many audiences, if the film hadn't been shot in black and white (by the late Fifties most comedies were in color) and set about thirty years in the past. Also ahead of its time is the film's creation of comedy out of violence and death, which Suber sees as a harbinger of subsequent dark comedies like Robert Altman's *MASH* (1970), Hal Ashby's *Harold and Maude* (1971), and even Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964). That last one is a stretch, but I agree with Suber's breakdown of how Wilder protects the film's humor by defanging its violence—the unfortunate crook known as Toothpick Charlie (George E. Stone) is riddled with tommy gun bullets in the massacre, for instance, but we don't see the bullets strike, and the only damage his body shows afterward is a trickle of blood at the corner of his mouth. Similar softening happens when Spats and company get wiped out near the end; they meet the bloody destiny they deserve, but the distantly framed view of them shot full of holes is downright discreet.

Alongside its satirical critique of binary gender images, *Some Like It Hot* presents some antic class analysis as well, aiming a lot of well-tuned mockery at the pretentious poses of the upper crust, represented by the exquisitely dull-witted Osgood and parodied by the fancy clothes and British-by-way-of-Brooklyn accent Joe deploys in his yachtsman persona. This aspect of the picture hasn't gotten the attention it deserves, especially since Wilder has an admirable record of skepticism toward capitalism and its discontents, as films like *Double Indemnity* (1944), *Ace in the Hole* (1951), *The Apartment* (1960), and *The Fortune Cookie* (1966) attest.

Criterion's extras package is broad but shallow, the informative audio commentary aside. Three promotional shorts produced in the early 2000s, grouped under the heading "Behind the Scenes," repetitiously affirm what an enduring classic the movie is, and neither a video interview with Curtis nor a radio interview with Monroe has much of substance to offer. There's more interest in a 1982 television interview with Lemmon, and better still is Wilder's 1982 conversation with the host of *The Dick Cavett Show*, although the director doesn't say much about *Some Like It Hot*. A video piece on Orry-Kelly's costumes features Criterion's current go-to person on wardrobe, Deborah Nadoolman Landis, who offers fascinating information on the nude dress, which was made from an ultralightweight (and ultracombustible) fabric called "souffle," pronounced "soofel," a material strong enough to contain Monroe's marvelous physique—and shape it, since she was pregnant at the time—without the aid of undergarments. Landis makes the excellent point that while the outfits in period movies are rarely historically accurate, the clothes in *Some Like It Hot* are nicely "period-ish," capturing the flavor of the Twenties without pretending that Monroe could ever look like Louise Brooks.

Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon are in drag throughout much of *Some Like It Hot*.
(photo courtesy of Photofest)

Several extras corroborate Monroe's reputation for being extremely difficult. She was habitually late to arrive on the set, not because of "temperament," in Lemmon's view, but because of her chronic insecurity as an actress. When she did go before the camera she worked very hard unless her limitations intervened, and they did so often. Wilder told Lemmon and Curtis they had to get every take exactly right, since Monroe's flubs and lapses might result in only one usable take out of dozens. For one scene it took more than forty tries before she managed to walk toward a dresser, open a drawer, and say, "Where's the bourbon?" She finally succeeded in remembering the three-word line when Wilder pasted cue cards inside the correct drawer and all of the other drawers as well, since he could never predict which one she'd open. On top of all this, Monroe had acting coach Paula Strasberg hovering by her side throughout, irritating Wilder no end.

In the earliest planning stages, the producers of *Some Like It Hot* wanted Frank Sinatra and Mitzi Gaynor to costar with Curtis, but as gifted as those performers are, it's unlikely they would have contributed the same degree of comic zing. Lemmon brings his innate touch of class to even his zaniest moments; Curtis gives a streetwise charm to each of his three personas in the story; and Monroe is...perfect. It's almost impossible to square the tales about her on-set difficulties with the miraculous rightness of her every moment on the screen, from her three deliciously rendered songs to her comic timing in scenes of rapid-fire dialogue. However much she had to struggle with the demands of her profession and the shortcomings of her psychology, she was ultimately a unique and inimitable artist. *Some Like It Hot* bears vivid witness to her gifts.—**David Sterritt**

Shampoo

Produced by Warren Beatty; directed by Hal Ashby; screenplay by Robert Towne and Warren Beatty; cinematography by László Kovács; production design by Richard Sylbert; music by Paul Simon; edited by Robert C. Jones; starring Warren Beatty, Julie Christie, Goldie Hawn, Lee Grant, Jack Warden, and Tony Bill. Blu-ray and DVD, color, 110 min., 1975. A Criterion Collection Release, www.criterion.com.

"Nobody understood that it was about politics," producer, star, and co-writer Warren Beatty lamented to film critic Roger Ebert not long after the release of *Shampoo*. Even supportive critics like Andrew Sarris were quickly dismissive of the movie's "muddled moralizing," praising instead its "incisive performances" and welcome focus on "sex instead of violence." Pauline Kael lauded what she saw as "a sophisticated, kaleidoscopic farce...frivolous and funny." Similarly, the audiences in 1975 that made the film a big hit—post-Watergate, post-Vietnam, post-everything, it seemed, with the exception of inflation and oil shocks—lined up to see *Shampoo* not in search of sociological subtext, but for its promise of sex, stars, and belly laughs, all of which were provided in generous supply. And many surely took prurient delight in what was easily imagined as a thinly veiled representation of Beatty's then-legendary sex life. The insatiable George (Beatty) beds four women in one frantic twenty-four hour period—including his former and current girlfriends Jill and Jackie, played by one-time Beatty paramours Goldie Hawn and Julie Christie. (George also fields phone calls during sex, one of the more colorful if curious aspects of the Beatty mythology.)

Seen today, in a stunning new 4K digital restoration from the Criterion Collection (compared with earlier home video releases and tired revival prints, the Criterion Blu-ray is a revelation, alive and vibrant with details, a tribute to the great New Hollywood cinematographer László Kovács), the film's essential politics are hard to miss and hardly muddled, if easy to misunderstand. Set on election eve in 1968, it's no surprise that *Shampoo* takes some sharp jabs at the morally bankrupt Republican establishment. Clips of Nixon and Agnew on TV are chosen almost gleefully to contrast their vacuous campaign rhetoric with the criminal transgressions and disgraceful exits that now mark their place in history, a juxtaposition that would have been especially fresh in the mind in 1975 (principal photography wrapped just two months before Nixon resigned).

Republican suits in general are easily ridiculed; more subtle is the way *Shampoo* positions Lester (Jack Warden) as an allegory for capitalism—driving around in his imperious Rolls-Royce with the radio invariably

In *Shampoo,* hairdresser George (Warren Beatty) has slept with Jackie (Julie Christie)—and every other woman in sight—but in the end he fails to win her love. (photo courtesy of Photofest)

tuned to a soundtrack of stock-market quotations, Lester's business "involves handling money for a lot of touchy people," and is generally suggestive of the notion that the distinction between corporate America and organized crime is not always obvious. Lester is also gently mocked for being a bit slow, failing to grasp that George has slept with his wife (Lee Grant), his mistress (Christie), and his daughter (Carrie Fisher, in her big-screen debut).

Despite all that, Lester is actually an affable fellow, a self-made man, occasionally introspective, and one who adapts admirably to novel situations and new opportunities. Thus, although its critique of shallow materialism is a central theme of *Shampoo* (production designer Richard Sylbert deployed mirrors as a ubiquitous visual motif to suggest the characters' vanity), the Republican villain in the movie is not money, but moral (and sexual) hypocrisy. This comes to a head at the first of two election-night parties—the restaurant gathering of well-heeled Nixon supporters—with the infamous line uttered by a very drunk Jackie, gesturing toward George: "I'd like to suck his cock." A shocking line, especially in 1975, and especially when forthcoming from the estimable Julie Christie—it was a lightning bolt both for those who grasped their pearls in horror at such crude vulgarity, and others who saw nothing but a cheap sensationalist play for more box-office gold. But Beatty has it right (and the line was his, and retained over studio objections at his insistence), with the assertion that it was much "more than a dirty moment when she says a dirty line." Expressing a sentiment similar to Bree Daniels (Jane Fonda) in *Klute*—"goddamn hypocrite squares"—Jackie is responding to the overture of the eminently respectable Sid Roth (William Castle), who has leaned intimately toward her at the dinner table, oozing with a promise to "get you whatever you want." It was little mystery what *he* wanted (or thought his wealth and status could readily obtain); Jackie, by giving it a name (if not Roth's intended goal), exposed the coarse realities lurking just behind the polished veneer of Establishment respectability.

The politics of *Shampoo*, however, run much deeper than fashionable left-coast criticism of right-wing politics. More than anything, it offers a scathing, incisive, and all-too-enduring critique of the left. As Beatty explained to Ebert, "We set it on election night because the point is...Nixon never really misled us—he was an open book." And that election was excruciatingly close—commentator David Brinkley is seen on TV predicting that the ultimate victor would not be known at least until the following day. Fifty years later, the extent to which Nixon's election in 1968 was such a trauma for what director Arthur Penn called "the mourners of the Kennedy generation" might seem like ancient history. But Beatty (and most in his cultural cohort) had his hopes fixed on the promise of Bobby Kennedy, and described Nixon's election as "the end of a lot of dreams." (The increasingly politicized actor would play a major role in the ill-fated 1972 McGovern campaign.)

Pointedly, *Shampoo* doesn't blame Nixon's election on the supporters who dutifully voted for him (why wouldn't they?)—it puts the onus squarely on his opponents, who did not vote at all. George certainly didn't cast a ballot, nor likely did the youthful sybarites reveling in the sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll of the evening's second party, which follows on the heels of the first, and is marked not by hypocrisy, but hedonism. *Shampoo* holds a mirror up to the left, and reveals the shrugging indifference of those who could have prevented the catastrophe.

Director Hal Ashby, a hippie free spirit less inclined to participate in organized politics, was nevertheless cut from similar ideological cloth. Learning of Bobby's assassination in the middle of the night, a shattered Ashby wrote his mother, "My heart is so heavy with grief it feels as if it will burst into a million tears." And from that irretrievable loss, the resurrection of the redbaiting, scorched-earth campaigning, ethically challenged Nixon was a bitter pill indeed. As it would in *Shampoo*, Nixon's image looms menacingly in the background of many of Ashby's pictures; the director mailed his absentee ballot for McGovern in 1972 from Toronto, where he was working on location for *The Last Detail.*

Ashby's contribution to *Shampoo* is often marginalized, an impression suggested on set by a combination of the director's laid-back disposition and the fact that the formidable (and strong-willed and obsessive) producer/star Beatty and co-writer Robert Towne were always on set—standing behind the camera, making voluminous suggestions, and calling for retakes. But Ashby's contributions were considerable. In preproduction, he engaged in an intensive ten days of shuttle diplomacy, negotiating back and forth between Beatty and Towne, each of whom had produced complete draft screenplays over the many years of the project's gestation, and eyed each other's version with some combination of suspicion and jealousy.

Ashby crafted the development of a shooting script that was a hybrid of the two (though Towne received the first writing credit). In addition, given Beatty's penchant for nearly Kubrick-level numbers of takes and Ashby's tendency to shoot a lot of coverage, the director, who worked his way through the system as an editor (winning an Academy Award for his cutting of *In the Heat of the Night*), had considerable discretion in shaping the final product. Ashby was also responsible for the film's (astonishing and uncredited) soundtrack that included songs by The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix (though it was Beatty who dictated that Paul Simon's haunting, minimalist score would be deployed sparingly). And *Shampoo*'s indelible ending was Ashby's preference (winning out as Beatty and Towne squabbled over possible alternatives).

Ashby, Towne, and Beatty also shared the sensibilities of Seventies-era cinema: personal stories, flawed protagonists, moral ambiguity, and downbeat endings. Thus, *Shampoo* doesn't just hold up a mirror up to

the left—it takes a long, hard look at George (and by implication, at Beatty), and is withering in its deconstruction of his character. The movie's final two reels leave the laughs behind, and feature two stunning scenes that strand its protagonist, leaving him irretrievably exposed and utterly bereft (nontraditional choices for a nominal comedy, to say the least). In the ruins of the following day (neither party ended well), Jill confronts George with evidence of his infidelity, and demands to know how many others there have been. As initially shot, the wrenching scene went through an impossible number of takes (Lee Grant reports that Hawn was physically ill by the end of the day) as George towered over Jill, ridiculing her naiveté about the ways of the world ("Everybody fucks everybody").

Finally set to wrap, Towne insisted the scene wasn't working, and the exchange was rewritten and restaged, in favor of George's tentative, resigned confession from across the room ("Let's face it, I fucked 'em all") which then develops unexpectedly into a searching, free-form indictment of everything he has failed to accomplish in his life. His compulsive pursuit of sexual conquest is rearticulated as a desperate fear of mortality (visually in accord with his frantic mobility —as one character observes, "You never stop moving and you never get anywhere"), and the principal cause of his arrested development. Earlier in the film, Jill admonished George to "grow up" (something Jackie had long before tired of waiting for). Now she kicks him out.

In a conventional Hollywood movie, the sting of that rejection would have been soothed by the inevitable happy-ending reunion that *Shampoo* seemed to be telegraphing from the very start—of George and Jackie. When last seen together, the couple had finally reconsummated their love, following another confession by George: that she is and always has been his one true love. But although Jill has evolved, Jackie has not. She enters the narrative as a kept woman, describing what a pleasure it is "to wake up in the morning with your rent paid," and departs by rejecting George in favor of her benefactor Lester, loading her luggage into the back of his Rolls, now with the promise of even greater financial security.

And with one iconic shot, Ashby got his favored ending: Beatty, alone on a hilltop, watching his true love recede into the distance. Like so many other canonical Seventies films, *Shampoo* leaves its leading man defeated, desolate, and despairing.

The extras on the Criterion edition are relatively modest: a well-informed thirty minute conversation between critics Mark Harris and Frank Rich (which situates *Shampoo* in the context of other New Hollywood "Los Angeles" films), an essay by Rich, and a brief excerpt from a 1998 *South Bank Show* television interview with Beatty.

—Jonathan Kirshner

The Magnificent Ambersons

Directed by Orson Welles; screenplay by Welles based on the novel by Booth Tarkington; cinematography by Stanley Cortez; edited by Robert Wise; set design by Mark-Lee Kirk; assistant director Fred Fleck; women's wardrobe by Edward Stevenson; special effects by Vernon Walker; sound recording by Bailey Fesler and James G. Stewart; starring Joseph Cotten, Dolores Costello, Tim Holt, Agnes Moorehead, Anne Baxter, and Ray Collins; narrated by Orson Welles. Blu-ray and DVD, B&W, 88 min., 1942. A Criterion Collection release, www.criterion.com.

Many cineastes and cinephiles consider the studio-enforced cutting of *The Magnificent Ambersons*, Orson Welles's first film after *Citizen Kane*, one of the most disappointing stories in the studio era. François Truffaut called *Ambersons* Welles's "mutilated masterpiece." Molly Haskell terms it "the lost film par excellence, even more of a holy grail than Erich von Stroheim's 1924 *Greed*." To Robert Carringer, whose 1993 book, *The Magnificent Ambersons: A Reconstruction*, offers a meticulous account of that forced recutting, the fate of the picture is "one of film history's great tragedies." The recent Blu-Ray release by Criterion provides an opportunity to take a close look at the film and its fate.

Like the novel, the film tells the story of the decline of the aristocratic Amberson family and the simultaneous rise of the inventor/entrepreneur Eugene Morgan (Joseph Cotten) as their Midwestern town transforms into a bustling industrial city between 1873 and the first decade of the twentieth century. As a dashing and energetic young man, Eugene courts Major Amberson's daughter, Isabel (Dolores Costello), but she opts to marry the more solid but staid Wilbur Minafer (Don Dillaway). The Minafers have a son, George (Tim Holt), and Eugene marries and has a daughter, Lucy (Anne Baxter). George is a spoiled child and becomes an insufferable adult. After both Eugene and Isabel become widowed, Eugene seeks to re-establish a relationship with Isabel, but after the traditionalist George insults Eugene's "horseless carriage," he also forbids Eugene from seeing his mother. Although George briefly pursues a relationship with Lucy, she doesn't reciprocate. The novel and the film end after Major Amberson and Isabel die—the Amberson fortune depleted—while George gets the "comeuppance" that many in the town had been wishing for since his childhood.

Film historians and scholars have painstakingly documented the film's tortured production history. Welles had presented an hour-long Campbell Playhouse radio adaptation of the novel in 1939 (included in the Blu-ray extras), and he wrote the screenplay himself in 1941. Shooting began in late October of that year, finishing on January 20, 1942 (about six weeks after Pearl Harbor), and RKO hoped for an Easter release. Welles, who had also been advising on and appearing in the spy thriller *Journey Into Fear* as shooting ended, flew off to Brazil to begin shooting *It's All True* in early February, immediately after recording the narration, leaving postproduction to editor Robert Wise and other RKO employees. While Welles was in Brazil, RKO held a preview of the movie in Pomona, screening the film as the second half of a double feature with *The Fleet's In*, a Paramount musical starring Eddie Bracken and Betty Hutton.

George (Tim Holt) disapproves of the affection Eugene (Joseph Cotten) feels for his widowed mother (Dolores Costello) in *The Magnificent Ambersons*. (photo courtesy of the Criterion Collection)

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