

Let Us Now Praise Jack Nicholson

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Features Editor

JACK NICHOLSON IS A BEAUTIFUL MAN. He is an indeed more beautiful man than Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, John Malkovich, Warren Beatty, Marlon Brando, Robert DeNiro, Daniel Day-Lewis, Robert Redford, and even Al Pacino. He is more beautiful than these men not for what he is as an individual but rather for what he has created as a character. Jack Nicholson is a beautiful man because he has given us what we have come to know today as *Jack Nicholson*.

With his most recent film, *Wolf*, now being shown at the nearby Quaker Cinema I thought now as apt a time as ever to tribute this great personage and speak briefly on what he has contributed to the collective consciousness of America and, to a lesser degree, the world.

Jack is distinguished from the likes of Pacino and Redford because Jack is no longer an actor, Jack is a sociological phenomenon. Perhaps this observation is not as accurate for our generation as for our parents' but, damnit, it should be. There is a lesson in Jack, one I believe many of us have missed.

Each actor seems to have a character, a collected individual who is the assimilation of all their previous parts. Robert DeNiro, for example, has made himself the image of a forever raging bull.

Sometimes he rages quietly (*The Mission*) and sometimes loudly (*Taxi Driver*). Robert Redford is the tortured, haunted, golden boy. Al Pacino is (with the single exception of *The Godfather*) mad and screaming about it. John Malkovich is mysteriously wicked and Marlon Brando is, well, Marlon Brando.

Jack, on the other hand...Jack is a way of life, a living, breathing attitude.

Last year, in preparation for *Wolf*, Jack was asked to do a typical promotional interview for *Vanity Fair* magazine. The eventual interview and accompanying article were not exactly typical. "There are only two people in this world you should have to lie to," Jack evenly told the magazine, "one is the cops the other is your girlfriend." Such a statement by such a prominent individual would usually be quickly followed in the media by downcast looks, condemnations and general ill-will towards the author.

But this was Jack talking and there is one fundamental understanding that most people have about the man which overrides almost any such reformatory backlash: Jack is honest. And really, in such an age of political correctness, prepared statements and specialized speech what could be more rare and valuable than honesty.

Sure, this is an outlook not prescribable for everyone. We can't possibly have everyone running about doing Jack. But when



everyone in the world seems to go out of their way to be quiet, to be unobtrusive, to be unassuming, doesn't it seem important to at least remember Jack.

Remember him asking for an order of toast even though it wasn't on the menu: "Allright, then I'd like a chicken salad sandwich, hold the lettuce hold the mayo. And one more thing, hold the chicken." "You want me to hold the chicken?" "No, I want you to hold it between your *kneeeees*."

Remember him describing the fairer sex after being scorned: "Women: a mistake? Or did He do it to us *on purpose*?"

Or even remember him philosophizing on the sheer injustice of the world: "Will somebody tell me what kind of world do we live in when a man dressed as a bat steals

all my press?"

Yes, and *Wolf* is no exception. Perhaps the first movie in which Jack gets to become *Jack, Wolf* is also the first of the actor's movies to take a stab at explicating what being Jack means. Advertised as the story of a man's transformation from wimpy book editor to badass man beast, *wolf* is also about the freedom of *Jack*

(or what the movie calls "Wolf").

The movie itself provides the best definition: "Love without doubt, power without guilt. It feels good to be a wolf, no?"

Still, being a *Wolf* is not being a god. Although Jack does in many ways have his similarities to especially the Greek god Dionysius, he is human—very human. There are dozens of books articles commentaries, what-have-you, that will describe in detail the people that Jack has hurt in his life: the broken relationships, the failed marriages, the BMWs whose windows were smashed by Jack and Jack's golf clubs.

But the original image persists. A man unfettered by the socialization of the gentleman. A creature who seems to move by instinct and intuition alone. A Man with a capi-

tal "M" who other men admire and look up to yet who is still true and unmitigated enough to cry out when he's hurt and run when he's scared.

And above all, through each action he makes on or off camera there is the feeling that it's *natural*. Too many of those our age strike out in impotent and contrived ways, trying desperately not to be domesticated, not to be controlled, but only proving the point more. Jack moves and Jack is. He will not rip his clothes to oppose convention or dreadlock his hair to establish his individual persona. Can you imagine anything more ridiculous? Jack exists in a far more eternal plane than those who swim in culture and those who counter it. Jack is forever.

And beyond this he is an amazingly gifted actor, a superlative artist, for how else could his message be so clear and so accessible? Jack Nicholson is a lesson well-learned.

I thought of Jack the other day, sitting in my comfortable bed on a lazy Sunday afternoon. The fire alarm went off, blaring its obnoxious message: "there's no fire, I'm just pathetic and need attention so I pulled this fire alarm to make you get up for no reason at all." So there I was, trying out of training to ignore it, ignore the noise and pretend it wasn't there—shut it out...shut it in. And then I heard his voice...whispering softly to me... and my eyes began to search the room for my five-iron.

AGONIES AND ECSTASIES

Those who have often claimed Greensboro to be a cultural vacuum had more evidence for their case this week. Anxious movie-goers hopeful and ready to see Robert Redford's highly-touted film *Quiz Show* were

turned away as such Triad area theatres as Brassfield, Litchfield, Janus, and Terrace all left the critically-acclaimed motion picture out of their weekly lineups. Strangely, all of these theatres managed to find room for Jean-

Claude VanDamme's new artistic creation *Time Cop*. Brassfield's marquee was also sporting the psychological thriller *The Little Rascals* and Terrace's marquee still blazed the times for the ubiquitous *Forrest Gump*. Fortunately, the organization which has been sponsoring the Carolina Classic film series will be presenting a restored version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* on October 11 at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$4 and can be purchased at the door the night of the show. The theatre is located downtown at 310 South Greene Street.

The Guilford College Football team extended their record to 3-0 this week beating a favored Hampden-Sydney at Hampden Sydney. The Ham-Syd defense had held its two previous opponents to a whopping 90 yards on the ground before Guilford forgot that stat for everyone rushing for over 260 yards. With this the third victory, word is beginning to circulate into campus of the Football teams's existence. "Naw, it can't

be," said one student. "I mean, that's just a rumor, right?" Righto, smartguy.

Suprise of all supprises, the forever-planned, forever-debated, forever delayed *Sesquicentennial Garden* finally got the official go ahead from the Board of Trustees this week. Apparently the actual work won't begin until November at the earliest but that didn't deter the Board who foresees the project to be completed around the year 2015. With the policy that only random people from the street be used as workers there will undoubtedly be a problem with gaps in finished work. "There's a big risk of mud puddles," said Dan Poteet. With such mounting obstacles, students have at last begun to show a disinterest in the project. Senior Scott Shaffer summed up the feelings of many: "I say they just pave the campus over." Scott will evidently be replacing the late Melissa Hoopes as Guilford's regent Environmental watchdog.

There has been much furor over *The Guilfordian's* last week's front-page photo of Wade Tomlinson, and close friend Susan Allen dancing. Eventual blame fell on the shoulders of *Guilfordian* Features Section editor Kitson Broadbelt, whose idea it was originally to run the picture. Mr. Broadbelt was unavailable for comment but those close to the editor say he understands that such behavior has no place in an organization as efficient, businesslike, and professional as *The Guilfordian*. "He's really sorry," said a close friend. "He swears it won't ever ever happen again."

And finally, as proof that the pen is indeed mightier than some things, the infamous showers of Binford which first-year student and writer extraordinaire Allison Amis described in these pages last week have been repaired. From all reports, water now runs freely through the drains. "I'm just...so happy..." was all Alison could muster. Congratulations.