

Review of Police Preview

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Mayday Film Fails Doubly

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This police-filmed account of the Mayday disruptions here last spring purports to be both a police training film and a documentary. It fails at both.

What it lacks in historical verisimilitude it amply compensates for in patriotic disgust at Yips, hips, Trots, rads and the other dregs of unbathefreakdom.

The warm, confident voice of the narrator describes the ranks of demonstrators as being filled with "well-heeled agitators" and "hard-core militants" who came here "to break the peace." The film shows countless scenes of ragged youths screaming through the streets and making rude hand gestures toward the police cameras.

The sound track preserves

"The Whole World Is Watching," Produced by Audio Visual Specialties, Inc., Washington, D.C. Supervised by Jerry V. Wilson, chief, metropolitan police department. Camera work by members of the police department's mobile crime lab. Length: 28 minutes. Rating: ?

THE CAST

The Demonstrators The Demonstrators
The Police The Police
The Army The Army

scores of obscenities shouted at the cameramen. One superbly hysterical woman demonstrator being searched by a policewoman shouts, "Stop feeling me up, you faggot woman."

Notably absent in the film are the police. There are a few random and brief shots of policemen making individual arrests or standing in serried ranks in full battle gear waiting for orders.

Thus, for the police trainee there is no explanation of mob control, of mass arrest techniques, of police logistical and support efforts, of the tactical rela-

tionship between police and federal troops on the streets.

For the documentary historian, there is little suggestion of the often violent confrontations between police and disrupters, of the intense and repeated fusillades of tear gas fired into the mobs, of the numerous acts of personal brutality by individual policemen and individual disrupters, of the rough use of police scooters and scout cars to break up crowds.

Rather, the film concentrates on the demonstrators, their outwardly offensive garb and speech and their well-organized tactical plan to shut the city down. One could almost believe that the police stood by rather passively while the kids ran amok in the streets.

See MAYDAY, B5, Col. 2

MAYDAY, From B1

In fact, the police in swift, decisive action arrested more than 7,000 persons in the early morning hours of May 3, throttling at the outset this dramatic and unprecedented attempt to tie up parts of the city through mass civil disobedience.

In perhaps its most negligent moment, the film noted only in passing that Police Chief Wilson ordered suspension of all field arrest procedures (the situation was getting out of hand, suggested the narrator, and Wilson did not want his mentied up with "time-consuming" paper work), but it failed altogether to note that this decision later caused almost all the 7,000 arrest cases to be thrown out of court.

This, it would seem, could have been a fundamental object lesson in the film as an instructional tool for other

police officers. As it is, they do not get a chance to share Chief Wilson's dilemma: whether to risk indefinite strangulation of the city's streets under conventional arrest procedures or risk court censure for improper actions in keeping the streets open.

As a documentary, the film also fails to point up the ironic hypocrisy of the demonstrators and their leaders in the Peoples Coalition for Peace and Justice: they came to the city with the announced purpose of overtaxing the police, jamming the jails and overburdening the courts, and as soon as they succeeded to some degree in these efforts, they complained bitterly of their plight.

"The Whole World Is Watching" (taken from one of the demonstrators' anti-police chants) was culled from 15,000 feet of color film by D.C. police during and just before the Mayday action. Underwritten by the

International Chiefs of Police at a cost of \$15,000 to \$20,000, it premiered Tuesday at IACP headquarters in Gaithersburg before an audience of police officials and press. The IACP hopes to sell copies (\$175 each) to police departments and various civic groups.