



Pictures at a Revolution: Five Movies and the Birth of the New Hollywood

By Mark Harris

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***The New York Times* bestseller that follows the making of five films at a pivotal time in Hollywood history**

In the mid-1960s, westerns, war movies, and blockbuster musicals like *Mary Poppins* swept the box office. The Hollywood studio system was astonishingly lucrative for the few who dominated the business. That is, until the tastes of American moviegoers radically- and unexpectedly-changed. By the Oscar ceremonies of 1968, a cultural revolution had hit Hollywood with the force of a tsunami, and films like *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Graduate*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *In the Heat of the Night*, and box-office bomb *Doctor Doolittle* signaled a change in Hollywood-and America. And as an entire industry changed and struggled, careers were suddenly made and ruined, studios grew and crumbled, and the landscape of filmmaking was altered beyond all recognition.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #115687 in Books
- Brand: Harris, Mark
- Published on: 2009-01-27
- Released on: 2009-01-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.40" h x 1.00" w x 5.60" l, .85 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 512 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. While one might think that the films discussed in this book have been thoroughly plumbed (*The Graduate*; *Bonnie and Clyde*; *In the Heat of the Night*; *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*), *Entertainment Weekly* writer Harris offers his take in this thorough and engaging narrative. Instead of simply retelling old war stories about the production of these five Best Picture nominees at the 1968 Oscars, Harris tells a much wider story. Hollywood was on the brink of obsolescence throughout the 1960s as it faced artistic competition from European art films and financial implosion due to an outdated production system and rising budgets. Harris doesn't shy away from complexity in favor of easy answers, and the personalities that he profiles—among them Sidney Poitier, Mike Nichols, Warren Beatty and Richard Zanuck—are certainly worthy of the three dimensional approach. Harris also peppers his narrative with moments that capture the rising cultural tide that broke in the late '60s: chipping away at the moralistic Production Code, and Hollywood's inconsistent engagement with the Civil Rights movement are continuous sources of interest throughout this fascinating book. (Feb.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Mark Harris, a former editor for *Entertainment Weekly*, combines his remarkable knowledge of film history with interviews and research that capture the Zeitgeist of the late 1960s, particularly the cloistered, changing world of Hollywood. The films that challenged the industry's expectations were, Harris writes, "game changers, movies that had originated far from Hollywood and had grown into critics' darlings and major popular phenomena." In the manner of Otto Friedrich's *City of Nets*, Peter Biskind's *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, and Ethan Mordden's *Medium Cool*, the author does an admirable job of bringing that "revolution" to life. Drawing on his deep knowledge and a sly sense of humor (and irony) about Hollywood's quirkier side (witness an account of Jane Fonda's Fourth of July party in 1965), he crafts what Charles Matthews deems "likely to be one of the classics of popular film history."

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Film critics and historians can turn out some of the deadliest prose on the planet, so when the odd Pauline Kael or David Thomson rises above the stereotype, it's always a cause for celebration. Add Mark Harris to the short short list of film writers who can tell a story. And what a story it is! Harris uses the Academy Award nominations for Best Picture of 1967 (*Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Graduate*, *In the Heat of the Night*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and *Doctor Doolittle*) as the lens through which to view the cultural revolution of the late 1960s as it affected the movies. Moving back and forth in time in the manner of some of our best narrative nonfiction writers (from John McPhee to Laura Hillenbrand), Harris tracks the genesis of each of the five movies as they came to reflect the building war between Old and New Hollywood: *Doctor Doolittle*, of course, represents the old way, a mediocre, big studio musical determined to milk the last possible dollar from the cash cow that was *Sound of Music*, while *Bonnie and Clyde*, the brainchild of two precocious *Esquire* editors, was unquestionably the avatar of the New World. The backstory on the films never fails to fascinate—a perfect blend of cultural commentary and film-business analysis—but the miniportraits of all the personalities (from dying Spencer Tracy to fish-out-of-water Dustin Hoffman to wunderkind director Mike Nichols to dozens more) are unfailingly spot-on, always delivering something about these overexposed celebrities that we didn't know or hadn't thought about in just that way. No contest, this is one of the best film histories ever written. Don't miss it. --Bill Ott

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