The Washington Post STYLE
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When Worlds Collide:

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Lights! Camera! Egos!

"The newspaper business is really very concerned about its image. I talked to one reporter and his first reaction was that the movie would open with Ray Bolger dancing his way into the newsroom."

—Robert Redford, star and coproducer of "All The President's Men"

"I think the movie could have an important impact on people who have a stereotyped view of newspapers. It may reinforce those stereotypes, or it could show them that we strive very hard for responsibility. But I don't want to be the new Hildy Johnson or Walter Burns."

—Benjamin C. Bradlee,
executive editor,
The Washington Post

"Reporters are strange. You're all so sensitive. Just like actors. Hollywood and the press are truly destined for each other."

—a publicist for "All The President's Men"

By Tom Shales, Tom Zito and Jeannette Smyth

The portly science reporter had returned to his desk at The Washington Post after a week away. His typewriter ribbon was a gnarled mess. He saw "a scruffy guy in jeans" standing nearby and, thinking "this was a new copy kid," asked him to change the ribbon. It wasn't a new copy kid. It was Dustin Hoffman.

On another day, high schoolers were touring The Post and spotted Robert Redford standing in an office. They rushed forward, pocket cameras clicking. "Wait," a reporter said to them, "Here's the *real* Bob Woodward. Don't you want a picture of him?"

"No," one youngster replied, and they rushed on.

One way or another, and like it or not, the presence of movie people is being felt at The Washington Post, where forces from Hollywood have gathered prior to the filming of "All the President's Men," Post reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward's bestseller on the investigation that led to the Watergate scandals and a President's resignation. Actor Redford bought the book a year ago for $450,000 and hired himself to play Woodward. Dustin Hoffman was later cast as Bernstein. Alan J. Pakula ("Klute") will direct the movie, Gordon Willis ("The Godfather," I and II) will photograph it, William Goldman ("Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid") is writing it. Budgeted at a hefty $5 million, it is to be, as paperback jackets often promise, "a major motion picture," for release next February or March.

Shooting begins in Washington on May 12 at one of various planned locations, including the exterior of the Post building at 1150 15th St. NW. Although film crews will not be permitted in the building, the movie people themselves have been in and out of The Post for months in an effort to soak up authenticity, rub elbows with newspaper people and learn the routine of a daily newspaper.

And thus has that routine been thrown out of whack. Hoffman arrives late for a news conference and sits sheepishly on the floor. Redford, all California casual, strolls among the upper echelon editors while heads turn sharply his way. Set designers crawl through the building with tape measures and light meters. And boxes of authentic Washington Post trash are dutifully gathered for shipment to Hollywood, where another newsroom, a fake, is being built.

Beneath this fuss—much of it merely an amusing show to staff members at the newspaper—lie questions that gnaw at editors and reporters alike. Roles are being suddenly re-

In the newsroom, Robert Redford, far left, with Bob Woodward, center, and Ben Bradlee; Dustin Hoffman, right, with Carl Bernstein.

Photos by Casey Summers —The Washington Post, right, and Stanley Tretick.

versed here; actors are going to be reporters and reporters are onstage, playing themselves for the observing actors. Normalcy is disrupted, simple privacy invaded, and ironic conflicts generated as two disparate worlds—the entertainers and the working press—meet on the press's turf.

Professional newspaper people prefer to see themselves as detached, dispassionate observers—rumpled scribblers lurking carefully in the background. Now they find themselves bedfellows (not literally, of course) with "The Stars," emissaries from Hollywood, where self-publicity is a necessary art and the synthetic ray of the spotlight a principal source of energy.

All these considerations surface at a time when, as a side effect of Watergate, the media and the public are talking about journalists being "stars" themselves. "Washington is now the capital of the media, more the creator of myths than Hollywood in the 1930s," says a current Washingtonian Magazine article about the new "mediacracy" now emerging. Time decorates its People section with photographs of journalists at play. And syndicated columnist Art Buchwald may only have been half-kidding when he noted recently, "For the first time, newspapermen are becoming more famous than the people they write about."

This may have enough implications to make a hardened journalist sick. But then Robert Redford saunters by sporting a smile and, gosh, the sick feeling goes away, cured by charisma. Hardened journalists aren't hardened all the time anyway, whatever they would have you think; when TV's Morris The Cat made a guest appearance on the desk of reporter Judith Martin last year, there was hardly a pair of hands in the place that didn't come forward to pet him.

"Reporters," observes director Pakula, "don't fit the stereotype of reporters."

"Uneasy truce" is a newspaper cliche, but that may be what exists now between The Post and The Movies—mutual suspicion beneath mutual attraction. "For some, it's a battle of glamor," says reporter Sally Quinn, frankly glamorous herself, "and the movie people have found out they're losing."

There are those who say Robert Redford isn't as big a name any more as Robert Woodward is. In recent years, Washington has been producing "stars"—including journalists—for the great media mulching machine with perhaps more success than Hollywood, even if it is unintentional and, to some journalists, deplorable.

For Post editors, the presence of the moviemakers presents a dilemma: how to indoctrinate those visitors from another planet with the true facts about the newspaper game without being "seduced," in the old melodramatic sense, by that corrupting Hollywood magic. Imagine the hard-line values of neutrality and objectivity crumbling under the spell. Why, one might ask, is The Post risking cooperation with the movie people even to a limited extent?

Says executive editor Benjamin C. Bradlee: "We're all in the position that we didn't have any choice about this movie—it would be made regardless—and I could see that. Lacking that choice, it seemed to make more sense to try to influence it factually than to just stick our heads in the sand."

"Everything we've asked for from The Post, we've been given," says co-producer Walter Coblenz, but he has yet to ask for permission to use the names of Post staff members other than Woodward and Bernstein in the movie, and when he does, he is likely to be turned down. There is also the possibility that The Washington Post will "officially" refuse to allow its name to be used—though lawyers have said the movie company has the legal right to use it anyway.

How rocky the road that awaits this awkward marriage, no one can say right now. But the egos, the fears, the self-images and the self-interests involved on both sides suggest a perilous honeymoon.

"CUT TO: THE PRESSES OF THE POST ROLLING . . . and they're modern and their noise would destroy a set of ear drums if you listened long enough and their power—Jesus, the whole building shakes when the presses roll and as we sense the frightening strength of the machines CUT TO WOODWARD AND BERNSTEIN and they're in the lobby of The Post at night and through a thick pane of glass they're watching their story roll and even through the glass the noise is something and the

See MOVIE, B6, Col. 1

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trembling of the building even more impressive and you'd think they'd be showing other on their faces than what's there: panic."

If this scene—from the second draft screenplay of "All the President's Men"—is ever filmed, it will give reporters in the audience a real har-dee-har-har. Reporters never watch their stories roll off the presses unless they want to be known as prize chumps. And, at least at The Washington Post, the presses don't shake the whole building. The earth does not tremble at their power.

Ah — the magic of Hollywood! Though the example may seem trivial, it may also be typical of the Hollywood way of blurring reality—sometimes beyond the point of recognition. Yet the makers of "APM" insist they are going all out for fidelity and accuracy.

Some credibility will depend on who plays whom, but only one role besides Woodward and Bernstein has been cast: Metropolitan editor (at the time of Watergate) Harry M. Rosenfeld will be played by Jack Warden, currently on screen as a Beverly Hills fatcat in "Shampoo."

Who's playing whom has proven a popular guessing game in this city and others. "The rumors are wild," says a publicist. "Stories of Martha Mitchell and H. R. Haldeman playing themselves! Ridiculous!" It is unlikely either character will even be in the film, except, perhaps, in newsreel clips. To that extent, former President Richard M. Nixon will play himself, through news footage.

Now for the others. Executive editor Bradlee, described in the preliminary script as "50, tough, and bright," and someone who "scares everybody," may be played by Richard Widmark, Jason Robards, Henry Fonda, Kirk Douglas, or even Gregory Peck. But not by himself. Bradlee rejected that idea recently with a typically earthy expletive.

At a dinner party, the insouciant Bradlee greeted the notion that he be played by Fonda with, "Good God! He's 70 and does needlepoint!" At yet another party, Bradlee jokingly suggested he be portrayed on the screen by Fred Astaire, and reportedly danced a soft shoe to support the proposal. He was kidding.

Notes the script: "If Gen. George S. Patton were alive and charming, he should play Bradlee."

Mentioned as possibilities for the role of Katharine Graham, publisher of The Post and "the unsung heroine" of Watergate, according to a script notation, are Patricia Neal, Alexis Smith, and Dorothy Maguire. The script praises the "lovely view of Washington" Mrs. Graham has from her office window. Unfortunately, her office has a lovely view only of a roof garden.

The major name being bandied about for the part of managing editor Howard Simons is Martin Balsam. Informed of this, Simons asked what other parts Balsam had played.

"He was stabbed on the stairway in 'Psycho' and made a common sense speech in 'A Thousand Clowns,'" Simons was told.

"Those both sound like my job," said Simons, smiling. "But I would still rather be played by Woody Allen."

Redford might be expected to dominate the film—although Dustin Hoffman's powers of upstaging should not be underestimated. Charles Michener, a Newsweek editor and Redford interviewer, predicts, "This movie will be about Robert Redford. All the Redford parts have been chosen to build up the Redford persona."

"As far as the Redford persona carrying an impact," Redford says in response, "that's up to the audience. I'm interested in portraying what happened in the most accurate way."

"Accuracy?" echoes coproducer Coblenz from the Wildwood company's rented offices in Rosslyn, Va. "I can't tell you how important that is to us. We're very very serious about this. I've got a list here (holds up list) of props correct to the smallest detail. Why, we're making replicas of phone books that aren't even in existence any more!"

So the phone books will be right. But what about the substance of the Watergate story and the way it was recorded by The Post staff? The accuracy in depicting the role of the newspaper in the national ordeal, and not the accuracy with which the physical environment is duplicated, will be the movie's crucial, essential test of credibility—at least to members of the newspaper staff. Admittedly, they comprise a tiny fraction of the moviegoing public.

Some of them already fear that no matter how much the fake newsroom looks like the real newsroom, entertainment values will win out over devotion to facts and Hollywood will have its usual way with reality. There have been many movies that set out to tell the truth and didn't. Supporting this apprehension is the fact that the role of key figure Barry Sussman has been absorbed into the Rosenfeld character in the transfer of book to film. Sussman, District of Columbia editor during the Watergate story, later became unofficially known as "Watergate editor."

Now "editor in charge of survey reporting," Sussman edited the Woodward-Bernstein stories, directed their early coverage, and continued working with other reporters on the unfolding story after the star couple dropped out to write a book. Some people are sore about Sussman's being eliminated, and Sussman is one of them.

"In my own view," Sussman says, "if they want to accurately represent what things were like at The Washington Post and leave me out at the same time, there's something wrong. But as an individual, I understand that directors and filmmakers have to make a decision: Are they creating a drama or portraying things as they occurred?"

Rosenfeld, now National editor, has his doubts about the filmmakers' devotion to "verisimilitude," too. "I'm hoping their concern for physical detail be matched with a concern for what Watergate was all about. Redford told me he wanted to make a movie about what reporting really is. I said this would be the first film to do that."

Pakula, a man of very few words when working on a film, says the picture will be "made with as much truth as we can make it" and convey reality—but "reality with a point of view."

Since The Post has denied permission to film in its newsroom (the movie people claim logistical problems make it impossible anyway), that sprawling, open arena is being reproduced, at a cost of $200,000, on two sound stages in Hollywood's Burbank Studios. Nearly 200 desks at $500 apiece were purchased from the same firm that sold desks to The Post four years ago, and to color them just right, the same precise shades of paint—be they "6½ PA Blue" or "22 PE Green"—are being mixed on special order.

Post administrative clerk George Middlebrook supplied production designer George Jenkins with a brick from the main lobby so it could be duplicated in fiberglass for that set. The color had to be perfect, said Jenkins. George Gaines, set decorator, got the titles and artists of prints hanging around The Post from its art critic, Paul Richard, and will attempt to buy duplicates for the set.

Everything in the newsroom has been photographed or measured or both. Reporters Stuart Auerbach and Thomas O'Toole, who sat next to each other, were informed that their desks were among the most photogenically disheveled in the place. "They told us, 'Incredible! We'll never be able to reproduce them; can we just buy them as they are?'" Auerbach recalls. "I think they were joking."

Not entirely. Jenkins' quest for accuracy has resulted in the great Hollywood Trash Lift—an agreement by The Post to supply moviemakers with authentic junk from reporters' desks (with the reporters screening what's sent) so it can be scattered in the studio newsroom.

Contrary to some reports, The Post is not selling the trash, just charging $1 for the cost of the boxes to put it in.

"We've got 37 boxes just sitting down here," says building superintendent Mike Ocetnik from the basement. "When're they gonna pick it up? Something like May I think."

Reporters with the least tidy desks were asked to donate their excess litter to the boxes and to the ages. Style reporter Phil Casey heard about this

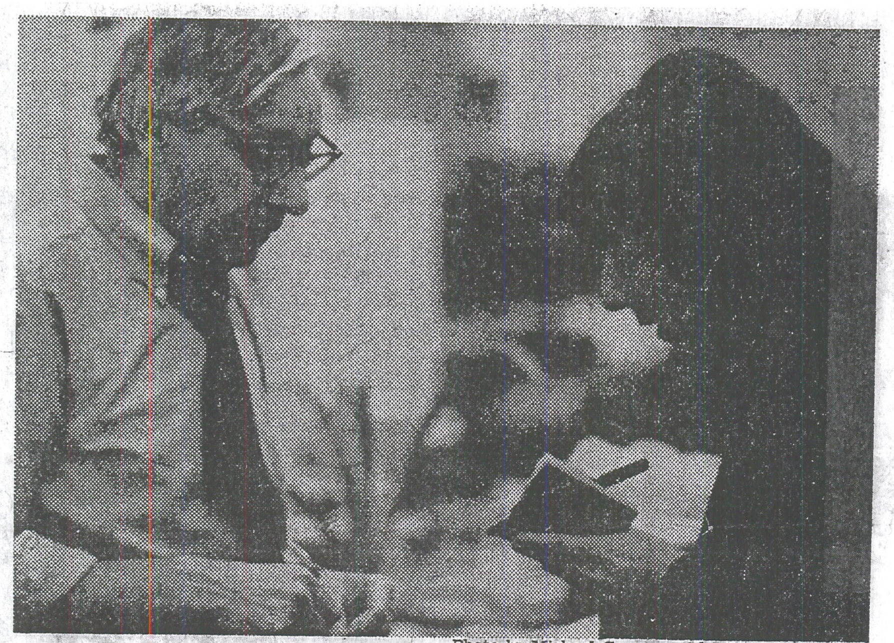


Photo by Michael Goergen—The Washington Post

Howard Simons, left, with Dustin Hoffman.

scheme when fellow reporter Emily Fisher left a memo in his typewriter which concluded, "Warning: Be careful stuffing, as you don't want your old love letters flashed on some drive-in screen when you are there, years later, with someone else.

"ALSO—This is NOT a joke."

But Casey never filled a single box. "I thought it was a joke," he says.

What will be in those boxes when they are opened in Hollywood? No trade secrets or eyes-only memos. Instead, reporter Peter Milius sent old Agriculture Department press releases about "fats and oils production and onion scabies in South Dakota." Auerbach included "a four-color glossy chart on ringworm, hookworm, pinworm, and some other kind of worm" with his debris. Style columnist Tom Donnelly found it easy to part with "as many pictures of Robert Redford as I could find," including stills from his less successful films. Other reporters sent such memorabilia as a rubber model of Pluto with a band-aid across its stomach, a Christmas card that had been mailed with a photograph of a nude girl on a trapeze enclosed, and five years' accumulation of The Penniman News, official newsletter of the Little Richard Fan Club.

Newspaper people get strange mail.

While the trash collection continues, so does work on the script. Pakula and Redford are holding all-day sessions at a downtown hotel in order to get it in shape.

The first draft written by Goldman, was apparently a loser, though Coblenz says movies are never shot from first drafts anyway. A New York journalist who saw that script calls it "appalling . . . a real gaggy, superficial movie in which all the editors talk like Henny Youngman, the woman are vulgar beyond belief, and the men converse only in banter. The whole thing was really nothing more than 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid Bring Down the Government'."

Bernstein and Woodward read the script and did not like it. Redford asked them for "suggestions," but, instead, Bernstein and writer Nora Ephron wrote their own version. Redford read that. He didn't like it. "A lot of it was sophomoric and way off the beat," he says. Goldman read it. He didn't like it. He hadn't written it.

Rewriting of the rewrite commenced.

Pakula says he doesn't want to comment on the script until the movie has been made. Coblenz says "William Goldman is our writer" and that's all there is to it. Redford says the talk about script squabbles is "a mushrooming cloud." He intends to let Post editors and others involved see the finished script, but they have no legal right of approval. They cannot demand anything. But they can refuse to let their real names be used.

"I've seen Goldman's original script and what was advertised by Carl to be his rewrite," says Bradlee. "None of that has eased my doubts or worry about the film."

"It will be very much a reflection of the book," promises director Pakula. "I think the story has an old-fashioned, Victorian kind of theme really: that American belief that a person or small group can with perseverance and hard work and obsessiveness take on a far more powerful, impersonal body and win—if they have the truth on their side. In a way, this could take the place of the Westerns.

"It's inherent in the story of Carl and Bob that they have become a kind of contemporary myth."

"Carl and Bob have a different problem than the rest of us. They're part of American folklore now. Everybody knows their names."

—Benjamin C. Bradlee

Beyond the personal and political fates of the President and his men, Watergate helped generate a new dimension in The Fourth Estate: Journalism as a glamor trade with definite social castes. Within this hypothesis Woodward and Bernstein are stars of an Eastern media circle who rival the flickering projected heroes of Hollywood.

Almost. For the reporters in the newsroom, the allure of Hollywood seems to eclipse the power ploys of Washington politics. Celebrity is real—and it's awesome. And certainly much less routine.

"Several days after the Middle East negotiations fell through Hoffman came up to me and said, 'Well, what's this mean for us Jews,' " recalls National reporter Steve Isaacs. "I said, 'Talk with Marilyn Berger, she's our number-two diplomatic writer. She travels with Kissinger.' So Dustin goes up to her and she's on the phone and can't talk with him. Later on I tell her, 'Marilyn, Dustin was looking for you before.' And she says, 'Oh, don't send him over until I have my hair done.' The next day she comes in with her hair done."

"Purely a coincidence," Berger says in retrospect.

Perceptions vary. "You know what I think of movie stars," adds Isaacs. "It's all celluloid. I see Larry Meyer [a meticulous Watergate trials reporter] swooning when Redford walks by his desk. But to me, one Larry Meyer story is more important than all the films Robert Redford has made."

"I'm always looking around to see what Redford or Hoffman are doing," admits Margot Hornblower, a young Metro reporter. "It's distracting, but we all need a little distraction. Some people get carried away. I mean, Dick Cohen has an orgasm every time Hoffman comes over to his desk."

Managing editor Howard Simons concedes some disruption in the newsroom. "We are gentle people," he says. "We have to be courteous." For amateur archeologist Simons it was a polite gesture to take Hoffman to the cornfields of Virginia on an arrowhead dig. That evening he took the uninvited actor to a party at the home of Washington Post publisher Katharine Graham.

Described by staffers as straight-arrow, Simons is a former science reporter. Until Hollywod arrived at The Post, actors didn't rate very high with him, compared with the altruistic, self-effacing pluggers who represent the classic newspaper ideal.

"I'm fully engaged seven days a week," he says. "Sometimes actors are gainfully unemployed. They don't deal with the realities of the world everywhere at once. They're in a somewhat sexy, albeit child's world of making something up, a fantasy. I'd look around the newsroom and see we were becoming actors on a stage, which we must desperately try to avoid."

"Sure, there's a federal case every time Redford is here," says Bradlee. A tough, blunt Boston Brahmin, he'll preface a quote with "let me say this in a way you can't print it." He machine-guns adjectives to parody the script's characterization of him: "Bradlee is mean, triple-spaced, graying hair, thin, nervous, bad language." A star in his own right, Bradlee obviously—if guardedly—enjoys hanging out with the film's stars.

In contrasting counterbalance to the gregarious but sometimes brassy Bradlee, who goes to Redskins games with attorney Edward Bennett Williams and faithfully watches "Kojak," Simons is quieter and self-mocking. He is a family man, an art lover and bird watcher with a strong, sometimes wistful, sense of traditional values.

When Redford discovered that one of Simons' daughters shared his interest in Hopi Indian dolls, he sent the girl an excerpt from a magazine article about his collection. Simon, his daughter, and Redford got together for dinner and the editor's family accepted an invitation from the Redfords to spend six days at the actor's Sundance ranch in Utah during the Simons' upcoming cross-country vacation.

Has Hollywood seduced Howard Simons?

"It could be," he says. "I'm not that cynical yet. I'm jaded, but I'm not cynical. Newspaper people—we can be nice, but we can be tough. A little soft soaping by Robert Redford won't get anything here. As for us in this business becoming stars and actors, I worry about that becoming the Achilles heel of The Washington Post."

"The danger is in the concept that any of us are gonna be played by anybody," says Bradlee. "It's like going down a ski-jump for the first time. You're not sure how you're gonna land. But it's kind of fun to do."

"Fun" is not a word used by Washington Post publisher Katharine Graham when talking about the movie. A reticent yet forthright woman, Watergate forced her into situations and critical decisions she might rather have avoided. Her paper's reputation and finances were on the line. It was a long way from parties with Truman Capote to lunches with Henry Kissinger and a Ms. Magazine cover story that labeled her the most powerful woman in America.

"Our interests are not the movie's interests," she declares. "I am concerned about having no control of what's in the movie. Even if it were a straight documentary I would still worry. But I would have preferred a documentary. Now, oh, I'm sick of it. I wish we could just get our heads down. It [Watergate] was a great moment for the paper, but let's get on with things."

Bradlee echoes that. Because the filmmakers plan to use stock footage of the President and some of his men, he's "afraid they're trying to marry a documentary with a small 'r' romance—a romantic story, not a boy/girl romance—and they may not marry."

Thus it comes to push-pull between newspaper and film: journalistic realism versus the entertainment interest of movie industry money.

"The question you have to decide is: Is there any potential service to journalism that this is a good movie?" Bradlee asks. "So do you get involved? I mean, we're a little bit pregnant now. Journalists should be in the audience and not behind the footlights, but I don't know if we can have it both ways. The press has had a profound effect on life in America. If we're going to support the people's right to know, then we're going to have to support the people's right to know about us."

And so the drama plays itself out in the football-field-sized city room of The Post, bathed in the monotony of fluorescent lights, more IBM computer-center than "Front Page" dingy, to Hoffman more an insurance company office than a newsroom. The actors learn to be newsmen: Hoffman sits behind the desk of managing editor Howard Simons, using the phone as Simons observes him with interest; Redford occupies a glassed-in office of a Metro editor, facing a wall, carefully unaware of the streams of women from other floors who trek by for a glimpse of his back; Pakula spends hours interviewing editors and reporters, taking careful notes of their comments.

The reporters act:

"I think when we'd go into news conferences with them," says National editor Harry Rosenfeld, who was Metro editor during Watergate, "many of us would rise to the occasion to act the roles we would have us be. And when they'd walk around the newsroom, I think maybe reporters hit the phones a little harder and typed with a little more fury than normal."

Only human, you might say. And there are many such moments. The March 7 National news budget—a daily in-house listing of articles slated for the next morning's paper—facetiously carried a story slugged REDFORD: "Visits The Post's newsroom and explains many things: A series of meetings with the staff results in further understanding." Rosenfeld, a bottle of Maalox No. 2 prominently displayed on his desk, flashes a wirephoto of a 700-pound man when asked who's going to play him.

Trying to master journalistic slang, Redford is told to return to the newsroom later in the evening and stay until the paper is "put to bed"—i.e. the final edition is on the presses. "I've got to go back to the newsroom," he tells someone later that night. "I've got to sleep with the paper."

Newsroom interest in stargazing was matched—perhaps even topped—only by an editorial decision to write in depth about what happens when a newspaper and Hollywood meet. The paper's coverage of Woodward and Bernstein's rise to fame and six-digit fortunes had been consistent if low-keyed—stories on inside pages of Style chronicling their book contract, their movie deal, their meetings with Redford and Hoffman, Woodward's wedding.

As the movie people's involvement with The Post enlarged, so did discussion of the paper's need to cover it. Bradlee ordered a "definitive" piece—"Like Newsweek would do a cover story"—on the movie/media interplay.

Journalists at The Post, regularly critical of sources who decline to be quoted, suddenly were saying: "No comment." "For background only." "Off the record."

"Jeeez, this is dynamite. TNT. An explosive story," exclaims Cohen, one of Bernstein's closest friends. "I can't talk with you about it."

It will smack of self-service, some reporters and editors fear. Others worry that too much may be revealed—or too little. Rosenfeld calls a reporter who had interviewed him several days earlier back into his office to clarify some of his quotes—a privilege rarely granted even the most important sources. First he had commented, "We usually dish it out; now we may have to take it." Later he wanted to soften his quote: "If that shows up I'm not going to be like these tolerant guys around here. I'll personally throw your desk out the window. Your career is at stake, friend."

Not everyone reacted passionately to the reporters' inquiries. And not everyone was worried about proper respect being shown the trials and temptations of the working press, either.

"All this morbid introspection and guilty, accusatory self-examination is ridiculous," announced Sally Quinn. "This is not Dostoevsky, after all. This is Walt Disney."

Bradlee considers the aura surrounding the making of the film news. "There's a fantastic amount of interest in this story," he says. "Everybody around town is talking about who's being cast as whom. I'm somewhat depressed by the interest because it tends to judge us not for what we put out as a newspaper but by how other people make us look. But it's a story."

> *I think there's a great similarity between the movie business and the newspaper business. We're all voyeurs.*
>
> —Carl Bernstein

Ironically, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward have spent less time in the Washington Post newsroom recently than Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford have. Movie director Alan J. Pakula sits at Woodward's desk going over his notebooks. "Woodward's too rich," observes night Metro editor Bill Brady, with some irony. Brady knew

Woodward and Bernstein when.

Redford and Hoffman haven't had a chance to see Woodward and Bernstein at work for The Washington Post for eight months, because the Watergate duo is on leave working on a second book, about President Nixon's last 100 days. So Redford interviewed New York Timesman Seymour Hersh. Hoffman spent two weeks listening in on selected phone conversations of Post reporter Fred Barbash, as he sought to document accusations of political corruption in Maryland.

Says Barbash: "He got involved to the extent he was shouting questions across the aisle at me. Good questions, but it's somewhat unnerving."

The scruffy Hoffman, who doesn't have the Golden Redford Glow, has been able to blend into the Post's woodwork, fraternizing with reporters. In contrast, "Redford didn't make much of an effort to talk to the little people," according to Post copy aide Nancy Braden. "He had lunch with the big shots and stuff like that."

The reason may be that Redford causes a commotion wherever he goes. Charles Michener, the Newsweek editor who introduced Redford to New York journalists, thinks Redford likes it a bit. He remembers an occasion in California when Redford snuck in to visit him, wearing a jaunty hat, sunglasses, and a glaring yellow ski jacket. "Redford said, 'Whew, nobody saw me.' I said, 'I don't see how they could miss you in that outfit.' "

Says Redford facetiously, "I haven't been to a party in Washington. I haven't had dinner with anybody in Washington. As a matter of fact I'm lonely in Washington." Sure.

Katharine Graham gives the kind of parties Washington dotes on, the kind of parties her newspaper would like to cover but can't, because they are part of her "personal life." At her Georgetown house, politicians and journalists pump each other for the straight skinny—or the gossip—over drinks. But not for the record.

On March 16, though, someone *was* taking notes, mental ones anyway. Dustin Hoffman was watching Ed Levi and Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn and Teddy Kennedy and Carl Bernstein.

During the party he had "a little argument" with Levi, the new attorney general, about objectivity in the news. He noticed that the journalists were checking him out "but I never noticed one looking at me. The vision is peripheral, the hearing is acute."

And he decided that Washington talks too much. "Talk, in the circles I was in, that's the real money-exchange. One sells and borrows information. It's part of your survival. It's what you have on so-and-so. I like to observe it. I don't think I'd like to live there though. It's enervating."

Redford is surprised to hear that politicians and journalists socialize. "I'd take a dim view of that," says he.

Both Redford and Hoffman brought an Agnew-like suspicion of news accuracy to the Post newsroom.

"I've been desensitized by reportage," says Hoffman, "because so rarely have I been quoted accurately. Initially it opens your eyes to reading newspapers. You say, 'My God, if it happens to a movie actor, it must happen all the time.' "

Without knowing that some journalists are contemptuous of "soft news"—like Robert Redford interviews—Redford himself was skeptical of "hard news," investigative reporting. Watching his alter ego, Bob Woodward, at work in the Post newsroom, Redford said, "I was impressed by his thoroughness. I've had the press come at me and I've wondered how things could have gotten so off-track."

Hoffman went to Bernstein's parents' house for Passover. "They don't nod their heads when you talk," says Hoffman. "There's strong opinions in the house."

Redford and Woodward have gone over Woodward's Watergate notes, as Woodward puts it, "to see the sequence of questions. The notes tell how your mind is working."

Redford's so committed to accuracy, Woodward says, that he is learning how to type. Someone should tell him about the Post sports writer who never learned to type with more than one finger but still managed to make a living as a reporter. There are many like him.

Neither Redford nor Hoffman care to offer their perceptions of the reporters they will impersonate on the screen. "We're trying to make a film that's going to surprise and inform people," Redford says.

It is also left vague just why Redford feels the Watergate book is such a hot property that he has already spent two years of his life on this movie—because it is the story of Nixon's downfall, because Redford likes tales of what he calls "people in conflict, people who grow," or because it stands a very good chance of earning him a fortune next spring?

Redford just says blandly that he finds Woodwood, Bernstein, and the whole business "interesting."

Meanwhile, Woodward, now 32, writes closeted in the library of his new house off Foxhall Road in discreet Wesley Heights, a new BMW parked in the drive. He and his new wife, Francine Barnard, expect a baby.

Bernstein, 31, says he has conquered the migraine headaches of his 20s and what he calls "self-destructive impulses" which, colleagues say, "overinvolved him personally" in events he covered before Watergate. He works at his old apartment in the melting pot neighborhood of Adams Morgan, while waiting for a new apartment—also in Adams Morgan—to be remodeled and graced with $10,000 worth of stereo equipment. Or shuttling off to New York to watch the Academy Awards at Dustin Hoffman's house in Greenwich Village.

Woodward often seems embarrassed by his celebrity. To friends, his marriage, not his success, seems to have made all the difference. "He's happier and more relaxed than I've seen him in a year and a half," says one friend. Bernstein enjoys his star status and talks of his affection for "gonzo journalism." "I'd love to be in Vietnam right now," says he.

Bernstein, divorced, has troubles with women that haven't diminished with fame and glory. A preliminary version of the movie script has Bernstein in bed with two different women, while steady Woodward is given a steady companion whose movie name is "Nancy."

As the odd couple—a team whose names are married forever—it is to straight arrow Woodward that the task of keeping Bernstein in line on matters of journalism, if not women, most often fell.

One colleague, who prefers to remain incognito, remembers the time Bernstein came back from a weekend in New York at 5 o'clock one Monday afternoon during impeachment proceedings. "Woodward said 'Where were you, Carl?' And Carl said something like, 'Oh, the shuttles got jammed up in the wind.'

"The next thing I know Woodward is dialing the phone and saying 'Eastern Airlines? Your flights are all on schedule today? Thank you very much.' And he calls Carl over to the corner for a conference."

"Carl and I always fight," says Woodward. "Sometimes we have ugly fights." Right now, they're disagreeing over whether they want to see the finished script of "All the President's Men."

"My feeling is that we should just stay out of it," says Woodward.

"That's not to say we're not going to take a good, hard look at the final version," says Bernstein.

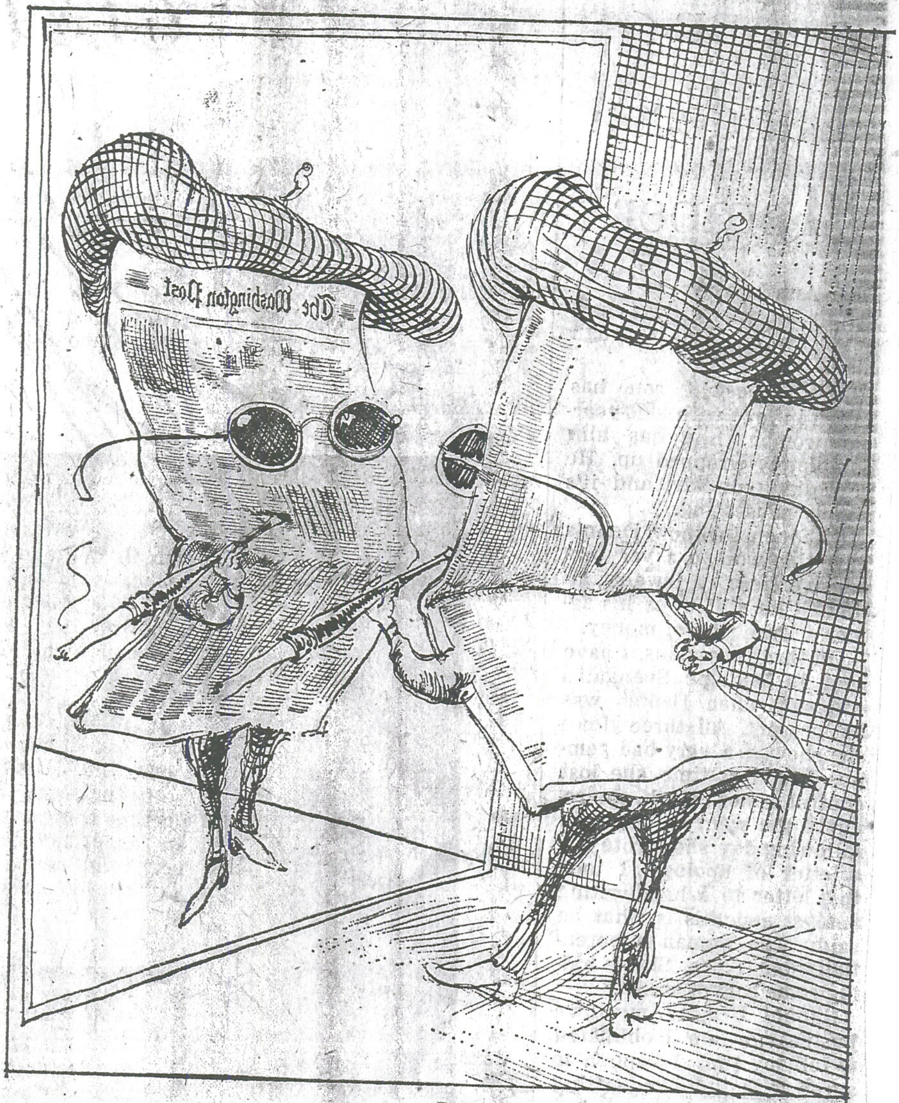
"I'm not going to take a good hard look," says Woodward. "It's an interesting creative thing but I'm not sure I'm even going to look at it."

"Speak for yourself," says Bernstein, laughing.

Both reporters think the movie people have done a good job of interviewing them. "We've gone way beyond the book in telling about ourselves in terms of what motivates us," says Bernstein, who then declines to say what.

One staffer says Woodward is an angry young man. "Angry?" says Woodward. "I can't talk about that too well. That's the kind of questions they asked. Like did I want to be a national affairs reporter and did I think I had wasted five years in the Navy. We've probably been too frank with them. If Pakula ever stops directing movies, he'll make a great shrink."

Will Hoffman and Redford become great reporters? What will Woodward and Bernstein do to follow their act? The more you talk about it, the more confused you get. Redman, Redstein, Woodford, Hoffstein, Woodstein, Bernford. And that's the point.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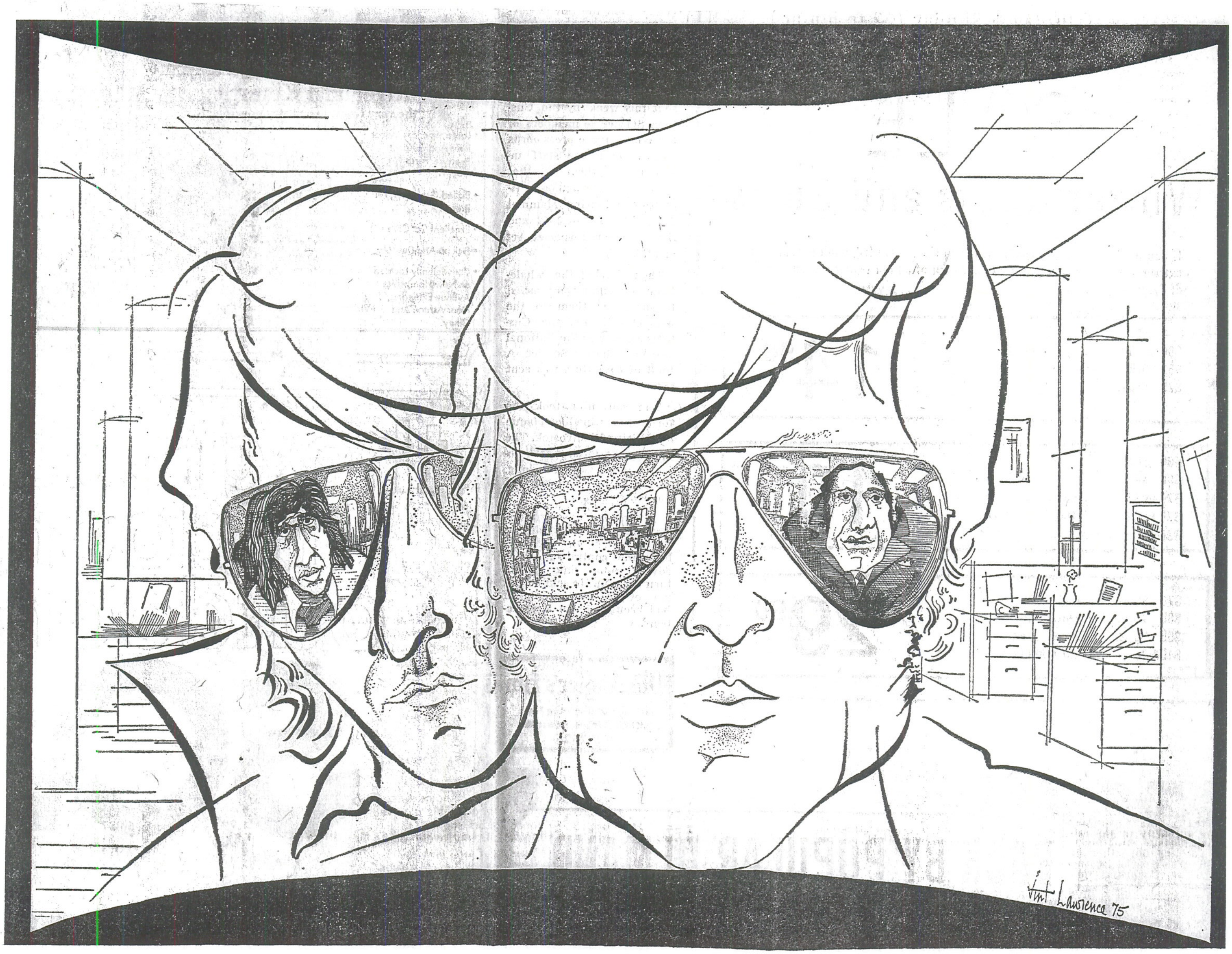
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