

*The Kingdom and the Power***New York Times saga gossipy but not overly penetrating**

I recall reading an interview once with Harold Robbins where he gave the formula for a best-seller. What the public wants, Robbins said, was to have some well-known or respected institution or profession laid bare.

For instance, they are eager to know what goes on behind the facade of Hollywood as Robbins presumes he told them in *The Carpetbaggers*. This formula is essentially the key to the immense success of Arthur Hailey's potboilers, *Hotel and Airport*. Now Gay Talese has used this same concept in non-fiction with his *The Kingdom and the Power: "The Story of the Men who Influence the Institution that Influences the World"*, which is, need I add, *The New York Times*.

The New York Times is certainly the

most influential single paper in the world. The weight it carries is vast. Yet I, among many others, do not consider it to be the best at all.

The paper irates me. For all its great size there doesn't really seem to be that much there. The endless pages of plush advertising are maddening and *The Times* takes itself much too seriously. The Times coughs up column after column of tiresome dull articles written in a strikingly colorless manner.

The Times may very well print "All The News That's Fit to Print," as its motto claims, but it is far too much for my digestive system.

But a paper of *The Times'* great significance does warrant a study. And Gay Talese is very well qualified to write such a

study. He worked on *The Times* for ten years and since leaving it to strike out on his own has established himself as one of America's best magazine journalists (he wrote, among other things, the incisive Esquire interviews with Sinatra and Joe DiMaggio).

*The Kingdom and the Power* unfortunately does not deal much with *The Times'* journalistic methods or its great impact upon the world, but more with the men who are behind the grey old lady of U.S. newspapers.

All Timesmen, no matter how divergent their backgrounds, have one common bond: a belief in the greatness and importance of their paper. For some, working on *The Times* is almost a holy mission. They venerate the Times as a sort of modern-day bitch goddess that must be sheltered from the grubby, grasping hands surrounding it.

"They regarded *The Times* as one of the few predictable things left in modern America," Talese says, "and they accepted this fact with degrees of admiration and cynicism."

Talese's story of *The Times* is gossipy and often petty. He is fascinated by the power battles that take place in the backrooms of *The Times*. Luckily, most Timesmen are pretty interesting fellows, like the reserved and moderate James Reston who battles over his Washington bureau and the dandyish Managing Editor Clifton Daniel (who had the good fortune of winning the hand of Margaret Truman). But what we need is a thoughtful and critical dissection of *The Times* and not a personality parade of its staff.

*The Times* is fallible, which might come as a surprise revelation to the many who swear by the paper. Under its famed banner *The Times* often wields its power in a deceiving manner. The Times knew of the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion beforehand but decided not to reveal the plans. If it had it is very possible that the fiasco would never have happened.

*The Times* again showed poor judgment when in the post-McCarthy fifties it only too readily dismissed members of the staff with Communist backgrounds.

The case of Daniel Burros is another indication of the insidious power of *The Times*. A reporter discovered that Burros, New York head of the American Nazi Party, was Jewish. Burros killed himself on the day *The Times* printed its findings. The impact and power of *The Times* is more frightening than awe-inspiring.

As the power of *The Times* grows steadily it is easy to understand why it is being disregarded by more and more people. People are realising that often what *The Times* prints is really what *The Times* sees fit to print. Many are turning to small underground papers that are not tied to such traditional and vast organisations. — D.McC.

***Model Shop is an unintentional comedy***

By JIM PURDY

In *Model Shop* a disillusioned young man surrenders his job because of its emptiness, his car to the finance company, his girlfriend to another boy-friend, his freedom to the draft board and his mother-figure, an older woman, to her young son. In the end, when he has lost everything, the picture fades and the young man's voice promises that he will try to start over.

Of course, alienated, confused youths trying to find themselves have been a recurring subject in films, the most successful being *The Graduate* and *Stolen Kisses*. In their treatments both Nichols and Truffaut handled the theme with comic sarcasm, and, unwittingly, so has writer-

director Jacques Demy in *Model Shop*.

The unintentional comedy springs from the obvious, simple-minded story and, to an even greater degree, from the actual presentation. Demy is a Frenchman writing English dialogue so that the conversations are contrived, artificial and downright comical.

Specific items must be covered in a discussion, but there is no subtlety or transition between topics, each merely following the other with an introductory, clumsy "so you think this or that".

There are even sermons, where the girlfriend angrily describes George with every stereo-typed label popularly applied to the

"mixed-up, anti-social bum, who hates the Establishment, refuses to work and can't get along with anyone".

There is no way the actors can possibly breathe life into such flat, comic-book dialogue. Their delivery merely imitates the wooden inflections fossilized by massive over-use in soap-operas and melodrama. It extends beyond camp to the ludicrous and the implausible.

This helps to utterly destroy the story, which is obvious and superficial in its own right, without such a mechanical, grotesque presentation. How such a botch of a film was ever seriously produced, let alone distributed, is beyond me.

# Media

# one stop

HIP CLOTHES  
INCLUDING  
HATS, BELTS  
AND PURSES  
RECORDS  
INCENSE  
AND MORE

610 YONGE

MEDIA (1) STOP BOUTIQUE  
610 YONGE STREET  
920-4188