

LIZ SMITH

This May Be Beatty's Year

NEW YORK—I spoke to Warren Beatty on the day his movie "Bugsy" received 10 Academy Award nominations. The movie man-of-the-hour and new father was ecstatic—and before talking about "Bugsy," he had a few remarks to make about his infant daughter. "She's amazing; just fantastic. You have to see this princess." Warren said he and Annette Bening and their baby girl will be in New York in a few days, en route to a European vacation. (He'll also accept the D. W. Griffith award in New York.)

Is this the year Beatty really comes into his own? He is incredibly well-liked and respected in Hollywood. He said the nominations for "Bugsy" are ones that "feel good because when you make this sort of film, you know, with this structure and an essentially tragic figure as its protagonist—well, it's not escapist entertainment. 'Bugsy' is basically a morality play, where the central character dies. Like 'Macbeth,' it isn't easy to make into a likable hit. So we had certain obstacles.

"But 'Bugsy' is a metaphor. He wanted to conceal what his darker side was. He lived in a denial of reality and then he formulated and helped create a city in the desert that was also a denial of reality. He used the glamour of Hollywood to conceal his darker side."

□

Barbra Streisand's total cooperation with the media and with Hollywood's machinery for the Oscars did not result in a best-director nomination for her movie "The Prince of Tides." This is a terrible slap in the face to the woman just elected by her peers in the Directors Guild for nomination as the year's best. The academy voters decided not to pay any mind to that; evidently, they want to keep punishing Streisand, and they did.

The omission of Barbra even from contention for directing a project into which she had poured her heart, soul and considerable intelligence, begs the eternal question of how a film nominated for "best" can have its director ignored.

Some people think the next time around, she should *only* direct. They think her distinctly movie-star persona, her glamour, her wardrobe, her close-ups, her fingernails, constituted the movie's one big weak point. Hmmmm, well, I thought Barbra was wonderfully appealing and excellent in the movie. But it's true that some who loved "The Prince of Tides," and who were impressed by Streisand the director, found her presence in the film distracting.

□

Other voices: Bette Midler's nomination for "For the Boys" is a great joy and may partially assuage her hurt over the way this film was received at the box office . . . Tommy Lee Jones' best supporting nod for "JFK" was well-deserved. I have loved this fine actor for years, both on screen and personally . . . Applause for the popularity of the Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon nominations for best actress in "Thelma & Louise." (So who cares if the film itself made some disgusting vigilante statements?) . . . Oliver Stone's "JFK" is right up there with lots of nominations! I am surprised and delighted. I never thought this movie stood a chance, what with all its hysterical detractors who honestly believe the American people don't have good sense . . . And, some months ago, this column predicted that Disney's animated feature, "Beauty and the Beast," would win a best-picture nod.