

Making Apocalypse Now

Episode 14: Playboy



Forward

By **CINEMATYLER**

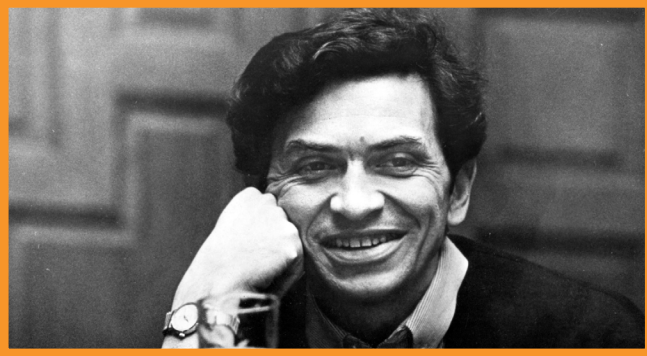
Thanks for supporting this series! I really appreciate it. The Playboy sequence does a great job of toeing the line between realistic and surrealistic. It was fascinating to read John Milius' original description of the stage being surrounded by punji stakes, barbed wire, and armed guards with dogs. The description definitely comes across as more satirical in the script than in the movie. I think Coppola found a perfect balance while making the scene so that it sort of slowly becomes more and more bizarre.

It was also cool to learn a little bit more about Bill Graham. I've been hearing his name a lot

while living in the San Francisco Bay Area, but he died when I was quite young. I grew up going to the Fillmore and Bill Graham Civic, so it was really interesting to see that his cameo gave more credibility to the scene. It was also hilarious to hear about him giving Coppola weed cookies at the Oscars.

But in this companion, we are going to take a closer look at the USO and how it became an important part of boosting morale for America's troops during conflicts.

CONTENTS



Characters

-Pg 3-



The USO

-Pg 4-



Selected Comments

-Pg 8-

CHARACTERS



Francis Ford Coppola:

The Hero. A director coming off the massive success of *The Conversation* and *The Godfather* parts I and II is about to embark on a journey that will test his limits—physically, mentally, and spiritually. Will he change the film industry? Will he survive?



Vittorio Storaro:

The Genius. An Italian cinematographer apprehensively accepts perhaps the most important role on this team—capturing the images that will tell this epic story. A true student of light and color, Storaro must bring these grand ideas into reality. Failure would bring a potential end to Coppola's career. Can he do it?



Bill Graham:

The Cameo. A legend of the San Francisco Bay Area where Coppola's Zoetrope Studios calls home. This iconic concert promoter would add even more realism to the production.



Martin Sheen:

The Face. An actor yearning to become a movie star will go through a journey similar to his character, Willard. In order to exorcise his demons, he must face his one true enemy... himself.

USO

BY SOPHIE



Marlene Dietrich's second tour lasted 11 months. (USO)

ORIGINS - WWII

The United Service Organizations, or USO, was founded in 1941 by Mary Ingraham after President Franklin D. Roosevelt requested action to provide morale and recreational services to U.S. military personnel.¹ Ingraham brought together six civilian organizations to work together as a whole, some of which had provided similar services independently during World War One.² These were the Salvation Army, YMCA, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), National Catholic Community Service, National Travelers Aid Association, and the National Jewish Welfare Board.³

The USO began by opening centers and clubs around the world as a "home away from home," a place where GIs could go for social events, and

entertainment, a quiet place to talk or write letters, or grab some free food.⁴ Of course, the most famous service that the USO provided were the "camp shows," which, with the help of the entertainment industry, brought actors, musicians, and comedians to service men and women at home and overseas.⁵

Due partly to lack of funds, the USO was disbanded in 1947, though only for a short time.⁶ When the U.S. entered the Korean War in 1951 it was revived.⁷

VIETNAM

The first USO club opened in Saigon in April of 1963, before the first combat troops had even arrived in Vietnam.⁸ During Vietnam the USO presented more than 5,000 performances in shows

USO

BY SOPHIE

that featured celebrities such as John Wayne, Anne-Margaret, Sammy Davis Jr, and Bob Hope, to name just a few.⁹

As you could probably tell from the scene in the movie, women played a major role in the USO's work—specifically, attractive American women.¹⁰ USO clubs all over the world recruited women not only to serve food and drink, but to dance and talk with soldiers.¹¹ As women were not able to serve in combat at the time, providing comfort as part of the USO was one of the limited ways American women could show patriotism and support the war effort.¹²

In addition to comfort, the presence of American women also acted as motivation for the soldiers, and the women who performed in camp shows were a major part of this. According to one author, these women functioned as “a reward for fighting the war, as embodiments of what they were fighting for.”¹³ One Vietnam GI recalled, “We turned to watch Ann perform, and for about two minutes of American beauty, the war was forgotten. Everyone fully understood just what was really worth fighting for. ... The show was fantastic, but the escape the Bob Hope tour provided us in expectation for days before, and after, helped us keep in touch with what we were there for – God, Country, apple pie ... and Ann-Margret!”¹⁴

PLAYBOY

It's worth noting that Playboy models (at least as a group) never actually participated in USO camp shows.¹⁵ However, Playboy did have some interesting roles to play in Vietnam. Besides the obvious appeal of the pinups, Playboy brought



Does this mean Ann Margret's not coming?

serious journalism from celebrated writers to soldiers; there's a reason “I only read it for the articles!” was a popular joke—it was at least partially true.¹⁶ The magazine's stance during the war was to be uninhibited in regards to criticism of the war and of politicians, but was supportive of the soldiers themselves.¹⁷ This allowed soldiers to see critiques of the wildly unpopular war without feeling that they were being demonized.¹⁸ It was a kind of news coverage that they certainly weren't going to get from Stars and Stripes.¹⁹

Playboy also kept soldiers in touch with the rapidly shifting cultural norms at home.²⁰ Playmates or the “Sweetheart of the Month” as they were originally called, were portrayed as sophisticated, intelligent women, with sexual appetites equal to the “ideal man” that the publication described.²¹ As opposed to the usually famous pinups of World War Two,

USO

BY SOPHIE

Playboy showed largely unknown models who reminded soldiers of the “real women” back home, and the inclusion of women of color as early as 1964 reflected changing attitudes surrounding race and definitions of beauty.²² The magazine also featured hard-hitting articles on issues as controversial and diverse as “feminism, abortion, gay rights, race, economic issues, the counterculture movement and mass incarceration.”²³

Perhaps most important was how the magazine gave soldiers a voice that they hadn’t had before.²⁴ Soldiers wrote into sections such as “Dear Playboy” and “The Playboy Forum” to describe their wartime experiences, including sensitive topics such as unfair treatment by the military, difficulties transitioning back to civilian life, and homosexuality in the military.²⁵ These forums allowed soldiers to connect to their fellow servicemen as well as the public at home.²⁶ In this context it’s no surprise that soldiers fighting in Vietnam often incorporated the Playboy logo into their uniforms and vehicles and used the name in call signs and nicknames.²⁷

The magazine continued to show support to Vietnam troops long after the war ended by funding documentaries on the war, research into Agent Orange, and studies on post-traumatic stress disorder.²⁸

TODAY

The USO continues to operate to this day, during both war and peace, and has come to be regarded as an essential part of military support despite being a civilian organization.²⁹ In 1997 Bob Hope—whose contributions to the USO began in 1941



Bob Hope and Ann Jillian at Desert Storm (Lietmotiv)

and continued until 1991, spending a total of 48 Christmases overseas and flying millions of miles to entertain G.I.’s during wartime and peace—became the first and only person to be declared an honorary veteran of the U.S. armed forces by Congress.³⁰

SOURCES

Endnotes

1. USO Wikipedia page
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Service_Organizations
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. "How Playboy Explains Vietnam" by Amber Batura, NYT opinion piece
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/28/opinion/how-playboy-explains-vietnam.html>
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. USO Wikipedia page
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Service_Organizations

Selected Comments

TIGER SCENE



Jesse Lapham

Chef is such a fun character. But also just as tragic as many of the others. He never wanted to be there. One of the saddest deaths in the movie, behind Fishburne's character and maybe the Vietnamese woman trying to protect the puppy.



Lounge Lizard

"Chef was wrapped too tight for Vietnam. He was probably wrapped too tight for New Orleans". I love that line, sums up his character perfectly. I wish he had lived, seems strange that he cared so much about staying alive and would die when Lance barely had his feet on the ground and made it.



Danny Cruz

That tiger scene was surreal and startling, seeing it for the first time. I love the behind-the-scenes stories about it...I would've freaked out seeing it on the plane too lol.



Lounge Lizard

My favourite scene, in one of my favourite movies. I put it on during overnight shifts often. I remember seeing this scene for the first time and thinking it stood out because of that eerie twilight lighting. The tension and release is done masterfully. Why can't movies be this dark and dripping with colour anymore? Thanks for covering it.



S

Sean Dawson

Coppola really did want the actors and production to feel what Vietnam was like for the people there. Just like the US government, he went to Vietnam with no idea how to end what he was doing. The only part where Coppola differed from the US government was that Coppola figured out a good way to end what he was doing in Vietnam!



D

David Snow

Coppola's chaotic process was pure art--- guided by a general idea malleable enough to go wherever the material determines.

Selected Comments

TIGER SCENE

R

RuyLopezQB6

It's really interesting to approach the movie production as if going into that war and that darkness. Perhaps this is a legacy of the plan to really shoot it in Vietnam, or something about Lucas and Milius wanting to compensate for not being drafted? And isn't it also poetic that the original script was about teaming up for victory at the end, and the actual movie ended without that victory at all. Was Coppola searching for a mess that he couldn't get out of and couldn't win?

M

Michael Hall

Could be, though I doubt that Lucas (or Coppola for that matter) were all that conflicted, not believing along with many of their generation that the war was winnable or even just. Milius did support the war, though, and had nothing but contempt for the hippies and other resisters who didn't. Nevertheless, he chose to go to film school, surf, and make movies rather than enlist. If APOCALYPSE NOW is some kind of compensation or penance for that, it certainly is an interesting one.

R

RuyLopezQB6

@Michael Hall It's just my own pointless speculation, and not that I'm implying they wanted to go, but both were rejected on medical grounds I believe, and when many of their generation went, I could imagine they see it differently than those outside draft age. I think Milius was rejected for asthma and Lucas for diabetes. Of course Lucas had his own early near death experience that dramatically shaped his life anyway.

In AG, set just before the start of the war, Curt, Terry and John are all different versions of Lucas, and Terry is M.I.A. in Vietnam in the epilogue.

D

Dead Set

1968 Ken Kesey's The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test also soundly expressed very firmly the 'never get off the boat' sentiment. Coppola observed how much was risked to change society by the all-in motivational "hippy" movement of the 1960s. D Hopper as well.

Selected Comments

TIGER SCENE



casinodelonge

You've probably commented on it elsewhere but for me, the Michael Herr dialog is the beating heart of the film, it's like seeing the pages of "Dispatches" brought to life, infact some scenes like the Thumperman at Do Lung Bridge are lifted directly from that book.



sir liner

The black guy with the M-79 Grenade Launcher(Thumper) was named Roach.



casinodelonge

@sir liner That's the guy, the scene was a straight lift from Dispatches, hell of a book. I must have read it a dozen times, and now when I read it, it's with Marty Sheen's voice for my internal monologue.



M

Michael Hall

@casinodelonge To an extent, I'd agree. I don't think the narration flows as well as the prose in "Dispatches" (some parts sound like a parody of Raymond Chandler), but a lot of it works really well — the nods to Conrad in particular, which elevate the material from Milius' macho posturing. Though I haven't read "Dispatches" in decades (it was part of my APOCALYPSE near-obsession), I recall it as being a damn-near-perfect work. My favorite line: "There was such energy there, American and essentially adolescent, that if it had been channeled into anything other than waste, noise, and pain, it could have lit up Indochina for a thousand years."

Patrons

THANK YOU!!!

Adam	Calin Lacea	Danial Sami	Emma Needham
Adam Savage	Caracasaurian	Daniel	eoin myxolodian
adnriy	Cary McManus-Davis	Daniel Martin-Mc-	Eric Dyck
Agustin Herrera	Charlotte Ostrov	Cormick	Eric Garson
Aj Salvo	Chevy West	Daniel Snitting	Eric Long
Alberto Pereira	Chris Carman	Darin Boville	Ethan Parfoot
Alberto Ulloa DP	Chris Maddox	Darren Kellaway	Eugenio Triana
Alex	Chris Markham	Darren Simon	ExitPursuedByABear
Alex Sadier-Gane	Chris Philbin	Dave Carroll	Farrell McGovern
Alexander Fryer	Chris Talerico	Dave Cavanaugh	felixgwen
Allyn Quigley	Chris Washburn	Dave Nagy	Florian Wyss
Andre K	Chris Weston	Davenezane Hayes	Gene Marcus
Andrés Yang	Chris Wright	David Dilling	Geoff Harrison
Andrew J. Brown	Christiaan Phleger	David Kehn	Giant Sparkplug
Andrew Mullins	Christian Belmonte	David Lieb	Glenn Broadway
Andrew Napier	Christopher Alexander	David Russell	Gonzalo Blasco
Andy Stobirski	Christopher Chen	David Sheffield	Graeme Neil Reid
Anton Halldin	christopher day	David Spake	Graham Carter
Anton Jaeger	Christopher Oberling	David Thornthwaite	Gregor P
Antonio Zapiain Luna	Christopher Urena	Deathpoul	halfsquatch
atd8vii	Chuck Harper	Denver Bravado	HellSent
Aurora Borealis	Cinereous Mourner	Dermot Power	Hernan Marques
Bart Kiggen	Clint Armstrong	Dianne Knudsen	Hugh
Ben Barnes	Colin Christian	Dick Hertz	Ian Schulz
ben hengst	Colleen Cupido	Dillon Norton	Ian Silvester
Ben Watson	connor	Dinnen Frank	Ingimundur Guð-
BigSalad	Costas Stergiou	Donald	mundsson
Bill Bates	Craig Borders	Doug	Intercut Podcast
Bob Lyness	Cristian Hampus	Drew	INTJ loves her INTP
Borys Vengerov	Cristopher Novick	Ed Salter	Ioan Scripcariu
Braden Hogan	cthuljew	Eddie Bowen	Ivan Fedorov
bree hopper	Cullen Duke	Edmond Woodfork	Ivar HEGGEN
Brendan Larkin	d10e	Edwin Jed Fish Gould	Jac Jack
Brendan Smith	dablamb	III	Jack McDonough
BRIAN GRANILLO	Dallas B	Ego Tripp	Jack McGrath
Brian Tinsely	damian karras	Eirik Berntsen	Jacob from Holland
Bryant	Dan Caffee	Eli Morgan Gesner	Jacob Ritter
bun ben ko	Dan Josefsson	Emily	Jacob Wiebold

Patrons

THANK YOU!!!

Jakub Łabeński	Kevin Boyd	Michael Andre	Quintin Owsley
James A. Ireland	Kevin Griffin	Michael Fitzhugh	quirkformity
James Day	Kheng Lai Tan	Mihir Vashi	R Ciampa
James R. Miro	Kieran Stephens	Mike Bird	Raja Thiagarajan
James Webb	kip calendine	mina jaweed	Ramble
Jan van Huizen	Konstantin Bredyuk	Minna Pallari	Rap Upz
Jason Arber	Kreme_Sauce	Moez Solis	Rex Dotson
Jason Phillips	Larry Williams	MrMcKonz	Ricardo P-Man
Jason Yeh	Lee Bailham	Ned Price	Richard
jaz h	lee jones	Neither-Neither	Richard M Campbell
Jean-Frédéric Beaudet	Leo Leigh	Nick	Richard Mawle
Jeff Preiss	Lily Blanchard	Nick Scafidi	Richard Millett
Jeff Wilson	loose wire	Nick's Personal Sym-	Rob Gilleece
Jeremy Bell	Luis Romero	phony	Rob Williamson
Jim Raden	Luis Trevino	Nicolas Marechal	Robert Burns
jittisoolt	M.T.	Nikita Liamzine	Robert Decker
Joel Shapiro	Makabe Rokurota	Nikita Shpanko	Robert Panico
Joey Steel	Make Stuff	Noah Smith	Robert Scharba
jogrnaut	Manon Raja	Odet Abadia	Ron Gilbert
John Cusack	Manuel Sepulveda	Oliver	Ronald Ladouceur
John Donaldson	Mark Hammer	Orapher	Rory Weden
John Dunn	Mark Wiitanen	P K	Royce Stephens
John Edge	Marshall Crawford	Paolo Barbolini	Rune Olsen
Johnny North	Martin Forchemer	Paul	Ryan Bailey
Johnny Oldfield	Mateya Lucic	Paul John Showalter	Ryan Ellis
Jon Power	Mats Helgesson	Paul Kyriazi	Sam Harwood
Jonathan R Charles	Matt	Paul Lashmana	Samuel Handwich
Jordan	Matt Dancer	Paul Sandammeer	Samuel McAlpine
Joseph Dillman	Matt Finnegan	Paul Spence	Santiago Abelleira
Joshua Carroll	Matt Rice	Paul Thomas	Scott
Justin Gaudet	Matthew Bouchard	Peter Foster	Scott Hoy
kcdg.dave	Matthew Dobson	Peter Runkel	Scott Rehorn
Keaton Smith	Matthew Lloyd	Peter Williamson	Scott South
Keith	Matthew Miller	Phil Strahl a.k.a. Pixel	Seamus Lavan
Keith J Pickett	Matthew Reyes	Prophecy	Sean Brennen
Kelly Ryan	Matthew Weinstein	Pineapples	Sean Brosmith
Ken Duncan	Mauro Vargas	pitgamer	Sean Doyle
Keon Hedayati	mcceri	Quincy Battieste	Sean Vale

Patrons

THANK YOU!!!

Seth Lochhead
Shane Reynolds
Shannon Gump
Shawn Hunter
SilentGhost
Simo Iiskola
Slater Jost
Spencer Somlyody
SpiderCoffee
Stefan Johnson
Stephen Glenn
Steve Wyshywaniuk
Steven Medcraft
Stuart Schwartz
Taylor DeLuca
TEB
Tee Bae Bae
Tenderloin Stew
The Brad Show
Thibault Longuet
Thomas Chen
Thomas Colella
timothy vollmer
Todd Hitomi
Tom May
Tom Vohasek
tony stone
Tord Nyttun
Trev Goldring
Trevor Blohm
Trevor Ramirez
TV's Ross
unos hombres buenos
VAUCHER ARCHITECT
veeti tuominen
Victor LaValle
Viktor Puchinger

warren blyth
Way of Cats
Will Turpin
William Cawlfeld
William Tompkins
woodruff phillips
Xenia Nobl
xnewdayrisingx
Zachary Sersland
ZeosPantera
Zerj
Zerodayton
Zig