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ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES



The simian astronauts Cornelius (Roddy McDowall), Zira (Kim Hunter) and Milo (Sal Mineo) newly arrived in earth's present from earth's future

● On a lonely beach in California a space craft splashes down and American officials cluster around waiting for the astronauts to appear. Three garbed figures emerge, but when they take off their space helmets the officials scatter. The three are apes: Cornelius (Roddy McDowall), Zira (Kim Hunter) and Milo (Sal Mineo). If you are familiar with the two previous *Apes* films, *Planet Of The Apes* and *Beneath The Planet Of The Apes* these articulate simians will come as no great surprise.

They are taken to the local Zoo and put in the care of animal psychiatrists, Lewis Dixon (Bradford Dillman) and Stephanie Branton (Natalie Trundy), while the experts theorise wildly. Lewis and Stephanie discover not only that the apes are literate beings, but also that they are from earth's

future and by a curious quirk of fate have travelled back in time to the present day.

The President takes a keen personal interest in the apes and sets up a commission to decide whether the apes represent a threat to mankind. During the hearing it is revealed that the apes can talk. Overnight they become much-feted celebrities; they are taken out of the Zoo and booked into the Beverly Wilshire Hotel; they are on television, opening conventions and addressing women's clubs.

But the President's representative, Dr. Otto Hasslein does not share the general adulation of the apes — he is deeply suspicious and is determined, if he can, to change the course of the future, particularly when he learns that the female ape Zira is pregnant.

While not possessing the amazing shock value of *Planet Of The Apes*, *Escape From The Planet Of The Apes* is a worthy successor. Devotees of the cult (which is surely what it has become) will be glad to hear that there is enough element of doubt at the end to indicate another *Apes* venture in the future.

While enjoying *Escape From The Planet Of The Apes* on a purely superficial entertainment level, I did regret its being set in present day America, thus giving us only three apes (two for much of the film, as Sal Mineo was killed off very early) — a break for the make-up man no doubt, but a bit of a cheat for the audience. However, a bouquet must still be paid to John Chambers who devised the ape make-up (he won an Oscar for his work on the first *Apes*

SCREEN SCENE



At a party to celebrate the release of the Apes from detention Lewis (Bradford Dillman) chats with Zira

Lewis takes Cornelius on a shopping spree — an event which causes some excitement among the passers-by



A Presidential committee discusses what dangers are posed by the two articulate apes, Zira and Cornelius

film). Roddy McDowall said recently that he spent three hours a day in the make-up chair; art director William Creber had it easier in this film too — for the first he had to envisage the vast impressive Ape City, for the second he created a mutated New York City entirely underground. In this film his problem was coping with modern day Los Angeles.

Once again full marks to Kim Hunter and Roddy McDowall who act for all they are worth through their ape facades — both are excellent. And I was impressed with Eric Braeden as Hasslein, the villain of the piece. Previously known as Hans Gudegast (that accounts for the feeling I had that the face was familiar but the name was strange), he has a compelling face and menacing manner and makes a really

lovely villain.

In the less rewarding parts of the animal psychiatrists who try to protect the apes Bradford Dillman (always a delight) and the lovely Natalie Trundy (formerly a successful Broadway actress whose career was interrupted when she broke her back) cope well enough.

Paul Dehn has written an amusing, literate script (the characters come from Pierre Boulle's brilliant novel "Planet Of The Apes") and particularly fascinating to me was the account of how the Planet of the Apes came into being.

I imagine anyone who has not seen at least one of the preceding movies will have trouble getting into the mood of the film, but I found it to be really absorbing entertainment.

E.L.

CAST

Cornelius	Roddy McDowall
Zira	Kim Hunter
Dr. Lewis Dixon	Bradford Dillman
Dr. Stephanie Branton	Natalie Trundy
Dr. Otto Hasslein	Eric Braeden
Armando	Ricardo Montalban
The President	William Windom
Milo	Sal Mineo
E-1	Albert Salmi
E-2	Jason Evers
Chairman	John Randolph
General Brody	Sieve Roberts

(20th Century-Fox). Colour by DeLuxe.
Cert. "U". Running time 97 minutes.
Directed by Don Taylor.