Bosworth reveals tragic life of Montgomery Clift

When Montgomery Clift, handsome movie star of *A Place in the Sun*, *From Here to Eternity* and *The Young Lions*, was a little boy he wrote his mother a note: "I love you. Why not?"

Patricia Bosworth's splendid new biography, *Montgomery Clift*, (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 438 pp. $12.95), tells us "why not," as she notes the strange, alienated childhood that eventually turned Clift from his role as a romantic screen hero to the life of a drunk, a drug addict, a tortured bisexual and to death from a heart attack at the age of 45.

His affluent Tennessee banker father went bankrupt in the Depression; and his snobbish mother, Sunny, deserted by her unmarried mother and raised by an adoptive family, spent her life trying to be accepted by the family she learned was hers: the prestigious Blairs of Maryland and the Andersons of Virginia. During Monty's childhood, she carted her three children all over Europe, trying to instill in them the culture and noblesse she thought was rightfully theirs.

Monty became infatuated with the theater when he was eight and saw the *Comedie Francaise*. He acted in his first Broadway play at 14 and with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in *There Shall Be No Night* when he was 19 (the Lunts almost adopted him). Montgomery Clift was an incredibly handsome young man; and both men and women were strongly attracted to him. Elizabeth Taylor, who played with him in *A Place in the Sun*, became his devoted friend and remained so throughout his life. In *From Here to Eternity* he played the young soldier, Prewitt, and even learned to play the bugle.

"I realized that Monty's best work was always his remarkable paring down to the essentials of a character," writes Miss Bosworth in her introduction. "In his movies Monty personified nonconformists and loners, who, in the midst of some violent crisis, seemed to be groping toward an understanding of themselves and the world; in so doing Monty always revealed some basic human truth."

His own violent crisis came in 1956 when he attended a dinner party at the home of his friend, Elizabeth Taylor (they were acting together in an epic of the Civil War, *Raintree County*, and smashed his car in a wreck on the way home, receiving injuries that left his face a wreck. He lived for ten more years, but as Miss

BOOKS
By WALTER SPEARMAN
Montgomery Clift
Patricia Bosworth

Bosworth says, "nothing would ever be the same for him after that."

His sexual ambiguity was one of his greatest problems and his biographer deals with that openly and sympathetically. He had countless affairs with both women and men, but would never admit he was homosexual. His friends said he got several girls pregnant, but he also lived with one male lover, Josh, for two years.

In his final years, when he was suffering from drink and drugs, "he often cruised on Forty-second Street before going to bed with Libby Holman" (a popular torch singer once married to North Carolina's Smith Reynolds). One of his friends told the author: "It didn't matter what sex you were. If Monty really liked you — man or woman — you ultimately went to bed with him."

Patricia Bosworth really does a superb job in this book. A former actress and editor, she had known Monty herself and then talked to hundreds of his friends, fellow actors and lovers of both sexes. Her appraisal of his acting is as sensitive as Monty's acting was; and when she writes of his physical and sexual difficulties, she portrays him as a haunted, hunted person who never found complete satisfaction in his human relationships — from his childhood with his possessive and obsessive mother, through his great triumphs on both stage and screen to his final tragic decline and death.

Point system may hike insurance for risky drivers

By RACHEL BROWN
Staff Writer

The staff of the N.C. Department of Insurance has proposed revisions in the insurance industry's system of classifying drivers for auto insurance saying the changes would increase rates charged to bad drivers to provide discounts for farmers, multi-car families and young drivers.

Under the revised system, auto insurance surcharges for bad drivers would be based on the point system used by the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles. Only liability insurance, which is required by law, would be affected.

Liability insurance covers damage to other cars and injuries to other people when the insured driver is at fault.

"We want to surcharge people based on their driving records," said Byron Tatum, deputy commissioner of the state insurance department.

Tatum said the proposals are in accordance with recent N.C. Supreme Court decisions saying use of the point system is in the public interest.

The charges include decreasing surcharges to a driver with less than two years of behind-the-wheel experience from $70 to $35. Families with more than one car would get a 5 percent increase in their discount liability insurance.

Points would be assessed against individual drivers instead of against an entire family, tending to lower rates for families which have more than one driver convicted of traffic violations.

Under the current system, a family is assessed seven points if the wife has three points and the husband has four. The revised system would require the family to pay separate surcharges for four points and three points instead of a surcharge for the seven-point total. The payment would decrease from $120 to $50.

A person convicted of driving under the influence of intoxicating substances now pays a $245 surcharge and is assessed 10 points. Under the new system, the figures would be $320 and 12 points.

A driver convicted of speeding over 55 mph would have a surcharge of $29 and 3 points assessed to him. This adds an extra point but reduces the present payment by $8.

A driver involved in an accident with injury of more than $200 damage would pay $50 and have no points assessed against him. The surcharge is now $48, with a two-point assessment.

An accident without injury or with damage less than $200 carries an assessment of one point and a surcharge of $7. The revision would eliminate the point and raise the surcharge to $25.