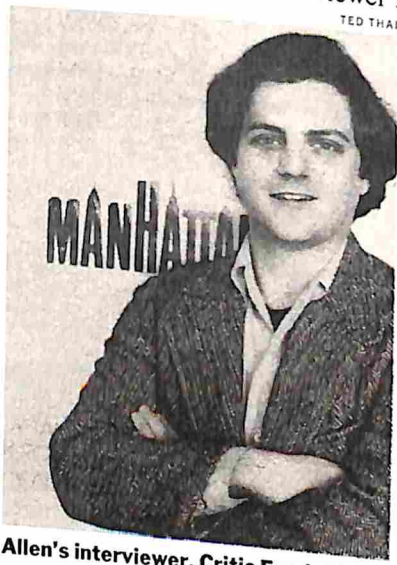


## A Letter from the Publisher

"Forthcoming, honest and very, very serious." That is how Staff Writer Frank Rich describes Woody Allen, the film maker, comic and virtuoso jazz clarinetist he interviewed in Allen's Manhattan apartment for this week's cover story. Says Rich: "Because Woody is involved in none of the side-show glitter of the industry, from TV appearances to Oscar ceremonies, he is different from anyone else I've met in show business."

Rich first met Allen while writing a profile of him for *Esquire* in 1977. Rich's own show business career began at age 13, when, as an aspiring actor in Washington, D.C., "I hung around the National Theater so much that the manager took pity on me and made me an usher so I could see the shows for free." Watching plays over and over as they were pruned, polished and otherwise primed for a Broadway run is, Rich believes, a great education for a critic: "I couldn't help learning what does and does not work well on stage." At Harvard, Rich decided he didn't work well on stage, gave up acting, and moved to the gallery as drama critic for the *Crimson*. He attributes his switch to film criticism to inspiration from the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* and to over-

exposure. "You could see more movies in Cambridge in a week than in a year in Washington," he says. Before joining TIME as a film reviewer in 1977, he spent two years starring in that role at *New Times* magazine and two more at the *New York Post*. Says Rich: "I've always preferred movies to real life."



Allen's interviewer, Critic Frank Rich

Contributor Richard Schickel, who wrote the story that precedes Rich's interview, has reviewed films for 14 years, long enough to have assayed every Woody Allen production since *Take the Money and Run*. Schickel first met Allen in 1963, when the comic did his stand-up routine on a TV show where Schickel was book critic. In this week's issue, Schickel examines Allen's maturation as a filmmaker on the eve of his latest and perhaps greatest triumph, *Manhattan*. To this task Schickel brings his experience not only as critic, but also as filmmaker himself, having produced, directed or written 14 TV shows about film history, including last year's comedy compilation *Funny Business*. Declares Schickel: "My list of truly great film comedians is very short. It consists of Chaplin, Keaton, W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers—and Woody Allen."

## Index



**62**  
**Cover:** Woody Allen in his new film *Manhattan* blends style and substance, humor and humanity. The director-writer-star explains how he has moved beyond comedy to confront his darkest anxieties. See CINEMA.



**18**  
**Nation:** The traditional confidence of Americans is giving way to gloom over inflation, according to a Yankelovich poll for TIME. The survey also shows Carter in political trouble. ► Verification worries may endanger SALT II.



**30**  
**Summer '79:** The dollar can still buy vacations in Europe. The Strategic Traveler skips the Ritz for small hotels and inns, picks country candles over city lights and food and wine that are modest only in price. See SPECIAL REPORT.

**36**  
**World**  
Rhodesian blacks vote in large numbers despite terrorist pressures. ► Interviews with Rhodesia's Mugabe and Muzorewa. ► Uganda recovers from Amin's rule. ► Differences between Iran's Ayatollahs. ► Britain's election campaign heats up. ► A Gulag survivor sues the Soviet Union.

**13**  
**American Scene**  
In Oklahoma a witness in the Karen Silkwood trial finds that testifying, like plutonium, may change his life.

**70**  
**Economy & Business**  
The Federal Reserve resists tighter money. ► Autoworkers aim to break the guidelines. ► Solar power rises in California.

**52**  
**Education**  
The U.S. Government is tampering with the quality of higher education in low ways, says Sociologist Edward Shils.

**79**  
**Sport**  
They are fulfilling an American ideal driving sedans at 170 m.p.h. while becoming rich: the big-time stock car racers.

**53**  
**Press**  
A journalist's mind can be probed in libel cases, says the U.S. Supreme Court. ► A crusading weekly wins a Pulitzer.

**81**  
**Books**  
*The Powers That Be* describes those on the other side of the headlines. ► *The Eighth Day of Creation* tells life's secrets.

**57**  
**Theater**  
The comic vitality in *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* belongs to British Star Tom Conti, who commands the stage from a bed.

**95**  
**Essay**  
The Central Intelligence Agency has been seriously disabled at a time when the nation needs it more than ever.

**60**  
**Science**  
Cooling down a hot reactor, with help from grade-school physics. ► There's an 8½-ft. worm at the bottom of the sea.

**4 Letters**  
**59 People**  
**61 Milestones**

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