

# The Seduction of Joe Tynan: Typical

by Frank McGinn

As somebody or brother once remarked, "The Seduction of Joe Tynan" is a good movie but it's nothing that we haven't seen before. It's about politics, and in the movies politicians are either vile and corrupt or charming and noble. If they are wicked, then the movie shows their downfall (see "All the King's Men") and if they are saintly, it shows how they must compromise their integrity in order to survive (see "The Candidate").

Joe Tynan is an eminently likeable, liberal senator and therefore his story goes the moral quandy route, with Joe suffering mid-life crises of conscience in both his public and private lives. As I say, however, the film is intelligent, thoughtful and humane and the degree to which it thrills you most depends on the order in which you care to qualify it. Is it good but not particularly original, or not particularly original but good?

I tend to go with the latter viewpoint, mainly because the acting here is so lovely. The three leads, Alan Alda, Barbara Harris and Meryl Streep, are either perfectly cast or

exceptionally gifted, or both. And as secondary senators, Melvyn Douglas and Rip Torn lend an air of seedy realism to the corridors of power.

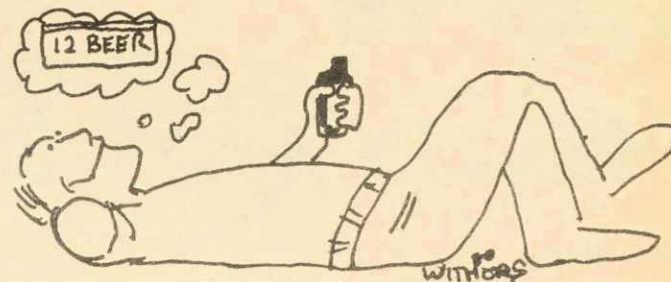
Alan Alda, in the title role, slips on his character like a body stocking. It's probably safe to say that he had himself in mind when he wrote this screenplay because the role is perfectly tailored to his talents and, especially, his looks. M\*A\*S\*H fans all, we are familiar with Alda's sincere, sarcastic delivery but on the wide screen he is also breathtakingly beautiful. With his clean, sharp profile, distinguished, greying hair and compact body he is as handsome as a matinee idol, and intelligent looking besides. All of which serves him well in the rendering of Joe Tynan—super politician.

Joe is the people's friend, and no wonder. He is also beset with personal problems, trying to love two, and Alda's warm, steady gaze is perfect for conveying any intimate emotion from lust to deep despair. Politicians don't really look this good, only actors do, but Alda makes it a believable fantasy.

As the women in Joe's life, wife and mistress respectively, Barbara Harris and Meryl Streep bring far more to their roles than is written in them. It's mainly Joe's movie and the function of his women is to illuminate the various facets of his character, and to provide the necessary conflict.

With his wife, Joe is affectionate and humorous and with his mistress he is more of a beast, and eventually he must choose between them. That sort of thing. But Harris grabs her slim scenes and squeezes them into a fully realized character. Joe's wife is a troubled, sensitive lady, perceptive, humorous and sexy.

And Meryl Streep sweeps the movie right into her corner. Her character is just your basic mistress, provocative and sympathetic, but the strength she brings to the part dominates the action. She strains the boundaries of her role like a thoroughbred race horse pulling a handsome cab and it seems to me about time that some producer gave her a movie that would let her run full out.



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Sloan, however, not only discusses women's rights but also ridicules man's desire to fight. The question of war arises when Al says he must defend Willy's honour. It is clearly shown that Al is fighting only to defend his own pride. This issue has direct comments on all religious wars. Jari-Matti Helppi as Al gives the audience a good look at the futility and stupidity of war.

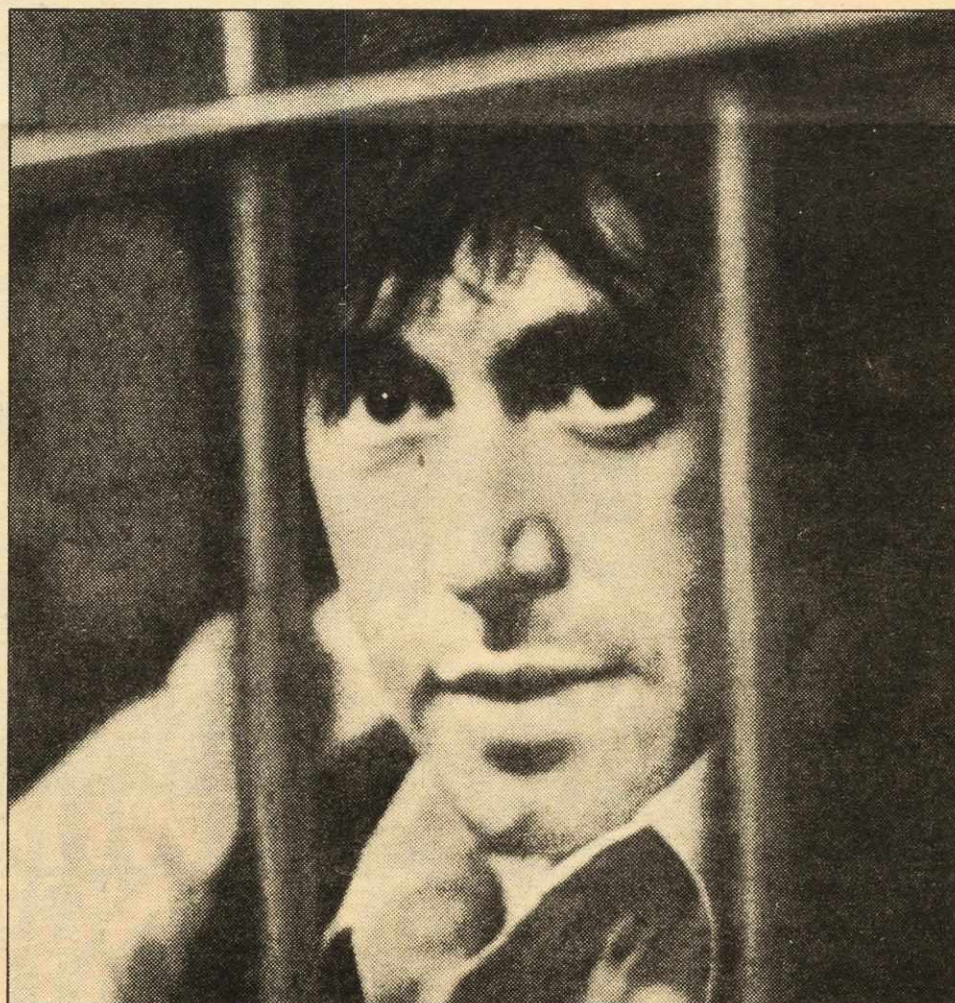
The last comment that the playwright makes is on the question of death. After Al and Meg have vainly tried to smooth out their differences and accept life's problems Willy points out that the last joke is on them. The only possible solution to the miseries in life is death. Al and Meg must accept this concept, death despite all its vagueness.

The actors made a fine

effort of provoking today's issues through the comical lines. Jari-Matti Helppi almost stole the show with his portrayal of Al. Helppi had all of Gomer Pyle's innocence and naivety. His humorous facial expressions broke the otherwise uneasy silences due to technical problems. Helppi's talent should take him far. Tom Regan's portrayal of Willy as neurotic God was also effective. Somehow he just seemed to suit the part. Regan held the audience's attention during the long and inactive beginning. Meg, played by Judith Slater was somewhat less convincing. One wonders whether she truly believed the issues she was raising. The play demanded a lot of imagination from the actors but they were willing and receptive to today's issues. A well written, thought-provoking comedy.

Once in a while  
someone fights back.

AL PACINO  
in



A JOE WIZAN Presentation

A NORMAN JEWISON Film

AL PACINO

"... AND JUSTICE FOR ALL" JACK WARDEN · JOHN FORSYTHE and LEE STRASBERG

Music by DAVE GRUSIN Lyrics by ALAN & MARILYN BERGMAN Written by VALERIE CURTIN & BARRY LEVINSON

Executive Producer JOE WIZAN Produced by NORMAN JEWISON & PATRICK PALMER

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