual-in-training (he even listens to taped books as he drives). "I don't want to say there are no other intelligent people in the acting community besides Richard," says Mazursky "but there aren't a lot."

— Jim Stotek