

Take the bus: it's cheaper, and safer

When a theatre holds a sneak-preview for an upcoming film, it's usually for the benefit of one or two media people slumped in seats on opposite sides of the auditorium.

The Rialto 1 sneak-preview of the much-acclaimed *Taxi Driver* was a little different. More than fifty blue-uniformed people were in attendance. Censor board officials? No - taxi drivers.

Those city taxi drivers probably left the theatre feeling glad. Glad that they're not working in the streets of New York. And Edmonton audiences will no doubt leave feeling just as glad - that they're not living in the streets of New York.

In the past few years, the USA (particularly New York) has produced a number of what could be called "street" movies. *Taxi Driver* has got to be the best of this genre yet to appear.

We, along with the naive cowboy, were initiated into the streets of New York in *Midnight Cowboy*. Then there was *Mean Streets*, *Fat City* and the more recent *Dog Day Afternoon*.

These movies became progressively more frightening with their processions of pimps, hookers, junkies, thugs, crooks and other just-plain folks.

Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* is the most terrifying of all. He shows us the streets of Harlem and the Bronx through the eyes of a taxi driver who is at least a little odd, if not to say a raving lunatic.

The cabbie (magnificently acted by Robert DeNiro) cruises the hot, wet (jungle)streets of

the city, picking up a series of 'interesting' fares. These include a well-spoken murderer in evening attire, a 12-year-old hooker and a presidential candidate, to name a few.

An insomniac, the driver works the night shift. We are given some of the most beautiful moments of film footage ever as he cruises the streets - up and down the wet, neon pavements of dripping

reds and blues.

His name is Travis Bickle, and he's (you hope) a bit different from your normal taxi driver. He lives in a sordid little room, cannot sleep and keeps a diary, in which he writes about the sad and sickening "scum" on the streets.

Travis is an enigmatic character, to say the very least. Throughout the film, one is constantly trying to pigeon-hole

him - is he just a regular guy, or a psycho, a crook, a genius or a prophet? By the end of the film, you're still not sure, but it doesn't matter. And to try to give you an idea of the basic story line is fruitless. There are four or five stories in the film, all combining to make none. But that doesn't matter, either. You still leave the theatre with enough action, characters, plot, and racked nerves to last several weeks.

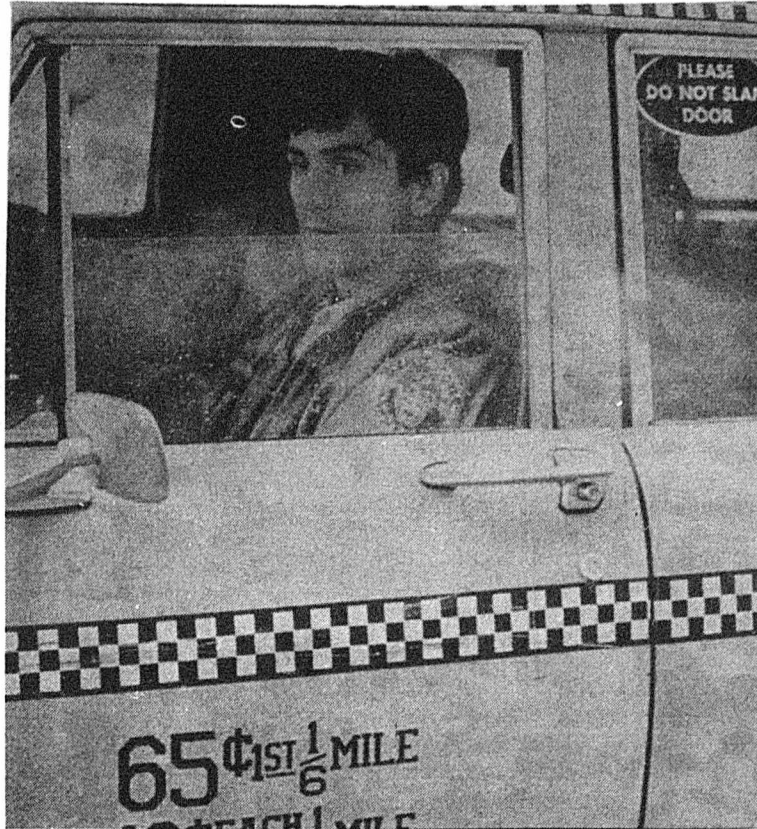
The film is one of suspense - the audience's nerves are tightened and stretched until the very last moment; but when the violence does actually occur, one is still somewhat surprised, and shocked. At one point in the film, Travis mutters something about cleaning up the scum on the streets, and about how they should be blown off the face of the earth. Then he (a former Marine) buys himself an arsenal of guns big and deadly enough to feed an

army. For the rest of the film, he carries five or six guns and a knife on his person. To sit and wonder when he is going to use them on the five or six people he could conceivably use them on is unbearable.

Director Martin Scorsese does some fascinating things with camera angle and placement, and with lighting. One wonders just why he did set up some of the shots the way he did, but monotony is never the result. Best of all, the result is the ease with which the audience is drawn into Travis' world. And that's one of the reasons it's so hard to decide if he's crazy or not - you're practically inside his head - inside his massive loneliness and isolation.

Taxi Driver will not leave you cold - it may not leave you happy or relaxed either. But it will leave you wondering.

It starts Friday at the Rialto 1, and must not be missed.



The Edmonton cabbie audience groaned in sympathy when they saw this evidence of a N.Y. driver's 65 cent flat rate in a sneak-preview of *Taxi Driver*.

U of T ... Write on!

This summer, beginning writers will come from all over North America to meet and talk to established novelists, poets, playwrights and journalists during the two weeks of the 9th Annual Summer Writers' Workshop at New College, University of Toronto.

This is Canada's largest summer Writers' Workshop where students of all ages can meet, talk to and discuss their own writing with well known novelists, poets, playwrights, and journalists.

A highlight of the workshop will be a Saturday Canadian Poetry Festival with readings by John Robert

Colombo, Phyllis Gotlieb, Joe Rosenblatt, Francis Sparshott, Brian Thackray, Miriam Waddington, and The Horsemen.


Toronto freelance writer D. Reid Powell, a former workshop student said in *Quill & Quire* that the workshop is "one of the few places a beginner can have direct contact with other writers at all

levels of accomplishment ... (it offers) not only critical evaluation but also spiritual environment and possibilities for university development."

For brochure write Writers' Workshop, 165 Spadina Ave., Suite 8, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2C4 or call 364-3818. Dormitory rooms are available at moderate rates.


Dracula meets Buck Rogers

On Tuesday, Mar. 23, the Edmonton Science Fiction and Comic Art Society will present what is considered the finest *Dracula* film ever produced, *Nosferatu*. The film, made in 1922, will be shown in the Art Gallery Theatre downtown, following a meeting at 7 p.m. In addition to the feature, there will be a showing of the first three chapters of the 1940's *Buck Rogers* Serial. Admission is \$2 for members, \$2.50 for non-members. Memberships at the door.



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