

is that of landowner Muddle's son) which exemplifies the progressive charge—along with the sheer excitement of enthusiastic excess—of American 'exploitation' cinema.

PAUL TAYLOR

## Don't Go in the House

U.S.A., 1979

Director: Joseph Ellison

*Cert*—X. *dist*—GTO. *p.c.*—Turbine Films. *p.*—Ellen Hammill. *assoc. p.*—Matthew Mallinson, Dennis Stephenson. *p. manager*—Diane Sancetta. *post-p. consultant*—Stan Warnow. *asst. d.*—Monica Lange. *sc.*—Joseph Ellison, Ellen Hammill, Joseph R. Masefield. *story*—Joseph R. Masefield. *ph.*—Oliver Wood. *col.*—DeLuxe. *asst. ph.*—Arthur Gardner. *ed.*—Jane Kurson. *ad.*—Sarah Wood. *set designer*—Peter Zsiba. *sp. effects co-ordinator*—Peter Kunz. *sp. effects*—Matt Vogel. *m.*—Richard Einhorn. *songs*—“Dancin’ Close to You”, “Straight Ahead” by Ted Daryll, performed by The Daryll Barber Band; “Late Night Surrender”, “Boogie Lightning” by Bill Heller. *cost.*—Sharon Lynch. *make-up*—Maryann Guar. *sp. effects make-up*—Tom Brumberger. *titles*—David L. Hoffman. *opticals*—Optum Effects. *sd. ed.*—John Lievsay; Lou Kleinman. *sd. rec.*—Jimmy Kwei. *sd. re-rec.*—Emil Neroda, The Sound Shop. *p. assistants*—Darryl E. Holmes, Barry Shapiro, Vincent Giordano, Harry Savides, Kim Martin, Jonathan Alexander, Jae Carter, Isabelle Verdini, Michael Bates, Randi Melman, Tony Barone, Matthew Polansky, Vilma Straino. *l.p.*—Dan Grimaldi (*Donny Kohler*), Charlie Bonet (*Ben*), Bill Ricci (*Vito*), Robert Osh (*Bobby Tuttle*), Dennis M. Hunter and John Hedberg (*Workers*). *Ruth Dardick* (*Mrs. Kohler*), Johanna Brushay (*Kathy Jordan*), Darcy Sican (*Girl in Car*), Mary Ann Chin (*Woman in Street*), Lois Verkruepe (*Woman with Kids*), Susan Smith (*Girl in Market*), Jim Donnegan (*Clerk*), Claudia Folts (*1st Body*), Denise Woods (*2nd Body*), Pat Williams (*3rd Body*), Colin McInnes (*Little Donny*), Ralph D. Bowman (*Father Gerritty*), Joey Peschl (*Bobby's Son*), Connie Oaks (*Bobby's Daughter*), David McComb (*Salesman*), Jean Manning (*Girl in Store*), Ken Kelsch (*Man in Store*), Tom Brumberger (*Alfred*), Nikki Collins (*Farah*), Kim Roberts (*Karen*), Louise Grimaldi (*Barbara*), Commander Johnny G (*Himself*), Gloria Szymkovicz (*Sylvia*), David Brody (*Tony*), O'Mara Leary (*Police*), Gail Turner (*Pat*), Christian Isidore (*Michael*), Eileen Dunn (*Michael's Mother*). 7,300 ft. 81 mins. *Original running time*—83 mins.

Returning home after helplessly witnessing an accident at his workplace in which a man is badly burned, Donny Kohler finds his mother dead. Fear turns to jubilation when he hears voices telling him he is now free, but he also remembers his mother punishing him as a child by burning his arms. Taking home a girl, Kathy Jordan, Donny knocks her unconscious and then incinerates her in a fireproof room he has constructed. Two other women suffer the same fate. Donny dresses the corpses in his mother's clothes, intending to dominate them as he had been by his mother. After disturbing dreams and hallucinations in which he is threatened by both his victims and his mother, Donny visits a church where he tells the priest, Father Gerritty, that he needs holy water to put out the flames. He shows the priest his scarred arms, and is told to forgive his mother and to visit the church again. Donny's workmate, Bobby Tuttle, has meanwhile been telephoning to warn him that he will be fired if he does not return to work, and because of his concern over Donny's strange inability to help the man burnt in the accident, Donny, who has previously ignored Bobby's overtures, now calls him, and arranges to go out that night with Bobby and two women, Farrah and Karen. At a discothèque, Karen accidentally burns Donny's arm. He pushes a candle in her face and flees after being attacked by her brother. He then picks up two girls, takes them home, and is about to burn them in the fireproof room when Bobby and Father Gerritty arrive. Donny sets fire to the priest and, assailed by hallucinations of his victims rising up to attack him, burns down the house.

A coda to this uninspired *Psycho* imitation shows a small child being beaten by its mother and starting to hear voices. This cynical pretence to a universal 'message'—don't mistreat your children or they'll turn into women burners—serves only to highlight the film's weakness as drama. Joseph Ellison happily and blatantly steals from Hitchcock (the shots introducing the Kohler home, a victim examining artefacts in the old dark house, à la Vera Miles), but fails to develop Donny's character or dilemma beyond the one-dimensional. The single bright moment—"I tried being nice!" screams demented Donny to his charred corpses—is more reminiscent of Basil Fawley than Norman Bates.

STEVE JENKINS

## Edward Hopper

Great Britain, 1981

Director: Ron Peck

*Dist*—Concord. *p.c.*—Four Corners. For the Arts Council of Great Britain. *exec. p.*—Rodney Wilson. *p.i.p. co-ordinator*—Patsy Nightingale. *p. manager*—Robert Epstein. *location manager*—John Wright. *sc.*—Ron

Peck. *ph.*—Patrick Duval. In colour. *camera op.*—Derek Little. *ed.*—Margaret Dickinson, Wilfried Thust. *asst. ed.*—Joy Chamberlain. *m.*—David Graham Ellis. *titles*—Frameline. *sd. rec.*—Derek Williams, Roger Ollerhead. *sd. re-rec.*—Richard King. *p. assistant*—Helen Sunshine. *narrator*—Ron Peck. *with*—Gail Levin. 1,705 ft. 47 mins. (16 mm.).

"Where to start?" muses the narrator-director at the outset of this study of the American realist painter, adding with the feigned air of one contemplating some extraordinary last resort, "Of course, there are always the paintings". Such a statement might almost be intended to parody the efforts of some recent Arts Council films to break away from what has been seen (by a certain latter-day critical orthodoxy) as the discredited form of the art documentary. A sense of prevarication persists with an interminable motorist's-eye-view of New York traffic, and with an on-camera conversation, rather fumbling in its pretended spontaneity, between Ron Peck and Gail Levin, the Whitney Museum's resident Hopper expert. But as the film discards existential gestures for exegetical demonstration, it moves on to much more rewarding ground. In fact, it seems a pity that Levin's remarks could not have been more extensively incorporated into the continuing commentary, since she proves not only critically incisive but anecdotally witty on the biographical background—disclosing, for instance, in illustration of Hopper's conservatism, that he was prepared to cut short a vacation in order to return home and cast his vote against Roosevelt. The film's essential interest is the series of analogues it proposes, and for the most part, fortunately, the pace is sufficiently unhurried to allow them to register convincingly. Thus, Hopper's early work in advertising and magazine illustration is shown to have influenced not only the technique but the content of his paintings. In particular, it is intriguing to discover that, according to the artist, "Office at Night", a picture which might seem to contain strongly dramatic elements—and which, indeed, the art critic William Feaver has discussed in terms of American hard-boiled fiction—chiefly had to do with the deployment of office furniture, an earlier subject of his labours in a series of advertisements. The pull in Hopper towards abstraction, and away from either the documentary or the populist, is succinctly highlighted by visual comparison with, respectively, Walker Evans' photography and Norman Rockwell's illustrations. Peck—whose preoccupation with Hopper is attested by his borrowing of the title from one of the artist's best known works, "Night-hawks", for the feature he co-directed with Paul Hallam—then proceeds by way of the contention that Hopper's paintings often resemble stage or film sets, with people placed like actors, and items like cigarettes and coffee cups utilised in the manner of props, to assert the notion of a 'fictionalised' vision. This in turn leads to the invocation of cinematic fiction—Hopper was, we learn, an inveterate moviegoer—and to the submission in evidence of assorted movie stills. Both Ray's *They Live by Night* and *Party Girl* yield startlingly Hopper-like images, though it is a pity that—whether unavoidably or not—the latter should be represented, as is Minelli's *Home from the Hill*, only in black-and-white reduction. (Moreover, at the risk of appearing pedantic, it might be objected that the use of a still of the newshounds' bar in Lang's *While the City Sleeps* is a bit of a cheat, since despite an isolated visual resemblance, the atmospheric context is appreciably different from Hopper.) Despite a few loose ends, this film would have made an admirable introduction to the Hopper retrospective which recently visited the Hayward Gallery. The circumstantial snag is that it has, rather, become a postscript to that event; as such, however, it is well worth having.

TIM PULLINE

## El Salvador El Pueblo Vencera (El Salvador The People Will Win)

El Salvador, 1980

Director: Diego de la Texera

*Dist*—The Other Cinema. *p.c.*—Instituto Cinematografico del Salvador Revolucionario. *exec. p.*—Oscar Castillo. *p.*—Carlos Alvarez. *p. sup.*—Alvaro, Luis, Haroldo. *sc./ph.*—Diego de la Texera. In colour. *camera op.*—Diego de la Texera, Federico Jaime, Roberto, (anim.) Pepin Rodriguez. *lighting*—Domingo Gómez. *opticals*—Jusebio Ortiz. *ed.*—Antonio Iglesias, Deborah Shaller, Roberto Bravo, Luis Fuentes. *drawing*—Hugo Diaz. *m. arrangements/j.m.d.*—Adrian Corzueta. *m. performed by*—El Grupo Experimental. *titles*—René Avila. *sd. rec.*—Luis Fuentes. *FPL liaison*—Valentin Hernández. *comm.*—Valentin Hernández, Carlos Alvarez, Haroldo, Alvaro, Chema. *narrators*—Onaida Hernández, Pedro L. Fernández Vila. 2,880 ft. 80 mins. (16 mm.). *Subtitles En. in commentary.*

An analysis of the conflict in El Salvador, documenting the formation of the popular movement founded and led by Farabundo Martí in the Thirties, and relating the history of that struggle to the conflict being waged in 1980 between the people and the American-backed junta. Eye-witness accounts and footage shot in