Milestone Film & Video,
Bertrand Tavernier and Frédéric Bourboulon

present

THE TROUBLES WE'VE SEEN

A Story of Journalism in War Time

"First Journey" and "Second Journey"

a film by
MARCEL OPHULS

A Little Bear – Premiere co-production
with the participation of
CANAL +
SOFIARP 2 and SOFINERGIE 3
and from the
CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINÉMATOGRAPHIE

Milestone Film • PO Box 128 • Harrington Park, NJ 07640
Email: milefilms@aol.com • www.milestonefilms.com

THE TROUBLES WE'VE SEEN

A Story of Journalism in War Time
"First Journey" and "Second Journey"

Color and Black and White. Running Time: "First Journey": 1 hour 32 minutes. "Second Journey": 2 hours 21 minutes. Total running time: 229 minutes. In English, French, German, Serbian and Croatian dialogue. A Little Bear Prods. (Paris)/Premiere (Germany) production, with participation of Canal Plus and the BBC.

CREW

Director.....**MARCEL OPHULS**
Cinematography.....**PIERRE BOFFETY and PIERRE MILON**
Editing.....**SOPHIE BRUNET**
Sound.....**MICHEL FAURE and ERIC DEVULDER**
Sound Editing.....**ARIANE DOUBLET**
Sound Mixing.....**PAUL BERTAULT**
Assistant Director.....**DOMINIK MOLL and LAURENT CANTET**
Production Coordination.....**PATRICK LANCELOT, VERONIQUE BOURBOULON and ERIN CRAMER**
Administration.....**AGNES LE PONT, FLORENCE DARD and MARTINE BILLONNET**
Assistant Editors.....**ARIANE DOUBLET and LAURENCE HUGUES**
Editing Interns.....**CECIL CHAGNAUD and VERONIQUE GIAI**
Sound Effects.....**NICOLAS BECKER and JEAN-NOEL YVEN**
Assistant Camera.....**CATHERINE PUJOL**
Producers.....**BERTRAND TAVERNIER and FREDERIC BOURBOULON**

With the voluntary or involuntary participation of:

PHILIPPE NOIRET.....*Comedian, on the making of* Roi de Paris *by Dominique Maillet*
JON DUCANSON.....*News Cameraman*
SERGIO APOLLONIO.....*FORPRONU Zagreb*
Colonel HANS HECKNER.....*Luftwaffe*
URSULA MEISSNER.....*Photographer*
RON ROSS.....*Satellite Technician, EBU center*
NIGEL BATESON.....*BBC Cameraman*
EDDY STEPHENS.....*BBC Soundman*
JOHN SIMPSON.....*BBC Correspondent – head of Foreign Service*
VERA KORDIC.....*Interpreter*
JOHN F. BURNS.....*N.Y. Times Correspondent – Pulitzer Prize winner*
MARTHA GELLHORN.....*Writer*
Prof. NICOLAS KOLJEVIC.....*self-proclaimed Vice-President of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia*
RADOVAN KARADZIC.....*self-proclaimed President of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia*
The THOMAS Family
MARTIN BELL.....*BBC Correspondent*
STEPHANE MANIER.....*France 2 Journalist – Albert London Prize*
PIERRE PEYROT.....*EBU center Coordinator*
PATRICE DU TERTRE.....*News Cameraman*
JEAN-JACQUES LE GARREC.....*France 2 News Cameraman*

FOUAD BOUZADJIC ..... *Singer*
LIDIA ZULUMOVIC..... *Interpreter*
MIRA BOGDANOVIC..... *Daughter of retired colonel*
JOSE-MARIA MENDILUCE ..... *Special Correspondent from HCR*
ZRINKA BRALO ..... *Interpreter*
HEINZ METLITZKY ..... *ZDF Correspondent*
REMY OURDAN ..... *Journalist at RTL*
ANTOINE GYORI..... *Photo-Journalist*
ERIC BOUVET..... *Photo-Journalist*
MARTINE LAROCHE-JOUBERT... *France 2 Reporter*
PAUL MARCHAND ..... *Freelance Radio Reporter*
ISABELLE BAILLANCOURT ..... *TF1 Reporter*
ALAIN FINKIELKRAUT..... *Writer*
PHILIPPE SEGUIN..... *President of the National Assembly*
SIMONE VEIL..... *Minister of the State*
BERNARD KOUCHNER..... *Former Minister*
ANNE SINCLAIR..... *TF1 "Seven on Seven"*
CHRISTINE OCKRENT..... *Chief Editor at France 3*
ALAIN LAMASSOURE..... *Minister Delegate for European Affairs*
FRANÇOIS-HENRY DE VIRIEU .... *France 2 "The Hour of Truth"*
PHILIP KNIGHTLEY..... *Historian, author of "The First Victim"*
EDWY PLENEL..... *Le Monde Journalist*
PATRICK POIVRE D'ARVOR..... *TF1, Joint director of news, chief editor and newscaster JT at 20 Hours*
WALTER CRONKITE..... *Newscaster at CBS-News*
HILARY BROWN ..... *ABC-News Correspondent*
BERNARD PIVOT..... *France 2, "Bouillon de culture"*
PAUL AMAR..... *France 2, host of JT*
ALIJA IZETBEGOVIC..... *Bosnian President*
JACQUES MERLINO..... *France 2, Joint Chief Editor of JT*
AMIR ABBAS HOVEYDA..... *Prime Minister of Iran, executed*
PAUL-Marie DE LA GORCE..... *Journalist*
MICHELE COTTA..... *TF1, News Director*
MAURICE OLIVARI ..... *TF1, Reporter*
BERNARD-HENRI LEVY..... *Writer*
ROMAIN GOUPIL ..... *Filmmaker*
GORDANA KNEZEVIC ..... *Journalist in Oslobodenje*
CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR ..... *CNN Journalist*
VLADO MRKIC..... *Journalist in Oslobodenje*
SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC..... *Serbian President*
NERMIN TULIC..... *Comedian, Director of Young People's Theater in Sarajevo*
MOHAME KISLIAKOVIC..... *Mayor of Sarajevo*
ANDREW REID..... *Photo-Journalist*
General PHILIPPE MORILLON..... *FORPRONU*
PATRICK CHAUVEL..... *Photo-Journalist*
HERVE CHABALIER ..... *Producer of "24 Hours," CAPA agency*
Colonel MICHEL TOURON ..... *Responsible for French forces in Somalia*
JEAN-FRANÇOIS DENIAU ..... *Former Minister*
ERIC GILBER..... *Canal +, host of "24 Hours"*
GERARD DE VILLIERS..... *Writer, author of "Mission in Sarajevo"*
M GEORGES KIEJMAN ..... *Former Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs*
Dr. MUFID LAZOVIC ..... *Surgeon at the Kosovo hospital in Sarajevo*

"The first victim of war is truth"

from *The Troubles We've Seen*

Statement from Thierry Frémaux, Lumière Institute

The Troubles We've Seen or *From Mayerling to Sarajevo 1994 Version* from Marcel Ophuls who, after having pointed his camera on the French during the occupation (*The Sorrow and the Pity),* Ireland during time of civil war (*A Sense of loss)*, Berlin at the collapse of the Wall (*November Days)*, "life and times of Klaus Barbie" (*Hôtel Terminus),* became interested in "journalism in times of war" which he does in a quasi-entomological way which allows him to follow his hunt for authenticity, history, and truth: truth of beings, of doings, of memory and images.

The film covers a vast array of subjects (from the war in Spain to the Gulf War, TF1 studios to those in Sarajevo, big reporters to young WOLVES?, etc.) and through the use of numerous and judiciously chosen fiction film clips dispersed throughout the images captured by reporters, is able to bring across a feeling that no one is secure, not even the author of the film who never hesitates to appear on screen and become a player in his own game. He goes for in a fundamental interrogation, and utterly aware (or sensitive), that touches simply on the question of individual behavior: "Don't do it as a profession, do it for social consciousness," declared Edwy Plenel, investigative journalist from "Le Monde." Here, Marcel Ophuls has chosen to make a socially conscious film.

Marcel Ophuls

Marcel Ophuls was born on November 1, 1927 in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, the son of the great director Max Ophüls (née Oppenheimer). When Hitler came to power in 1933, the Ophüls family emigrated to Paris where Marcel became a naturalized French citizen in 1938. Max joined the French army when war broke out, but he and his family had to flee yet another homeland and the invading Nazi persecution when the Germans occupied France in 1940. "I did live through the defeat of France. I was 12. And then we fled into the unoccupied zone where we more or less hid, without any money at all, for something like a year." The family managed to escape and arrived in America shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Marcel attended Hollywood High School and later continued his education at Occidental College in Los Angeles and the University of California at Berkeley, following a brief stint with a theatrical unit of the U.S. occupation forces in Japan.

After acquiring American citizenship, he returned with his family to France in 1950, at which time he started to follow in his father's footsteps. Ophuls worked as assistant director for Julien Duvivier (*Marianne de ma jeunesse*, 1954), John Huston (*Moulin Rouge*, 1953), Anatole Litvak (*Un Acte d'amour*, 1954), and his father (on the poorly received *Lola Montes*, 1955). "After *Lola Montes*, the name Ophuls was so hated on the Champs Elysées that I couldn't find any work at all." Ophuls married Regina Ackermann, a German native, and worked for several years in Baden-Baden where he began what would become an illustrious documentary career. François Truffaut, whom Ophuls first met at his father's funeral in 1957 (Truffaut was one of the few contemporary defenders of *Lola Montes*), invited the fledgling director to participate in the omnibus film *Love at Twenty*. Truffaut also aided Ophuls immensely on two additional films: his fictional feature debut *Banana Peel* (a Hollywood-style comedy starring Jeanne Moreau, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Gert Fröbe) and the celebrated *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Ironically for a man so well associated with the non-fiction form, Ophuls declares that his two major influences are Truffaut and his father.

While working for French national television, Ophuls met André Harris and Alain de Sedouy and directed many segments on their monthly newsmagazine, *Zoom*. This experience helped refine his journalism and interview skills and taught him the basics of 16mm filmmaking. Together the three created *Munich, or*

Peace in Our Time, an early foray into the exploration of World War II history. They all quit the state-run O.R.T.F. television network over the government's response to the May 1968 demonstrations, forcing a need to find outside sources for their next project, *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Funded by Swiss and German television, the film was Ophuls' breakthrough. A huge critical and commercial success around the world, it was such a hit that the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) bought the rights to show it in the United States. However, the film so disturbed French television executives and state officials (it didn't help that Ophuls himself was a German Jew by birth although officially a French citizen) that it was only broadcast there *twelve* years after its completion.

After making a documentary about the conflict in Northern Ireland, Ophuls next turned to a mammoth undertaking. Intended as a "sequel" to *The Sorrow and the Pity* and inspired by *Nuremberg and Vietnam: An American Tragedy*, the book by Telford Taylor, U.S. Chief Counsel at Nuremberg, *The Memory of Justice* (1976) embroiled Ophuls in a protracted battle with his German and British financial backers. The German backers wanted a segment on the Stalinist concentration camps and the British producers wanted a "radical-chic version for America," in which the U.S. Marines' behavior in Vietnam would be compared to the German S.S. The BBC representative objected to a sauna scene with frontal nudity. Eventually, Ophuls was fired and his work print confiscated. The producers cut the film to suit their own needs, but Ophuls' loyal assistant managed to smuggle a scratch print out of London to New York. There, a group of "American opinion-makers" rallied behind the film and, with the financial help of Hamilton Fish and others, Paramount released Ophuls' version in America.

Over the years, Ophuls has produced radio plays, made documentaries in France, Germany and the United States. He worked for almost a year at CBS News to create documentaries on the McCarthy era and "Fred Astaire and the Protestant Work Ethic," though neither came to fruition. He also worked at ABC as a contributor to *20/20*. He pursued acting, taught classes on Hollywood comedies at Princeton, and wrote for magazines such as *American Film* and *Positif*. He has also served on the board of the French Filmmakers' Society. It is, however, for his astonishing body of documentaries including *The Memory of Justice* (1976), *Hotel Terminus* (1988, winner of the Academy Award® for Best Documentary) and *The Troubles We've Seen* that Ophuls is regarded as the conscience of his generation and one of the finest filmmakers in world cinema history. As a sign of his often unrecognized lighter side, he has repeatedly stated that what he really wants to do is direct — a musical.

Filmography

1960 *Matisse, ou Le talent du Bonheur*, director (short)
1962 *Love at Twenty (L'Amour à vingt ans)*, director, screenwriter — "Munich"
1963 *Banana Peel* (*Peau de Banane*), director, co-screenwriter
1964 *Fire at Will* (*Feu à Volonté*), director, co-screenwriter
1967 *Munich, ou la Paix pour Cent Ans*, director, screenwriter (TV documentary)
1967 *Clavigo*, director (TV documentary)
1970 *The Harvest of Mai Lai*, director (TV documentary)
1970 *The Sorrow and the Pity* (*Le Chagrin et la pitié*), director, co-screenwriter
1971 *America Revisited*, director, screenwriter (TV documentary)
1971 *Zwei ganze tage (2 Whole Days)*, director (TV)
1972 *A Sense of Loss*, director, screenwriter (documentary)
1976 *The Memory of Justice*, director, screenwriter (documentary)
1980 *Kortner Gescichte*, director, screenwriter (TV documentary)
1982 *Yorktown: Le Sens d'un Bataille*, director, screenwriter (TV documentary)
1988 *Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*, director
1990 *November Days: Voices and Choices*, performer, director (TV documentary)
1993 *François Truffaut: Stolen Portraits*, interviewed
1994 *The Troubles We've Seen: A History of Journalism in Wartime*, director

Interview with Marcel Ophuls
By Thierry Frémaux

"It's an excerpt from Philip Knightley's book *The First Casualty* that made me want to do a film on reporters: 'the first victim of war is truth'. It's a project I held onto and, over 15 years, there is not one producer I've not proposed it to. The idea is simple: go where there is war, near the pools at the big hotels, and film the journalists who play poker while waiting, who bribe the switchboard operators to learn of events before the others do or to find the first jeep, the first helicopter. I wanted to capture that, and then interrogate Lacouture, Bodard, Halberstam and a few other big reporters on Algeria and Vietnam. Then I wanted to illustrate their ideas with archival material. That was my project.

During the filming of *November Days*, we knew that the Gulf War would end with a bang because of the ultimatum. As General Schwarzkopf, Saddam Hussein and CNN settled down, Schwarzkopf and Saddam Hussein got ready to have journalists' heads. This was not the zenith, it was the nadir. But I was too difficult and the BBC pulled out. France 2 also. When I had finished mourning, I learned of what I would come to misname a beautiful occasion. I found myself suddenly realizing that there were people who were gunning each other down in Yugoslavia simply because they were journalists.

But this was not exactly the same subject…

It was a new form of radical and definitive censorship. But I had made a false calculation: what I would've done in Ryad for two years could not be done in eight days in Bosnia. We always imagine that documentaries are singular experiences for those who make them, asking: "How have you changed during the filming?" No, making *Hotel Terminus* did not change my opinion of Barbie. Same for the collapse of the Berlin Wall in *November Days.*

Therefore, this time it was done differently. I left for Sarajevo as soon as I had a little money, thinking that one trip would suffice. Coming back the first time, I knew that I had to do others. I did six. The departure point is there: a documentary filmmaker with his little subject finds himself swept into the tragedy most characteristic of our culture at the end of the century. And I had not foreseen that at all.

But the film is not only devoted to Sarajevo. The "other film," you had…

Yes, but the heart is the Holiday Inn and the people down there. It's true that the subject grew larger because we touch on an important question of fighting against disinformation, cynicism, indifference and forgetting. Forgetting what happened fifty years ago, forgetting what happened a thousand kilometers from here. These are questions of chronological and geographical distance. In the film, Noiret asked a spontaneously fabulous question: "Would it have changed anything if we had seen Auschwitz on television?" Sadly, we know the answer. The answer is no. It wouldn't have changed anything.

You know then that it's no longer only a documentary on journalists but a global discourse on the end of the century…

Yes and that journalistic heroism is an act of resistance in terms of the indifference of the whole world that overpowers every issue in war. However, the people of Sarajevo know it and say it: the most important solidarity is that of the journalists.

The Troubles We've Seen is, I believe, more than a documentary on journalists, a denunciation of the cowardice that dishonors all of us, cowardice not exclusively reserved for France. The English don't count much. Clinton tried, but he's a yuppie who marches to the polls, flip, flop, flip, flop, and he doesn't want GI's in Bosnia for fear of the Vietnam effect. But the man who has been the most lucid and voluntarily

pro-Serb from the beginning because he wanted to be on the winning side and because he didn't want people to be bored by things that don't concern them, is Mitterrand. Cynicism is like alcoholism: as soon as you can make other people drink, your conscience is at peace.

The Troubles We've Seen* appears at first, as in its subtitle (*a story of journalism in war times) to be a film on "reporters"…

You know, I truly admire the people at the Holiday Inn, risking their life for a tiny amount of money, simply to try to change the sensibility of the times. The dynamic of the film tries to show how admirable they are in comparison to politicians who are content to follow public opinion.

Journalists do hopeless work that could possibly lead to nothing. Taking this into consideration, they are equivalent to the 1940-1941 resistance fighters. They're troubled when Paris takes their blood-tinged stories. This frustrates them because they feel like completely derisory characters in the scheme of things. At the same time, they continue, like Remy Ourdan who writes magnificent papers. How could that not be admirable when all this is happening? Especially when we see what Edwy Plenel calls "le journalisme de frequentation", become an integrated part of the political-media class – opportunistic and self-absorbed as it is.

Famous debate on deontology of information…

Yes, I asked myself these questions about entertainment news…where among are the limits, do they still exist? The first function of journalism is to witness. Without false testimonies. At the beginning, I had to be careful not to be especially indulgent for the journalists, which had been particularly compromising 15 years ago in Timisoara and elsewhere. The first shock was when I discovered my 'characters'. As soon as I accounted for the way the journalists worked, what they exposed about themselves and how clear they are about what they do, we no longer needed to criticize them. In this particular context, it seems to me that people at home don't have the right to criticize the media. Forty journalists have lost their live in Bosnia, forty!

And then the film swiftly becomes an exploration of the professional community as a whole. What did you learn about journalists that you did not previously know?

I thought that there would be an enormous opposition between people on the ground and the editors in Paris. Not true. We must know the difference between the TF1 enterprise (the totalitarian fixture, the megalomania of multiple screens that reflect themselves between us, the smiling portraits of their star newscasters, etc.) and its editorial staff. Because the editors of the J.T. hold out. They know Bosnia is pure poison, that it would ruin ratings, etc. But they preoccupy themselves with it all the same because it's still an ethical problem and a journalistic conviction. They know that Isabelle Baillancourt in Haiti or Marine Jacquemin in Rwanda do a dangerous job that the camera rends still more perilous. Each year, this chump becomes more at risk because the photojournalists are, unfortunately, targets of the integrationists and the fascists who have understood that they are the true adversaries.

No, the true difference made between the two conceptions of journalism: that which conserves a work ethic, and that which lives for ratings, for television culture and for the draining of mass democracy…. The politico-media class is very intelligent, but whether on the left or on the right, we know how it operates. Journalists from Paris or from Sarajevo are better placed to understand this, and it's because of that I feel responsible. Before, I didn't like the "journalistes de frequentation", I like them less now.

You are a formidable interviewer and we have learned from your preceding films to watch for your intentions. In the case of PPDA, we sense a certain aggressiveness. Now, that's not the case…

I had not decided to give it to them, but I had decided to never give in. In a first cut, I was cantankerous, I interrupted him all the time, it made me depressed and I said to myself: "What is this? You jealous of this guy or something, you want to be on screen in his place?" it was profoundly unjust and what's more, it did a disservice to the film.

But it was necessary to thoroughly interrogate him, without aggression, on the phony interview with Castro. What's more, he opened himself to my question and made it practically inevitable by declaring: "You will not find journalists who do dishonest things here." Having said this, Poivre d'Arvor decided to receive me. Anne Sinclair (who I respect as an intelligent "journaliste de frequentation," who resists the pressure of her own image as a star, a beautiful woman, etc.) would not be able to let her secretary say 'she didn't have time.' Not to me! Like Christine Ockrent who would've had to explain herself in the Hoveyda interview.

The condition of contemporary journalists that we see is hardly glowing…

Ten years ago, reporters were the privileged. Today, as ethnic purifiers are well aware, the camera's eye is the big menace. Journalists who go to these corners of the earth consciously take these risks in solitude. It's not against an enemy. One never knows with certainty if Serbian snipers will fire or not on journalists, this comes up and is discussed elsewhere in the film. But we know that it goes from bad to worse. In Algeria, for example, the intellects and the journalists were shot voluntarily…we can't believe the editors in Paris are unaware of this. Obliviousness, like public opinion, springs from an abominable apathy.

The film is as much as an entomological description of a community of "war time journalists" as it is about the will to say what is disinformation, manipulation…

Yes, it's a film about the modern situation of the informant from those who don't want the information to get through. My father thought that television was killing film. It's a question of supply and demand. At the beginning when television needed to produce, demand exceeded supply, so they called in the mediocrity. Then the mediocrity sought amongst themselves to form their own hierarchy, their own universe, and now it's hopeless. Aside from all the questions of ratings, of stardom, of the advertising market, the true explanation is that the direction of the channels is in the hands of people who don't know anything about entertainment.

Throughout the constant progression of your filmmaking practice, from *The Sorrow and the Pity, Hotel Terminus* and *November days,* and your lesser known film *The Memory of Justice,* we get a feeling that comes back to Edwy Plenel's saying about journalism: "Don't do it as a profession, do it for social consciousness." Has your desire to make civic cinema grown over these last few years?

Yes, from the force of things. I never wanted to be as political as I've become. It is, however, one of the large discussions I had with Truffaut: he asked me "You don't really believe that sexuality is more important than politics?" And I told him: "Of course! But why are you asking me that?" *Munich* and *The Sorrow and the Pity* were orders, I was sent out to do those reports at the ORTF because I didn't have any cash. I had a flop with a bad film about the Champs-Elysées and it would've been better to sit back and let the pot boil.

***Banana Skin* is a very good film…**

I don't know anything about it, but the next one was pretty terrible. So I left the ORTF and worked as a reporter for a small anti-Gaullist rebel group. Edwy Plenel would've also, perhaps, liked to have done other

things; you'd have to ask him. But to make films about our time without a social consciousness would be an aberration!

But the political question in *The Troubles We've Seen* is very explicit…

It needs to be more still. Look at the banality and the decadence in even the idea of democracy. We confuse ratings with democracy. It's deadly, deadly and barbaric.

Documentaries have become, sadly, the business of television and television is in the hands of reality show producers…

I don't like "reality shows". I find them indecent, unbearable, hypocritical, unpleasant and tacky. But I've never really believed in a difference between film and television. What I believe is that the people who are able to impose their value on television are amateurs who give the profession a bad name. They don't understand that entertainment is not a dirty word, that you don't have to be ashamed of it. This is something I learned at birth from my father. I grew up with it. I'm a child of bullets and I know the ethics of the circus.

The link that exists between "journalists de frequentation," acrobats and government ministers is that of a people who have monopolized a power that doesn't belong to them, that will never belong to them because they don't understand anything about show business. Look at *Singing in the Rain.* It's not only a beautiful, elegant and masterful film, it's also a film that shows discipline in its workmanship – that's what creates the professional morals.

Something I found particularly striking is that the film is a quasi-ethnographic documentary on journalistic society. Like when Martine Laroche-Joubert tells about her problems with alimony…

How Martine's discussion comes off is one of the gambles of the film that I hope to win. It's very courageous of her to discuss it because she attacks her employers – something the kind Isabelle Baillancourt very rarely dares to do. Will people be interested in Martine's alimony and her claims about salary and about women? Compared to what's going on with the snow, the famine and the war, her discussion appears frivolous, corporatist and unimportant, compared to the tragedy of the siege, doesn't it? This is also the challenge of the film.

The little stories of the journalists, their rivalries, their snags with the editors, armored car traffic, etc. can all appear light and unimportant compared to the Yugoslavian problem. This has haunted me. But by taking on a pluralistic tone, challenging formal structure (with the help of the Marx Brothers), I hope that little by little the idea comes through that the professional worries of journalists are as valid as those of the people dying around them.

Yet, they don't seem especially moved by the risks that they take…

Because this is part of their job. I don't know Marine Jacquemin, but I know that she's very well respected by others. So, now when I see her name on a report from Kigali, I look at it more attentively than before. What she does is great and incredibly courageous. She goes into Kigali without protection, without anything but her team, while other reporters are content to follow Léotard in a helicopter.

While your film focuses solely on a solemn proposal that is completely serious, it's also generously combative and almost lighthearted at times. There seems to be a feeling of complete freedom of creation…

First off, if the film gives off this impression of freedom, it's because the producers gave me the possibility to do so. Bertrand Tavernier and Fred Bourboulon are heroes. I'm not an easy guy, but throughout the whole process, in all our conflicts, they were never tempted to tell me what I had to do. This has become very rare in filmmaking.

How was the filmmaking team structured? A camera operator, a sound guy?

For the first trip we were low on cash and I had a hard time paying the cameraman, so I didn't bring a sound guy. This was an immense mistake that was salvaged through post-dubbing in Paris by journalists from the BBC and France2 who did it by eye.

From its conception, could the film have existed without an accord with Pierre Boffety, your head camera operator, or with your editor, Sophie Brunet?

Sophie Brunet collaborated from the creation, as did Albert Jurgenson. When there is so much material it's difficult to conduct editing alone. As I age, I need people who will back me up! And who can edit without me. There are whole sequences, like the TF1 section and a few others, where the original idea was my own but Sophie executed it. She's the one who finds a way to make the idea really work. She is, in reality, a co-director.

Both Pierre Bofferty and I are "our fathers' sons" and this is something that brings us together. He's worked with his father on other projects. He's able to make rapid decisions in limited situations because he was a cameraman on *James Bond* films and during the same time made militant film in Chile and Nicaragua. He has an understanding of filmmaking that we can fall back on during editing. The shots are admirably well-composed and because he knows me well, he gets it quick. Take, for example, the interview with Martine Laroche-Joubert. The rushes left me furious because everything was in a wide shot on her without any cutaways which would make it very hard to edit. In fact, there was a great thing happening between Martine and myself which he didn't want to let miss.

Yes, that's pretty neat! ...

But it wasn't necessarily a sufficient reason! For a long time it was me who wanted him to do it; but finally, it was, without a doubt, he who was right.

Like in the scene with the train conductor at the beginning of the film. We don't yet know what is improvisation, scripted…

Of course it's improvised, because we couldn't tell him what to say. I didn't know in advance that he would recognize my name on the passport, but it's also true that he wouldn't have said anything if we hadn't turned a camera on him.

It's a rather miraculous scene…

It's one of those that makes you feel good because it works. Like where the Serbian soldier said to me: "Ah Marcel, Marcel Proust, he was also Jewish…," from there, we begin to seriously consider if this guy is racist.

We also feel a certain complicity with you and your characters who seem to guide the construction of the film…

Yes. In *Hôtel Terminus*, whenever I ran into an obscure problem with the construction I was able to call up Serge Klarsfelt at midnight and ask him to come to the editing room the next day. In *The Troubles We've Seen* it happened much the same. For example, during editing for the Anne Sinclair segment, it seemed to me that Alain Finkielkraut would be able to be more precise. I called him and we did a second interview directly, between the editing and the phone call. And I left it all up to the picture. Of course, support played a large role. If the BBC team hadn't come to Paris for the post-dubbing, I would've had serious mixing problems.

You can take all the liberties you want as long as you don't lie to viewers. To preserve liberty you cannot lie, make propaganda or make something fake that tries to pass off as reality. It's very simple, there's no need for a whole ideology, an aesthetic, a cinema-verité, direct cinema or what have you. The idea is to make the rules and stick to them. I try to respect them and I have a feeling that someone like Wiseman also does, but that quite a few others hold to them less and less.

There's a real liberty of tone and style in the film. You had complete permission to do this?

Yes. As long as I told them about it and didn't pull an Oliver Stone, mixing fiction and reality without warning. You've always got to try to put reality on the screen. People recognize me and I am feared or respected. So, if the people being interviewed are afraid of being misrepresented through editing, you've got to show it, you have to let the feeling come through because that becomes part of the reality. Long ago, at the time of *The Sorrow and the Pity,* this wasn't an issue. Today, PPDA knows very well why I'm going to see them. Thus, it becomes a kind of game. Obviously, I've got the upper hand because I control the editing. But even Pivot has precise techniques for directly guiding interviews.

You've already appeared on screen in *Hôtel Terminus* and *November Days*. But there, your involvement and evolution is very straightforward. It seems as if you said to yourself, "In this film where I question the behavior of other people, it's more honest to put myself in the game."

At the beginning the film didn't have this subjective dimension at all because it was only focused on the question of seeing how other people work, to look over their shoulders and listen to them. But a film based on interviews is difficult to direct. You have to interrupt people so that they don't manipulate you or bring the film in their own direction. And you must always hear the voice of the guy in the back, hear his words and see his picture, even if he's not Cary Grant, even if he's bald, myopic and old. This way, viewers aren't fooled.

A documentary is an investigation and inevitably, a self-investigation…the film tries to be a critical investigation of the media and thus it must be self-critical because I am a part of this world. We all make entertainment news because there's no other way to make news. What is essential is to understand that entertainment is not a pejorative word and to see in which ways it is not pejorative.

And you're sure that the director isn't poking fun at himself or his viewers since he goes so far as to put himself on screen with a whore…

Yes, even if it's a little excessive to read a thought as profound as that from that particular episode.

But without doubt this scene brings its share of provocation…

This scene will be heavily criticized, but it's there really to try to say: "Well, when you leave hell and you hear the sounds of bullets close by, and you go to a good hotel, you want to have a nice moment". There

are telephone numbers in the hotels, why shouldn't Marcel Ophuls use them?! The scene isn't trying to fool anyone, it's playful. You can't film a naked girl in her bed without having talked to her beforehand! But it's also a challenge to "politically correct thinking" because I don't see why they would, over the years, spread films about prostitution to Moscow while continuing to think that all the clients are Japanese, anonymous and squinting.

The film is scattered with clips from films by Huston, Hawks, Wilder, your father. How do these choices work?

We worked on them a lot. It was difficult because it costs a lot to buy these images and the music. The largest budgetary impasse of the film did not come from my six trips to Sarajevo but from this. But the film lives precisely because of them.

But still, each clip seems to be involved in a narrative sense as well as in content…

The juxtaposition between the Bosnian Shakespearean actor who lost his legs and James Cagney – who was not a good Shakespearean actor to anyone, not even to Max Reinhardt – can be interpreted as a provocation. But this dance is the expression of the vitality of entertainment, of a guy who lights the fire of freedom. I compared him with an actor who can no longer do that. There are millions of people who think that Bing Crosby and James Cagney are sentimental twaddle, that they have nothing to do with life, that their work is not art, that it's kitsch, and they will not touch *White Christmas* or James Cagney. And it's a shame. I made all these choices voluntarily. Against all those who think that all these things are out of date. I think that television culture and rock culture are for the most part responsible for the tragedy in Sarajevo. And there's a challenge in the references to Laurence Olivier, to classical cinema that I still love. You have to stop pandering to young people to get them to come to movie theaters or all that. If they don't save themselves from the cowardice of the end of this century, it will be their responsibility, not ours! They are responsible for their own future and they continue to partake in neutrality, complacency and indifference. Sarajevo is already their fault: the International Brigades will exist for a long time.

"Political Correctness" and "filmic correctness" don't interest you…

I don't like political correctness, and I like Hawks, Wilder, James Cagney and Bing Crosby.

It seems to me that the film forces us to look at the last fifteen years as well as the last half of this century in order to try to explain what awaits us in the coming decade…

We'll have to try to resist. You know, you can say what you want about the communists, but they had an ethic, an ideal. They were conned by Stalin and company, but anti-fascism lived in them and it was a militant force that no longer exists. Without it, Chamberlain wouldn't have been replaced by Churchill, and the GI's wouldn't have landed in Normandy. The parallel between Sarajevo and the moral collapse of the west, in Washington or in Paris, is only shown in very small bits, but I keep (perhaps for a third film?) images that show wounded people, that confront the conflict in everyday life, the journalists who forget that to do their job is to help others, the difference between the vultures and those who feel solidarity in the suffering of others.

In your film we come across many people who are normally in the shadows: Martine Laroche-Joubert, Paul Marchand, the small free-lance reporter who comes down from the roof of the Holiday Inn, Patrice du Tertre whose discourse is as lucid as it is radical, Martha Gellhorn, Stéphane Manier. Who had the largest impact on you?

Maybe the hero of the film is John H. Burns. In an interview I saved for the end of the film he reveals that he has terminal cancer and that he traveled 150 km alone in the snow across Serbian borders to see the first

American parachutes on Gorazade. Two years before he couldn't even cross the *New York Times* offices. He didn't have anymore hair because of the therapy. They're like this, these guys. And he did a 150 km on foot in the snow, in full out war. I still have a lot of pictures with him. Perhaps for a third section…

You keep talking about an umpteenth trip, of a third segment…

I cannot believe that the siege will last eternally. The first trip started at Christmas time: people are in the snow, they die. I believed that six months later it would be done. Now, it's still going on…we've got to find money to make this third segment that will be still more hopeless, like the situation down there. And then I'm in the same situation as all the journalists who know Sarajevo, it's almost become a second home. We feel solidarity, we want to return, see the people, and try to show that we're with them, even if we're against the rest of the world.

What is the "end of the film" for the journalists?

There's a terribly strong negative evolution that, curiously, Philip Knightley foresaw. Knightley is a very pessimistic person. When he wrote his book, fifteen or twenty years ago, he said that journalism was a profession that would no longer exist at the end of the century because mass media and dictators would figure out how to completely eliminate it. Or else it would be completely manipulated or not exist at all. That's what my father said about cinema! In general, it's the pessimists who are right. But if you're very pessimistic and you turn out to be right, you've got to be like Billy Wilder and at least try to cling on to irony and humor.

Paris, September 30th, 1994

Film Comment
July/August 1996

Memories of injustice: Marcel Ophuls' cinema of conscience

By Kurt Jacobsen.

Marcel Ophuls really would rather be making musicals. Honest. "People always laugh when I say that:' He routinely protests that he never craved the role of minicam-toting conscience; it became his by happenstance. After all, the pay is lousy, the hours infinite, and one never ever runs out of injustices or the multitudes of small complicities that enable those injustices to take root. Officially sanctioned injustice is his lifelong topic; exposing complicity in all its subtle forms is his metier. Ophuls aptly has been likened to TV's Columbo, a sly, perpetually rumpled detective who deftly manages, through deceptively simple queries, to pin his smug prey squirming to the nearest wall. No one can surpass him at peeling away the protective devices and dodges through which hideous behavior is rationalized by cheerful criminals, outright collaborators, and the cowed families who are only being "realistic" by adjusting to thuggish regimes. Dissecting the reasons why ordinary people shut their eyes to historical horrors, from the deportation of Jews in occupied France to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, might prod us to open ours.

Ophuls seems fated from birth to be cosmopolitan, a filmmaker, and incorrigibly a thorn in the side of all authorities. He was born in Germany in 1927, the only child of director Max Ophuls and his wife Hilde. In 1932, with the Nazis on the brink of attaining state power, his family fled to Paris. When France fell in 1940 they slipped into Switzerland; in 1941 they managed to emigrate to the United States. There Marcel attended Hollywood High, Occidental College, and the University of California at Berkeley. He served with the U.S. occupation forces in Japan and in 1950 became an American citizen. In 1951 he returned to Europe to work in a variety of directorial and writing capacities for French and German television. In the early Sixties he also directed two small films: an episode of *Love at Twenty* ('61) and an offbeat feature comedy, *Banana Peel* ('64).

But Ophuls's most striking works in that turbulent decade began as projects for the French state television network ORTF. In 1967 ORTF screened his caustic documentary of the diplomatic maneuvers behind the 1938 Munich agreement attempting to appease Hitler's appetite for lebensraum. A companion study of France under the Occupation, focusing on the town of Clermont-Ferrand in the Vichy zone, was under way when, during the "events" of May 1968, Ophuls took part in a directors' strike protesting state censorship in broadcasting. He was fired, after which he moved to Germany. With supreme irony, it was there that he scraped together the funds to complete his masterpiece in demystification.

The Sorrow and the Pity ('70) dispelled the myth of resistance solidarity, highlighted homegrown anti-Semitism, and examined the virtual state of civil war and vicious class conflict rending

France long before the Panzers rolled in. An ORTF official infamously objected that the film "destroys myths that the people of France need." The many memorable interviewees included a French Waffen SS officer, a shopkeeper who placed a newspaper ad in 1942 denying he was Jewish, and a Resistance fighter and Buchenwald survivor who now somehow lived peacefully beside the fellow Frenchman who had turned him in to the Gestapo. The government refused to screen *The Sorrow and the Pity* on TV, but the four-and-a-half-hour documentary played for years in a French cinema and created a furor anyway. A milder and fair-minded critique leveled by Harvard scholar Stanley Hoffman is that Ophuls's film, while it ignited a necessary reappraisal, was too harsh a judgment insofar as it characterized all French behavior on the basis of a study of a single town. Only when Mitterand came to power in 1981 was *The Sorrow and the Pity* permitted on French TV.

In the category of marathon-length documentaries-though he made a few short films, too-Ophuls next ventured into the less familiar terrain of Northern Ireland in *A Sense of Loss* ('72), in which he concentrated

on the grim, ground-level experience of sectarian oppression and nationalist struggle. In *The Memory of Justice* ('76) he scoured the Nuremberg trials and mordantly reflected on their legacy in the age of napalm and My Lai massacres. The Oscar-winning *Hotel Terminus* ('88) disclosed a sinister saga of collaboration among "free world" intelligence agencies that passed around and made use of the unsavory likes of Klaus Barbie, formerly chief of the German secret service in Lyons, 1942-44, whose vicious skills were harnessed to postwar anticommunism. Intelligence "professionals" obviously had more in common with crafty ex-Nazis than with the democratic values they were supposedly defending. The many meanings and implications of the fall of the Berlin wall formed the heady subject of *November Days* ('90).

Ophuls's latest documentary, *The Troubles We've Seen*, is a work-in-progress centered on war correspondents in Sarajevo that sifts through the seamy history of war reporting and focuses on the ethical tensions inherent in their trade. Can they only or ever be dispassionate analysts? Should they ever champion a cause? Ophuls's investigative ambit spans the Spanish Civil War -including an interview with Martha Gellhorn, who revels in the romance of "la causa," and an inquiry into the authenticity of Robert Capa's famous photograph of a Republican soldier at the instant of death-and extends to wry observations about the meticulously controlled coverage of the Gulf War. (A French journalist recalls informing his editors that in liberated Kuwait the manin-the-street interview they innocently wanted could consist of nothing more than their esteemed correspondent dangling a microphone beside a highway to pick up the sound of fleets of MercedesBenzes whizzing by.) At one point Ophuls, the irrepressible provocateur, in a bathrobe and slippers pads around a nude woman in a Vienna hotel room for no other evident purpose than to tease provocable feminists.

BBC executive Paul Hayman, who collaborated on *November Days*, attests that Ophuls "like any great talent" is "a nightmare to work with" but is well worth the trouble. Ophuls is busy trying to fund and complete the third part of his Sarajevo documentary before he embarks, in all likelihood, on a fresh exploration of neo-fascism in Europe. Meanwhile, it's renewed hope for *Troubles Part Three* that occasions the publication of this interview, conducted a year and a half ago as Parts One and Two were making the festival circuit and the NATO bombing and deployment of U.S. troops in Bosnia were still in the future. — K.J.

You have said in earlier interviews that it's not your business to provide political solutions. Yet your latest film, *The Troubles We've Seen*, openly advocates a political solution you wanted the West to intervene militar ily in Bosnia. That stance is new.

Yes. That is new for me. But I think that part of a documentary filmmaker's business is not to have any absolute principles, otherwise he closes too many doors in advance. So you must always be prepared not only to surprise other people but to surprise yourself. Something might happen to you in the course of events that changes your mind about previous statements in previous interviews.

Are you conscious of any difference that this advocacy may make in your work?

Oh, I still refrain from "voice of God" commentary. I still don't identify with Andre Malraux and I still try to avoid propaganda.

I think the question is very good. But, as a matter of fact, I started out advocating. *Sorrow and the Pity* is certainly not a relativistic or neutral film; it comes down very squarely on the side of the Resistance. The film is realistic enough to assume-even before being told-that the majority of people by nature and by circumstance are not resistance fighters. But that doesn't mean that the film was philosophically or politically neutral. It was not.

In [the case of *The Troubles We've Seen*], frankly I can't understand how anyone could get involved, whether on the ground or as a journalist, in what is happening to these people [in Sarajevo] without choosing sides. Certainly the very few journalists I have met who tried to maintain the neutral stance or came out on the Serbian side seemed to me to be agents provocateurs; they're probably paid by the enemy. It's that clear cut.

Why use foreign correspondents as your focal point?

It's their role as mediators. It's because-whether reporting a fire in Chicago or as White House correspondents or as Woodward and Bernstein, or whether it's what happening to Mitterand in France-the role of journalists as mediators is one of the most fascinating subjects of our time. I think it's simply that problems of censorship, pressure, schooling, competition, sensationalism, jingoism-all of these problems become more acute and dramatic in a time of crisis and so obviously make the filmmaker's job easier. In a time of violent crisis it's more interesting to see a man or a woman on camera with bullets flying around than to find them just at the city desk. That doesn't mean you shouldn't make the connection between the city desk and what is happening in Sarajevo. As a matter of fact, I hope I did, and if I ever get the chance to make the third part of the film the connection will be even stronger.

There is a tension between your interventionist stance, which is voiced especially via *New York Times* journalist John Burns, and the rest of the film, which displays how fallible correspondents are.

I am not using John Burns – I think John and I just happen to have the same ideas on this. He says in the film that in other places it might not be a healthy thing that we all agree with one another. I choose to showcase that statement, but it is his statement. I happen to agree with it.

Yet you present evidence from Martha Gellhorn, on the Spanish Civil War, that gives audiences pause, encourages us to think about the manipulability of correspondents who can get so caught up in a cause that they lose critical distance. Which is not to say one cannot, like Orwell, be for the Republic and still refuse to ignore terrible things within it.

And not fake it. Yes. Why is Orwell's book [*Homage to Catalonia*] the only one we get out of the Civil War that still has meaning and value to us? As opposed to Malraux or some of the other propaganda writing? Because he saw through the bullshit. But that's also what this film is about.

You use what can seem like frivolous clips and references to Cagney, Rosalind Russell, and old films, including your father's film *De Mayerling a Sarajevo*.

I think a general sign of maturity is that as we get older-by "we" I mean people who are paid to make personal statements in writing, painting, or whatever-we become more interested in form than in content. It's quite natural that people should feel that that fault is somewhat shocking in a documentary about death and violence and victimization. A filmmaker who says he is more interested in form than in subject matter seems to be saying he is getting bored with victimization and oppression. So I'm leaving myself open to that.

But it is true that trying to *His Girl Friday* and James Cagney, and connect these dramatically with Sarajevo and what is happening there, may seem repellent to some people. I choose to assume that risk. I choose to try to convince people that it is not frivolous.

Women in Hawks's films such as *His Girl Friday* are as formidable as any man, if not more so.

One can't help noticing, however, in one notorious scene in your film that you seem to go out of your way to needle feminists.

I would quarrel with some modern women on their repressiveness, their terrorism, their narrow-mindedness, their Puritanism. But I would not quarrel with feminists who know about movies, as Molly Haskell does, who would explain to us that Hawks's basic attitude toward women was patronizing. I think it was. But that would not change the fact that he was one of the great directors of all time. Certainly Angie Dickinson in Rio Bravo and Jean Arthur in Only Angels Have Wings and you name it, they are being made members of a club on an exceptional basis the way that some Jews got into a Harvard fraternity if they had the right credentials-but only on tolerance. Certainly from that point of view Hawks's attitude can be criticized. But it was coherent, it was intelligent, and, for the time he lived, it was generous. One thing we should always do is use a time perspective.

I hope that audiences will not misunderstand. They are more likely-from the first femi-fascist reaction I've been getting, from the bad vibes I've been getting in this country-to resent the presence of the call girl in the hotel room. They seem totally hung up on that.

But you are putting out the bait.

Yes, I'm putting out the bait and I will continue putting out the bait. If they ever want to get anything done, they will have to stop that kind of shit. Who are the femi-fascists? I shudder at you and Rush Limbaugh agreeing about anything.

These women are using victimization. Particularly in America, victimization is used as a form of collective identity to oppress and victimize others. We should fight that.

Let me see if I understand. You deal with indisputable victims: people who were turned in to the Nazis in the days of the Resistance, people who were tortured by Klaus Barbie, and so on. I suppose what you are complaining about is the debasing of the role of victim-a lack of proportion, perhaps. You want to comment?

No. You just said it. I think you have to make choices, and choices imply hierarchies, which are based not only on looking at your own navel but on a sense of proportion. I am not a Holocaust celebrationist and I don't say only Jews were victims of genocide. But until people are willing to face the fact that the gas chambers are the ultimate form (for the time being-it may get worse) of willful victimization.... This is not excluding other forms of genocide. Not at all. There's a good argument to be made that during

decolonization there were many crimes against humanity committed. That there were many people who should have been brought to trial and condemned.

But unless you are willing to face the idea that it is not just a matter of whose ox is being gored, and unless you are willing to relativize your own suffering to what you know about history, I don't think you will be able to face any kind of reality. And reality will continue to fade into the background amidst all the violence and shit and frivolity. It will all become spectacle, all of it: narcissistic spectacle.

Can you reconcile good filmmaking with good reporting?

One of the people in the film says that one of the worst things that can happen "when I get back to Paris is that people say to me that they saw me in this film, because this makes it look as if I were only making a movie, and I am ashamed of that." I think what I am ultimately trying to convey in this film is that we have to lick the problem of information spectacle. We have to face the fact that we are in show business and then try to deal with it in a decent and humane way, and try to lick the problem. We're not licking the problem we're getting licked by it. Not only the journalism but many feature films we've seen are just escalations of indecency. There's a virus around us that makes more and more people less and less able to discriminate between what is legitimate show business and what is perverted show business.

Are you talking about "reality shows"?

Yes, but not only the reality shows. Also some shows are extremely successful that display arrested development, a refusal to grow up, a tendency to blame our parents for everything. Here's a hierarchy of people who feel victimized accusing those whom they feel are responsible for their victimization. All of this escalation of anger leaves the people in Sarajevo more helpless and more alone because they are facing real genocide. People who make movies about justifying murder and mayhem because their parents weren't nice enough to them are not facing that kind of reality. Who do you think was primarily to blame for the war? The Europeans are. Bush refused to do anything, but it's more interesting to respond about the Clinton administration because Clinton made promises to the Bosnians which he hasn't kept. We all know why he hasn't kept them. He hasn't kept them because Mitterand and, in a minor way, John Major influenced him and prevented him. But perhaps it's like the movies' barroom fight where a fellow says, "Hold my coat because otherwise I'll get into it." It's a bad situation and I think we'll all be paying for it.

What about financing the film? It's mainly due to friendship that's been going on for the past ten years with Bertrand Tavernier, who is just about the only Frenchman who worries about my getting employment in France, and who made tremendous efforts so that I could get enough money to make it. It hasn't been easy. Then good old Beeb [the BBC] came in with 880 thousand, I think. And the French subsidy system. Again I happened to be lucky, because Jeanne Moreau is president of it right now. If not....

You had a rather different experience with the BBC over *A Sense of Loss*?

At that time I was on very good terms with the BBC. They had shown *The Sorrow and the Pity*, they were very much interested in the next film, and the head of purchasing programs wanted to have an option. They were very anxious to see *Sense of Loss* because it was about their problem-and when they saw it they didn't want it. It was the only one of these marathon documentaries that never made it onto the BBC.

Here we are more than 20 years later and at last we have a fragile peace process in place in Northern Ireland. But up until 1994 your film could have been just as relevant as it was in 1972.

I think you are right-it would look like a current affair. In some ways that happened to *November Days*, which was a much more recent film about the joy of the fall of the Berlin Wall. But then the only excuse for either film is that I am not a political prophet. Matter of fact, I'm not very good at politics. I'm certainly not very good at predicting the course of human events.

I don't want to sound apologetic about it. I think *Sense of Loss* was a fairly good film, [but) I think the BBC may have been right-not the best work I've done. I [was commissioned by American sponsors to do the Irish republican movement with the same kind of awe, respect, and sympathy that you would feel for the French resistance. I never felt very comfortable with that idea. So I concentrated on the mayhem and the violence [in Northern Ireland] and what it means to people to be casualties in that kind of civil strife, which I suppose is an easy way out.

How did your sponsors react?

I think the sponsors were not terribly happy because the film did not make any money. [Laughs.] Possibly one of the reasons it did not make any money in the United States is that the original intention was to please the Irish-American community and of course it didn't do that. In fact, it was quite sarcastic in this respect, showing the contrast between the Saint Patrick's Day parade in New York and the business of collecting money for the IRA -this distance between all the folklore and what actually happens on the ground. That's how the film starts. So I'm trying to make elbow room in these films against pressures on both sides, between what the sponsors originally want and what they get.

Is making everyone unhappy a sort of victory?

At the Edinburgh Film Festival the response was just that-that it made everyone unhappy. But I don't think a film should just do that. It may be a sign of some sort of filmmaker's independence or stubbornness or whatever to make everyone unhappy, but it is not a moral victory.

Were you unhappy?

Not terribly, no. Because I think sympathizing with the oppressed and sympathizing with the victim is one of the easiest things a documentary filmmaker can do. It is part of correct political thinking, and I have never been a correct political thinker even before the term was coined. I am against it. Too few people were concerned or interested enough to go after the facts.

That seems to be your task-or to induce other people to go out there and dig out the facts in order to understand why the world is less civilized than it ought to be.

Well, don't cast me into the role of Atlas, because it is too heavy for me. I don't know the mythology. Does he still continue to carry it on his shoulders? After a brief relief by Hercules, yes. Well, that's a very flattering portrait. What your question implies, if I have correctly understood it, is that other people are not doing that kind of job. That the world waits for me to come along and do it in the place of the other people. That's why I talk about Greek mythology, because I can't take that heavy a compliment.

Peter Davis is a friend of mine and I think *Hearts and Minds* is a very important film. [But] we are not alone; you can add Claude Lanzmann and others. There are historians and investigative journalists who come out with important work all the time. The fact that we try to put it together audiovisually is just a temporary phenomenon. Again we get into this business of information spectacle. We may tend to overvalue right now the impact that nonfiction filmmaking has on people. I think it is going to have less and less impact because of television, because there is so much crammed onto the evening news that I don't think we can adapt and deal with.

Why are you talking about retirement from these kinds of films?

I think my way of dealing with it, long films, long interviews — is not going to bring home the bacon anymore. After all, the only commercial success I ever had with these films is *The Sorrow and the Pity.*

There are reasons for that. It has to do with people no longer being able to afford the attention span that is necessary. So you have to find something else. Peter Davis and I are obsolete. We really are.

I wonder whether your life's work is spurred by the early contrasts you experienced as a teenager. There you are, a European Jewish emigre enrolling at Hollywood High of all places, with the Nazi menace as a very vivid memory Your parents, of course, fill your environment with high culture and a sense of purpose out there in La-La Land. Am I warm?

We were very privileged and we got out much earlier than other people did. It did not at the time have all that profound an influence on me. We did not get near a concentration camp. We were in unoccupied France in various dangerous situations. Most of them were kept from me because my parents were very good parents-very intelligent, very cultured, very knowing, very sophisticated. As you say, wonderful parents. So they tried to soften or cushion both the Hollywood experience and the Vichy experiences. They didn't entirely succeed, otherwise I wouldn't have become the fucked-up person that I've become. Parents never entirely succeed. But that doesn't mean they should be blamed.

My response to that culture shock was very simple: I became a French snob. I retreated into bookwormish, wallflowerish behavior because I couldn't cope with the dating system. So I never met Marilyn Monroe — but then she couldn't cope with the dating system there, either. I only ceased being a French snob when I went into the American Army, which was a very happy experience.

What years were those?

In 1946-47. Before I went to college I went to Japan as an occupier. I didn't drop the atom bomb, so I refuse to be blamed for it. All those cliches. Anyway, I was very happy. I had a very good time both in basic training and in Tokyo. I discovered American movies before I ever came to America, but jazz and Brooklyn and Tennessee and all these things that are closer to the American reality than Hollywood High School, are things I discovered in the American army-things that make me very fond of this country. So by the time I got out of the army I was no longer the snob. But Hollywood High was pretty bad, yes.

In the Sixties you made a *Love at 20* episode and *Banana Peel*. Why did you move to nonfiction? The obvious guess, of course, is lack of money.

That's right. I was married. I was a family man. There was no work. I just happened to be spending an evening with friends and a woman who worked for French television. We got to talking. What would I want to do if I worked for French television? I said, "I don't want to work on cheap fiction stuff because the directors are working under terrible conditions and you can't possibly do any good work there. So if I were to work on French television it would be reportage, a magazine piece." She said, "Well, do you have anybody special in mind?" I said, "Yes. I see some anti-Gaullist stuff that I rather like. There seems to be a small group of good people there who are doing good work, and if I could work with them that would be okay." She said, "We'll set up an appointment for you.

I left the country. I didn't believe anything would happen. But when I came back I found messages from this woman for three different appointments. So for two years, thanks to her having me meet these television producers and journalists, I very happily and for very little money would do 20-minute-pieces for something like America's "60 Minutes." That's what got me into it.

Then one day a producer said to me, "Would you like to do Munich? We are going to do historical evenings on Channel 2 and we would like you to start off because you are our senior director." I was middle-aged by that time. I remember saying. "Munich the town or Munich the agreement?" He replied, "The agreement, of course" And that became a three-and-a-half-hour film of interviews and archives. That basically is what I have been doing ever since. There is no explanation [for my career] except anecdote and circumstance.

Did you start out wanting to tackle these terrible moral subjects?

No. I would have much preferred to do musicals. People always laugh when I say that. People like John Simon in New York have written about this — that here I am, such a profound thinker of our time, and I actually like *Top Hat*. Well, I like John Simon but I think he is quite wrong when he thinks he can patronize *Top Hat* or Fred Astaire or the people who made it. No, the great artists of the 20th century in filmmaking including my father-are [in fictional films] I've always thought that.

So it's mostly groceries now. That doesn't mean I patronize myself. It doesn't mean I think that I've been doing unimportant work. Circumstance, the groceries, and pressures have brought me time and again into situations of filmmaking where I think am a good one. But that is not for me to say.

Your father's reputation had deepened over the years in part because people have had the chance to see restored versions of his work.

But why do they get that chance? Certainly not because of the distributors and the money people. There is one very simple answer for the posthumous revival and fame of my father — which he certainly deserves. Francois Truffaut did it, and a few friends in Paris. Like so many other things. Francois was the leader because he had the talent and was interested enough, he was crazy enough, he was fanatic enough.

Still, your father's reputation seems to have stood very well and is even undergoing a revival.

A great deal of it has to do with fashion. And a great deal of it has to do with people's ways of making a living. In other words, for film critics it has become more and more important not only to their own ego but also to the size of their bank account to be seen at the source of a rediscovery. That's why you get all this business about restored versions when in fact, as in the case of my father's *La Ronde*, I had to fight off these art historians because they disregarded my father's right to final cut. "Ah;' they say, "but he was pressured into shortening the film." Then somebody had come up for very suspect reasons with a restored version of *La Ronde*. I had to defend my dead father's rights against this being restored because he is no longer around to be asked whether he was pressured.

We have to be careful not to fall prey to this kind of vicious circle of fanatic film buffery. Reevaluation is good and is necessary. But one of the things I think we discover is that posterity is no judge of art either. Shaw, I think, said people who write for posterity are pompous asses.

Aren't you tempted to play the investigative role again? There are so many targets around.

The BBC wants me to do a thing on the revival of fascism. But fascism is always with us — it is not being revived. Anyway, I don't want to spend another two years living these nightmares. For one thing, my memory is fading. I have to rely too much on other people. Fortunately I have found very good people to help me. But the business of keeping one hundred to two hundred hours of rushes in my head is something that is becoming too difficult and too strenuous to deal with.

So I said, "If you want me to interview that creep in Russia, or if you want me to interview Berlusconi, I'll do it if the BBC pays me well and I can add another room or two to my retirement home. But I will not otherwise spend two years dealing again with the nightmare of the problems that these people -the neo-fascists-are banking on. I've already done it.""

Kurt Jacobsen, author of Chasing Progress in the Irish Republic *(Cambridge) and* Dead Reckonings *(forthcoming from Humanities), has written on film in the* London Guardian*,* Chicago Reader*, and* Irish Times.

Letter from Bertrand Tavienier to Marcel Ophuls

Dear Marcel,

I left the screening of *The Troubles We've Seen* and I immediately wanted to write to you. To impart my emotion, my admiration, my enthusiasm.

Also, my pride at having produced this film with Fred Bourboulon. To produce your first French film since *The Sorrow and the Pity*. I find it shameful that a French filmmaker of your caliber could be marginalized in his own country, and can only find foreign financing after having won dozens of prizes, an Oscar and a Nomination. I've spent years beating myself up trying to get the admirable *Memory of Justice* to Public Service without success, organizing a retrospective at the Lumière Institute. Just one more step. It was not an easy adventure. We almost lost ourselves many times. It was better to find ourselves at the beginning.

For four hours I shared your passion, I shook with your anger, I laughed at your devastating humor, your stunning visual associations (Ah! The Marx Brothers…), I've been deeply moved by your characters, dazzled by the playful invention of your writing, of your mise-en-scene. There's a term that will make more than one shudder, as if it were obligatorily synonymous with falseness and with lies. A successful idea that you beat to a pulp throughout these two films in jumping the boundary between fiction and documentary. Truffaut said, to Welles I believe, that in all successful fictional film there is a documentary. The inverse is also true. While watching *The Troubles We've Seen* I recalled Lubitsch's dazzling cuts, John Ford's democratic conviction – in your own and in that of John Simpson or John Burns – Billy Wilder's steadfast, corrosive irony, and abrupt changes in tone that leave you suddenly submerged in emotion (as in *A Foreign Affair, Arise My Love,* and *Stalag 17*).

I completely identified with your aesthetic and moral reasoning, with your caustic gaze tracking clichés, false semblances, ideas in general. On leaving these warm portraits of war correspondents, often tremendously sympathetic and clear, it is always the political compromises of the west, all the hypocritical politicians, that you denounce, all that encourages laziness and cowardice. After leaving the individuals who I often agreed with, it's the System that you take down. What corruption!

Your look at history unearths the function Michelet gave to it ("Unlearn respect") and reminds us of Paul-Louis Courier ("The ill of our century is indifference, cold indifference"). **Our** respect and **our** indifference.

We must show *The Troubles We've Seen* in every school because in it you learn to read images, which, I have the impression, have enslaved quite a few people.

So that's what I needed to tell you right away…Now all you've got to do is file this letter in volume 27 of our correspondence.

With all my friendship.

Bertrand Tavernier

Variety
Friday, June 10, 1994
By LISA NESSELSON

In "The Troubles We've Seen," master documentarian Marcel Ophuls tackles the dangers, rewards and ethical/philosophical underpinnings of war reporting in this century. Helmer's restless probing -- and audacious juxtaposing of movie clips with footage culled from four trips to Sarajevo starting January '93 -- yields a compellingly sculpted view of ongoing atrocities and ongoing courage, framed by a view of other historical conflicts that is comprehensive only in segments.

"First Journey" and "Second Journey," the first two free-standing installments of a three-part project, preemed with little advance notice on final day of the Cannes fest and will be telecast by Brit pubcaster BBC the last two Saturdays in July. Theatrical release in France this autumn should be echoed in major cities worldwide.

Pix are dense, entertaining, informative but also "difficult" for viewers whose level of erudition in the arts and humanities falls beneath that of Ophuls himself -- which is just about everybody. Helmer is a major character in both installments.

Ophuls has an unbeatable opening hook in the true story of how World War II was declared on the very day his father, Max Ophuls, was directing a scene in the costumer "From Mayerling to Sarajevo" in which disgruntled Prinzip shot Archduke Ferdinand, thereby setting off the first World War. Ophuls postulates there's no end to meaningful coincidences or to history itself.

Ophuls reiterates historian Philip Knightley's pronouncement that "the first casualty of war is the truth," and posits the journalist's job as trying to get at the truth all the same. He then cuts to mocking military scenes from "Duck Soup," including the Marx Brothers singing "All God's Children Got Guns."

Ophuls documents his efforts to get to Sarajevo in January '93, speaks to intrepid journalists -- both novice and seasoned, but all freezing -- and relates the efforts of his own tiny crew to get around, which they do mostly by tagging along with the BBC's exemplary men in the field.

Martha Gellhorn, the crusty no-nonsense reporter who posed as a nurse to sneak aboard a D-day landing craft, only to have her scoop swiped by former husband Ernest Hemingway, is an unmitigated delight. Gellhorn says boredom is the worst thing in a war setting and contends that "war correspondents are highly privileged and shouldn't be glorified."

Clips from Olivier's screen version of "Henry V" comment brilliantly on the folly of ill-considered battle, as Clinton, Major, Mitterand and Kohl are shown going about their non-committal business in the comfort of state occasions.

Although clips -- from "His Girl Friday" to "Lola Montes"-- make irreverent points throughout, pic's second part employs a highly questionable comparison when footage of James Cagney dancing up a storm is intercut with testimony from a Bosnian stage actor whose legs were blown off.

First part ends with jarring sequence of Ophuls wearing a bathrobe and a fedora in a Vienna hotel room, while a shapely naked woman lolls on the bed. Auds at the Cannes preem were baffled by helmer's intent. Scene could be taken to mean that life goes on outside the besieged war zone, that journalists are "whores" or, better yet, that viewers can rapidly disregard the whole topic of Sarajevo's agony to wonder, "What's Ophuls doing on camera with a naked woman?"

Pic's longer second part is bracketed by shots of Venice, which Ophuls deems to be "another dying city." Back in Sarajevo, docu delves into risks and etiquette of war reporting and the primordial importance of luck. In a series of scathing indictments based on televised news shows hosted by Gallic media honchos, French government officials are shown spinning their wheels with egregious complacency.

Pic examines control of info during the Gulf War, and the president of Serbia assures Ophuls with a straight face that freedom of the press in Serbia is "unparalleled."
Ophuls and Burns conducted lively interviews, weeks before the massacre, in the same Sarajevo market where the devastating February '94 bombing took place. (Pre-massacre interviewees all insisted that relief supplies be redirected to their needier compatriots outside of town.)

Odyssey winds down as a surgeon at an overwhelmed clinic in Sarajevo -- a city where one out of every six people was killed in less than a year -- sings "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" in a lovely baritone.

At Cannes, "First Journey" was screened in an answer print fresh from the lab; "Second Journey" was shown as video projection. Pierre Boffety and Pierre Milon's no-frills camera work is involving and communicates on the big screen. Sound recording is crisp, editing tops.
More footage of Ophuls sparring with Serb leaders would be welcome and will apparently figure prominently in third and final installment.
Outraged that French trades had given little or no coverage to the Cannes screening, Ophuls canceled his press conference and left town, sending a witty and combative fax to take his place. Latest opus proves that when it comes to much-needed conceptual chutzpah, Ophuls is irreplaceable.

Milestone Film & Video

Winner: January 9, 2005
Special Award from the New York Film Critic's Circle
in honor of 15 years of restoring classic films.

Milestone enters its fifteenth year of operation with a reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, new foreign films, groundbreaking documentaries and American independent features. Thanks to the company's rediscovery, restoration and distribution of such important films as Mikhail Kalatozov's *I am Cuba*, Marcel Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity,* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, the company has long occupied a position as one of the most influential independent distributors in the industry. In 1995 Milestone received a Special Archival Award from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I am Cuba*. *L.A. Weekly* chose Milestone as the 1999 "Indie Distributor of the Year." On January 2, 2004, the National Society of Film Critics awarded Milestone Film & Video their prestigious Film Heritage award. And the kudos continue: in December 2004, the International Film Seminars awarded Milestone its prestigious Leo Award, named for indie distribution pioneer Leo Dratfield, and the New York Film Critics Circle voted a Special Award "in honor of 15 years of restoring classic films.

When Amy Heller and Dennis Doros first started Milestone in 1990 their goals were to find and release the best films of the past *and* the present. The company's US premieres have included such remarkable new films as Manoel de Oliveira's *I'm Going Home*, Bae Yong-kyun's *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*, Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Maborosi,* Yoichi Higashi's *Village of Dreams*, Takeshi Kitano's *Fireworks* (*Hana-Bi*), Tareque Masud's *The Clay Bird*, and Jerzy Stuhr's *The Big Animal*.

Milestone has released a wide range of classics in sparkling restorations, including: Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers*, F.W. Murnau's *Tabu*, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack's *Grass* and *Chang*, Henri-Georges Clouzot's *The Mystery of Picasso,* Frank Hurley's *South: Ernest Shackleton and the*

Endurance Expedition, Kevin Brownlow's *It Happened Here* and *Winstanley*, Lotte Reiniger's animation masterpiece, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, Michael Powell's *The Edge of the World*, Jane Campion's *Two Friends*, Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Wide Blue Road*, Conrad Rooks' *Siddhartha*, Anthony Howarth's *People of the Wind*, and Rolando Klein's *Chac*. Milestone is also working with the Mary Pickford Foundation on a long-term project to preserve, re-score and release the best films of the legendary silent screen star. The company premiered a new restoration of E.A. Dupont's *Piccadilly* — starring the bewitching Anna May Wong — at the 2003 New York Film Festival. Such stellar contemporary filmmakers as Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Woody Allen, Jonathan Demme and Dustin Hoffman have co-presented important Milestone restorations.

Milestone has established strong working relationships with some of the world's great film archives, including the British Film Institute, UCLA Film & Television Archive, George Eastman House, Library of Congress, Nederlands Filmmuseum and Norsk Filminstitut. In 2000, Milestone's 10th Anniversary Retrospective was shown in venues nationwide and Milestone raised and donated $20,000 from these screenings to four archives in the United States and England.

In addition to the company's strong presence in art-house film distribution, Milestone has built a highly praised video/DVD collection. Most of these DVDs have been released on Image Entertainment's "The Milestone Collection" label and have earned the company new accolades. Milestone's video-only releases have included such important silent restorations as: *Eternal Love, The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Blot*, *La Terre*, *It*, *Simba*, *The Chess Player*, *Silent Shakespeare, Mad Love: The Films of Evgenii Bauer, Early Russian Cinema* (a 10-volume compilation), and *The Cook & Other Treasures*.

Milestone also released on DVD four great animation collections: *John Canemaker: Marching to a Different Toon*, *Cut-Up: The Films of Grant Munro*, *Norman McLaren: The Collector's Edition,* and *Winsor McCay: The Master Edition*. Other video premieres have explored the stories of four remarkable American women: *Millay at Steepletop, Captured on Film: The True Story of Marion Davies, Without Lying* Down (about screenwriter Frances Marion) and *Mary Pickford: A Life on Film.* Some of the company's other classic films on video include *With Byrd at the South Pole, The Bat Whispers, Tonight or Never, The Gay Desperado,* and *Night Tide*. Milestone's independent docs on video include *A Day on the Grand Canal with the Emperor of China, Shackleton's Boat Journey,* and Alan Berliner's documentary trilogy, *Family Album, Nobody's Business* and *Intimate Stranger.*

Milestone has many features lined up for 2005 for theatrical, video and television release. Included are *Electric Edwardians: The Films of Mitchell & Kenyon*, *Cut to the Chase: The Charley Chase Classic Comedy Collection* (15 short films, 6 hours), *The Harold Lloyd Collection* (13 short and feature films, 5 hours), *The Crossing* (directed by Yoichi Higashi), *The Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack Collection* with *In Search of Kong* (directed by Serge Viallet) and newly remastered versions of *Grass* and *Chang*, The films of Charles Burnett including *Killer of Sheep* and *My Brother's Wedding*, *Nosferatu* (directed by F.W. Murnau with a score by James Bernard), *The Olive Thomas Collection*, *Uttara* (directed by Buddhadeb Dasgupta) and *Oporto of My Childhood* (directed by Manoel de Oliveira).

The Library of Congress has selected eight Milestone films for its prestigious National Film Registry: Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep* (to be released in 2005), *Tabu*, Edward S. Curtis' *In the Land of the War Canoes*, Mary Pickford's *Poor Little Rich Girl*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *It*, Winsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur,* and *Grass*.

In 2003, Nadja Tennstedt joined the company as director of acquisitions and international sales.

> *Asking why I'm grateful for MILESTONE's existence is like wanting to know why we like buying our croissants for breakfast at the village bakery, rather than at the nearest supermarket. The local baker doesn't spend his entire life trying to figure out what product*

the consumers will buy at a minimum cost in fabrication. He bakes his own bread according to his own choices, in the hope that the villagers will share his tastes.

Dennis Doros sends individual Christmas cards to individual filmmakers, sometimes featuring photographs of his whole family. To me, that indicates rather strongly that he considers the motion pictures he distributes to be the work of individuals, not just products or properties, in the shopworn vocabulary of the "In-dust-tree," to be placed and removed from the shelves according to the rules and fashions of mass marketing.

My father used to say: "If you run after the public all your life, all you ever get to see is its ass!" That still seems to me the soundest MEDIA STRATEGY I ever heard of.

With my best regards to the Doros family, and holiday greetings to you all,
— Marcel Ophuls

"Since its birth the Milestone Film & Video Co. has steadily become the industry's foremost boutique distributor of classic and art films — and probably the only distributor in America whose name is actually a guarantee of some quality."
— William Arnold, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

"Milestone Film & Video is an art-film distributor that has released some of the most distinguished new movies (along with seldom-seen vintage movie classics) of the past decade"
— Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

Translations by Sarah Lipkin, Milestone