

Von Hoffman

The Moon Is Full

Washington

WHILE COOL HAND DICK has been twitching and telling us what a great pressure ballplayer he is, a theater in Georgetown has been showing a flick called "The Werewolf of Washington." The film isn't advertised as a documentary, but when you think about what's been going on around this town you couldn't tell it from the plot.



Nicholas von Hoffman

"Jack Whittier, the President's press secretary," was traveling in Romania where under a full moon he clubs a werewolf to death with his silver-tipped cane. However, he is bitten in the process and doomed in his turn to be a werewolf.

Returning to Washington, on the first full moon he hairs over, grows fangs and claws and sneaks out of the White House to kill the wife of the Attorney General, a woman who reminds us of Martha Mitchell. Note the deviation from reality. If this movie

were a documentary, it would be the Attorney General who was found with his throat slit and his blood sucked out.

Regaining his human form, Whittier resumes his normal White House routine until the next full moon when the poor fellow hairs over again and picks as his victim a woman newspaper publisher who could be said to bear a resemblance to the lady who owns the Washington Post. The next victim is a Black Panther.

Whittier finally tries to tell the President about his peculiar affliction, but the Chief Executive won't hear it. At length the press secretary hairs over and begins howling in the Pentagon's situation room. He escapes into the basement of the building where he attempts an attack on Dr. Kiss, a gnome in a white smock who is the President's chief adviser.

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RADIANT WITH PEACE and love, Dr. Kiss is able to tame the werewolf for a while, but the beast escapes and the cover-up is on. It is exposed when Jack grows his full-moon fangs in the Presidential helicopter, frightens the beejeesus out of the Chinese Prime Minister and then goes after the boss himself. "Down, Boy!" shrieks this cinematic President, who lacks the real one's icy-cool steel nerves in a crisis. "This is your President talking to you!"

That has about as much effect as the real-life Cool Hand Dick when he tries to tranquilize the rabid pussy cats of the White House press corps. The werewolf bites him anyway and is only saved from death when the President's daughter, a girl with a bouffant hairdo, kills him with a silver bullet. The movie ends with the President hairing over and howling while addressing the nation, so we never find out if Congress refuses to impeach for lack of evidence.

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ON OUR SIDE of fantasy, Julie doesn't have a silver bullet to save Daddy Cool Hand. Nor will appearances on the Today Show to state Papa's case to that small jury of sympathetic Alpo Dog Food salesmen convince anyone in this city that her old man isn't suffering from a Transylvanian gypsy curse.

They sit around here waiting for the next full moon of foreign affairs, arguing symptoms and diagnoses. "He's a manic depressive . . . no, he shows definite signs of paranoia . . . well, I hear they've got him on tranks . . . absolutely not, there's a man who needs uppers. Did you hear the White House has him so spooked he can't sleep at night so they either have to dope him or cart him up to Camp David?"

Nobody knows any facts, but the Washington cocktail hour has begun to sound like an emergency meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. There's even advance proofs floating around of a book on the subject by a panel of shrinks, but Cool Hand Dick says he's as sound as an inflated dollar.

He has polarized and divided the city. One-half thinks he's a yo-yo and the other half swears he's a crook and murmurs about him in Florida in the 1940s and the Mafia. Almost everybody has little midnight terrors that he's going to use the Army to get the country back in line.

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THE COUNTRY IS out of line. Even the mail to Senator James Abourezk from his South Dakota constituents shows it. From Langford a wire saying, "I, a Republican, favor the impeachment of Nixon"; from Letcher, "We think it imperative that the legislative body stand up and be counted"; from St. Paul's Indian Mission, "He should be impeached"; from Volga, "Urge that he be removed"; from Yankton, "I want to add my voice in support of efforts now being made to impeach Mr. Nixon," and from Spearfish, "President Nixon should be impeached."

When they've got your number in Spearfish, S. Dak., it's even too late for a coup d'etat. He's a goner for sure, by impeachment or resignation, but unhappily not before the next full moon.

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