

# Luft on Hollywood

## Caan the cowboy

● BY HERBERT G. LUFT  
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JAMES CAAN who demonstrates his skill as a frontier horseman showing that he can handle an old-fashioned gun, rope a steer and ride with the best cowboys, in the French Western movie, "Another Man, Another Chance", by Claude Lelouch, actually has competed successfully in rodeos against leading professionals with steer roping one of his specialities — though he is a modern

though he is a modern young man from the borough of Queens in New York.

Early he indulged in playing basketball and baseball; sports and his athletic prowess helping him to survive the tough element of the neighbourhood in Sunnyside. When he graduated at 16 from Rhodes High School in Manhattan, he was class president.

Wanting to become an actor but fearing parental objections, he took a summer job as athletic director at a Catskill resort, soon acquiring the added duties of a social director

duties of a social director and before long emceeing floor shows at the hotel.

When enrolling at Michigan State University, he felt somewhat out of place in the Midwest as a New York City Jewish kid, but his physical strength and fair play gained his respect when playing fresh-

man football and being accepted in the swimming team.

After transferring to Hofstra College on Long Island for his second year, where he majored in pre-law, he took on economics, business management and history.

He left school to pursue an acting career supporting himself with outside jobs.

## VERSATILE

Caan auditioned for Sanford Meisner and was accepted at the Neighborhood Playhouse. His professional debut was launched in 1961 with a nine month run of an off-Broadway production of "La Ronde," augmented by several segments of the New York based television series "Naked City."

After a series of TV roles in "Route 66," "Combat," "The Untouchables," "Wagon Train," "Ben Casey," "Alfred Hitch-

cock Presents," and "Dr. Kildare," he was signed for his first feature role in Hollywood, a sadistic heavy in "Lady in a Cage," with Olivia de Havilland.

After half a dozen other parts in period pictures and military yarns, he jumped to stardom as the villain opposite Simone Signoret in "Games."

His first association with Francis Ford Coppola came with "The Rain People," in which he essayed the character of a brain-damaged ex-football star.

After two other top assignments, he played the cancer-doomed fullback of the Chicago Bears in TV's "Brian's Song." He received an Oscar nomination for the portrayal of Sonny Corleone in Coppola's "The Godfather," a stunning performance which we could admire again on TV recently.

He rendered a subtle performance as Billy Rose in "Funny Lady," was a toughy in "Rollerball"; a small-time crook in "Harry and Walter go to New York," and a battered World War II GI in the current offering of "A Bridge Too Far." And now the frontier veterinarian of 100 years ago opposite Genevieve Bujold in the Lelouch movie, a three-dimensional characterisation of a man driven between his love to his

terisation of a man driven between his love to his family and devotion to his profession.

The contrast between the Westerner and the slick Mafioso in "The Godfather" is quite amazing. Seeing both parts within a week, one can appreciate the scope of James Caan's talent.



STEVEN SPIELBERG was at hand at an international press conference in Los Angeles at the Bonaventure Hotel after screening of his latest the \$20 million-plus spectacle, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" here surrounded by the two female stars, Teri Garr and Melinda Dillon plus the delightful youngster Cary

Guffey who with the innocence of youth believes in UFOs and fears none.

Spielberg, today 29, wrote the original story while preparing the all-time box office hit "Jaws" and editing his none-too-successful first feature film, "The Sugarland Express," that nonetheless was highly praised by the critics.

## INSIGHT

Upon questioning, the director confirms that the earlier encounter in the

earlier encounter in the film of unidentified flying objects by the power repairman Roy Neary (portrayed by Richard Dreyfuss) is well documented and based on expert observations.

The further nocturnal encounter and phenomenon of the skies, finding of physical evidence such as scorched earth and broken vegetation also have been researched by such scientists as Dr. J. Allen Hynek who attended the interview session.

The dramatic sightings with physical contacts and the events at a remote hillside that lead up to the climax are fictional and developed by the writer-director from his own instinct and imagination and according to him well in the range of possibility.

He remains evasive about details, such as the symbolism, the spidery figures emerging from the spaceship and the cause for the creatures from another planet to land on earth, feeling that the motion picture viewer should make up his own mind upon unexplained and unexplainable events.

To Spielberg, more important than conjecture is a feeling of compassion culminating in a benevolent exchange between creatures from two planets

exchange between  
creatures from two planets  
thousands of light years  
apart.

Famed French film director Francois Truffaut who portrays the all-knowing scientist Claude Lacombe reflects this spirit of interplanetary brotherhood.

The picture which was produced by Julia and Michael Phillips, photographed by Vilmos Zsigmond, edited by Michael Kahn, with special camera effects by Douglas Trumbull, in itself is a triumph of Hollywood's ingenuity. Yet, at times we wonder whether the technique is overpowering the mind and matter may overpower us all at the end.

Richard Dreyfuss missed the conference; he has already started his next picture, "The Big Fix," in which he portrays a private detective in addition to his bow as producer.

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