

Female extras came out bleary-eyed, staggering— 'Hollywood Babylon' Movie magazine in hard cover

by Robin Clark
Features Editor

Anger sucks every ounce of scandal from Hollywood's open wounds and then regurgitates it, filling in with rumors and innuendo where the facts are not known.

Everyone's making much ado about noted underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger's visit to Chapel Hill to plug his new book, *Hollywood Babylon*. The author himself has taken time out to transform The Intimate Bookshop display window into a vision of Hollywood opulence, and he's been autographing copies of his book there daily since his arrival Friday.

Hammond Bennett, part-owner of The Movies 1-2-3 in Chapel Hill and owner of The Janus Theater in Greensboro, has arranged a special showing of "The Magic Lantern Cycle," a collection of Anger's best underground films, which is introduced and commented upon by the filmmaker himself.

But after reading *Hollywood Babylon*, I am left hoping that when its author leaves town he will take every copy of his vile book with him. *Hollywood Babylon*, which ostensibly chronicles the manners and mores of Hollywood in its formative and golden eras, is little more than a cheap, lavishly illustrated movie magazine with a hard cover.

Anger half-heartedly disguises his work as a social documentary, but in fact it is the perverted prattling social parasite. He sucks every ounce of scandal from Hollywood's open wounds and then regurgitates it, filling in with rumor and innuendo where the facts are not known.

This could be tolerated easier if Anger didn't constantly berate yellow-journalism's scandal-mongers of the '20s in his book for employing the same

device he uses to sell *Hollywood Babylon*—opportunistic capitalization on Hollywood's early sex-ploits, drug-fests and murders:

"Whether the power behind the press happened to be Big Daddy Hearst, with his redolent, rotten-apple yellow sheet, the *Mirror* or his gutter competitor Bernard Macfadden and his wildly fibbing *Graphic*...the pulp and ink wisecracks all knew HOLLYWOOD HEADLINES SOLD NEWSPAPERS."

But with this harsh condemnation of sensational journalism, Anger sets himself up for matching abuse in *Hollywood Babylon* when he records such beauty-parlor tidbits as, "Organ talk was similarly popular. Chaplin and Bogart led the list of the well-endowed."

Or: "Many (of the female extras in Erich von Stroheim's exotic films) emerged (from the studio) with the look of having spent a weekend in Sodom, bleary-eyed and staggering. Some girls, teetering on the edge of hysterics, bore evidence of whip marks and bites."

Or, reporting Charlie Chaplin's divorce from Mildred Harris: "Chaplin was too discreet to draw attention to the nature of her flights from the conjugal bed—often to spend the night with Metro's 'Woman of 1,000 Moods,' Nazimova."

Chaplin may have been too discreet,

but Anger certainly isn't. He records every scandal and every star's fall from public favor with all the pity of a town gossip, preying on their vices like a starved vulture left unsatisfied till all the sheets in Hollywood are stained and all the idols are smashed.

Hollywood Babylon is inevitably examined first as a picture book. And it is a good one, with lovely, full-page photographs of all Hollywood's early stars: Olive Thomas, Myron Selznick's find and later a Ziegfeld star; Virginia Rappe, the "Sunbonnet Girl"; Barbara La Marr, the girl who was "Too

Beautiful," and a host of others. And even when these beauties die their tragic, premature deaths, as do most of the members of *Babylon's* cast, the book's death scenes, and even the full-page pictures of their lifeless bodies aren't offensive.

It is Anger's captions that are offensive, captions like "And gossip there was" and "Lillian and Dorothy Gish: Lovers?"

Hollywood Babylon has been praised by some critics. Rex Reed called it "a gossip gourmet's delight," and it was acclaimed by *Penthouse* as "high camp, black humor."

But if *Hollywood Babylon* is as well received by the general public as it has been by these critics, it will testify only to the low-rent, movie magazine mentality of the American reader and not to the true value of this book, for books worth much more can be had for much less than *Hollywood Babylon*.



Staff photo by Steve Causey

Underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger has been in Chapel Hill since Friday, promoting his new book, 'Hollywood Babylon,' which chronicles the manners and mores of Hollywood during its formative and golden eras. Pictured above is the window display at The Intimate Bookshop downtown, which was designed and assembled by the author.

To add to the hoopla, The Movies 1-2-3 will present 'The Magic Lantern Cycle,' a collection of Anger's best underground films, at 9 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Anger will be on hand to introduce and comment on his work.

Wallace: five degrees and still going strong

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of background features focusing on the mayoral candidates for Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

by Tom Ward
Staff Writer

"Jimmy Wallace, my lord!... Well, he's a farm boy who came from Martin County in 1940... valedictorian of the class and Eagle Scout who was God's gift to physics, he thought," said Chapel Hill's mayoral candidate James C. "Jimmy" Wallace when asked about himself.

But the Jamesville, N.C., native's interests have extended well beyond the bounds of the farm, scouting and physics.

Besides teaching ecology at North Carolina State University, Wallace, 52, serves on the N.C. Environmental Management Commission and owns two area travel agencies. He has been a visiting professor of law at Duke University and holds degrees from UNC in mathematics, physics, history, public health and law. An accomplished pianist, Wallace has five children.

A self-proclaimed "perpetual student," Wallace, a 1972 UNC Distinguished Alumni Award winner, has lived in Chapel Hill for 35 years doing what he enjoys most: reading, studying the environmental problems, teaching and talking.

"My real hobby is conversation," Wallace said. "Professors across the campus are writing right now, and they're not saying a word... I'm talking right now and won't write a word."

In recent years, Wallace has spoken out on many environmental issues. He is against nuclear fission as a future major U.S. energy source and supports the use of coal and solar energy as alternatives.

"The main reason we aren't already using solar energy is that Exxon doesn't own the sun... If they did, we would all be getting solar energy today," he said.

Some of his critics warn that Wallace's outspokenness is "a sign of a man who has to be in control of everything." However, his supporters assert it is the mark of a "respected," "gifted" and "forceful" man.

"Jimmy is a hard worker. He is intelligent. He thinks things through," said George Spransy, who served with Wallace on Chapel Hill's Central Business Committee in 1970.

"He's not afraid of the devil," Spransy said, "because if he had to, he could talk the devil to death."

Whether it be to students at N.C. State or Duke or to the citizens of Chapel Hill, one can be sure that Jimmy Wallace will share his ideas with anyone willing to listen. It's one of his hobbies.

Carolina Union elections

Applications for the Carolina Union presidency are now available at the Union desk. They are due by 11 p.m. Nov. 12. Interviews and selections by the Union Board of Directors will take place on Nov. 17.

The president chairs the Union Board of Directors and the Union Activities Board, attends and oversees most Union functions and represents the Union to the media. The job is unpaid and requires a minimum of 15 hours per week.

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Liv Ullmann

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2:45 4:55
7:05 9:10
SIDNEY POITIER BILL COSBY
LET'S DO IT AGAIN

Plaza 2
NOW SHOWING
2:30 5:50
7:10 9:30
ALAN BATES SIMON GRAY'S "BUTLEY"
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9:30
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3:30 5:30 7:30 & 9:30
PG
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2
3-5 7 & 9 p.m.
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YEAH, I KNOW, DAD, OF COURSE YOU MISS HER, BUT... DAD, THE FIRST DAY OR TWO ARE ALWAYS ROUGH... NOW, COME... I...
OH, ALRIGHT, DAD - IF IT'S THAT BAD YOU CAN COME STAY WITH ME FOR A WHILE...
I WAS HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT, SON...