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THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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CRONIN, NICHOLS, HARBISON & KANFER IN NICHOLS' APARTMENT

A letter from the PUBLISHER

Henry Luce

COVERING show business," says Los Angeles Correspondent Sandra Burton, "is mostly a problem of logistics. Just when a star is most preoccupied with a film and least accessible—shooting on some remote location or on a closed sound stage—that's when you decide you must interview him. Because it's nearly impossible to get up earlier or work later than he does, it's difficult to see him before or after shooting. So interviewing has to be piecemeal—between takes, on planes, in cars."

Reporting this week's cover story on Film Director Mike Nichols was no exception for Sandy or for New York Correspondent Mary Cronin and Researcher Georgia Harbison. Their assignment started, appropriately enough, with an exclusive Los Angeles preview of *Catch-22*, which Nichols has adapted from Joseph Heller's bestseller. "I've never flown 3,000 miles to see a movie before," remarked Georgia. Actually, she flew 6,000 miles, because she was back in New York the following day, tracking down nearly a dozen of Mike's earlier associates and co-workers.

Mary Cronin remained in Los Angeles, trying to keep pace with Mike himself as he raced around the Paramount lot. In preparation for interviewing Mike during a flight back to New York, she had bought five new tapes for her recorder.

But she took the wrong freeway, nearly missed the plane, and in her rush left the tapes in the car. Nichols was delighted at this evidence of journalistic fallibility, but Mary didn't mind. She was elated at having her peripatetic subject strapped down beside her during the five-hour flight.

In Hollywood, Sandy interviewed stars who know Nichols well and even got an appointment with elusive Elaine May, whose social satires with Mike made them both famous. Elaine's brilliance at conveying key words with gestures and facial expressions was a problem for our correspondent, however. When Sandy reviewed her notes, she found empty spaces scattered through Elaine's quotes—all at crucial points in the sentences.

The story was written by TIME Cinema Critic Stefan Kanfer—who has had a couple of his own TV and theatrical comedies produced—and edited by Peter Bird Martin. How did Martin and Kanfer feel about their all-women reporting team? Says Kanfer: "The work made its customary demands on the cerebrum, but the optic nerve had an easier time."

The Cover: Photographs of Mike Nichols by Santi Visalli and of Alan Arkin (as Yossarian in a tree) by Bob Willoughby. Design by Robert S. Crandall.

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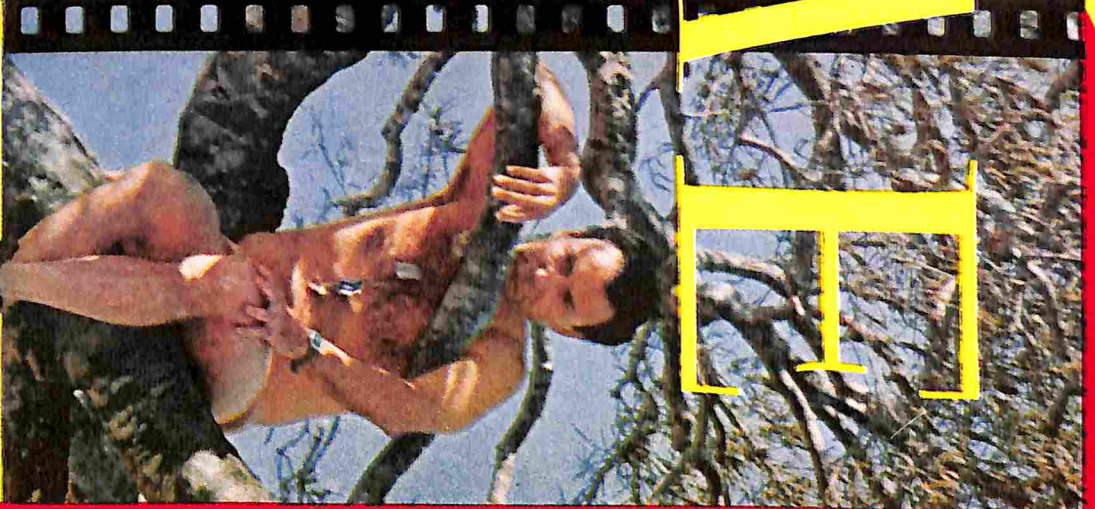
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FIFTY CENTS

JUNE 15, 1970

Catch 22 on Film



**Director
Mike
Nichols
as
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Comedy**

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