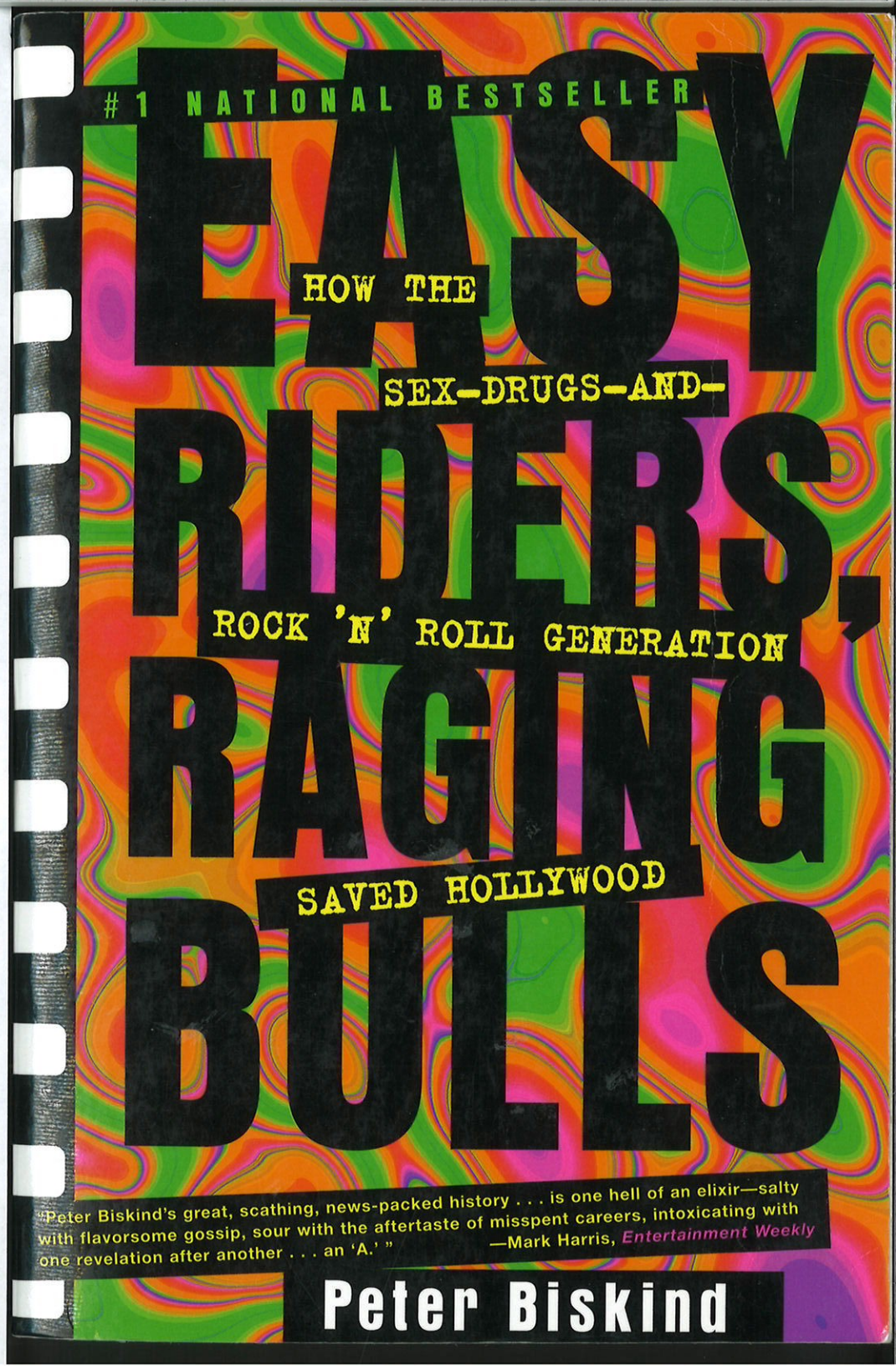
#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER
EASY RIDERS, RAGING BULLS
HOW THE SEX-DRUGS-AND-ROCK 'N' ROLL GENERATION SAVED HOLLYWOOD
"Peter Biskind's great, scathing, news-packed history . . . is one hell of an elixir—salty with flavorsome gossip, sour with the aftertaste of misspent careers, intoxicating with one revelation after another . . . an 'A.' "
—Mark Harris, Entertainment Weekly
Peter Biskind

Introduction: Knockin' on Heaven's Door

"Some friends of mine were saying the '70s was the last Golden Age. I said, 'How can you say that?' They replied, 'Well, you had all these great directors making picture after picture. You had Altman, Coppola, Spielberg, Lucas. . . .' "

— Martin Scorsese

February 9, 1971, 6:01 in the morning. A scattering of cars, headlights glowing fuzzily in the predawn gloom, had just begun to navigate the freeways as the first commuters sleepily sipped coffee out of Styrofoam cups and listened to the early morning news. A high of 71 degrees was expected. The Manson trial, now in the penalty phase, was still titillating the city of Los Angeles. Suddenly, the ground started to shake violently, not like the rolling, almost soothing motion of previous earthquakes. This was an abrupt heaving and falling that was terrifying in its intensity and duration, threatening to go on forever. For many, the 6.5 quake felt like the Big One. Manson's girls would claim later that Charlie himself had brought it down on the sinners tormenting him.

Over in Burbank, Martin Scorsese was jolted out of bed. He had just gotten a big break, an editing job at Warner Bros., and had arrived from New York a few weeks earlier. Marty was staying at the Toluca Motel, across the street from the lot. Dreaming of rare books when he heard a rumble, he imagined he was in the subway. "I jumped out of bed, looked out the window," he recalls. "Everything was shaking. Lightning was slashing across the sky—it was the electric wires from the telephone poles, falling down. It was terrifying. I thought, I gotta get outta here. By the time I pulled on my cowboy boots, got my money and the key to the motel room, and made it to the door, it was over. I went to the Copper Penny, and while I was having coffee, there was a big aftershock. I got up to run, and a guy looked at me and said, 'Where are you going to go?' I said, 'You're right. I'm stuck.' "

For Scorsese, there *was* nowhere to run. He had followed his dream to Hollywood, and if it was going to be a bumpier ride than he had imagined, he

either had to stick it out or go back to New York, make industrials, live in the old neighborhood and eat cannoli, always knowing that he hadn't had the stomach for what it took to make it in the movies.

Before the dust settled, sixty-five souls had perished in the quake. None of the people who populate this book was among them. *Their* injuries would be self-inflicted.

FOR OUR PURPOSES, the earthquake of 1971 was supererogatory, unnecessary, gilding the lily, as Hollywood has always been wont to do. The real earthquake, the cultural convulsion that upended the film industry, began a decade earlier, when the tectonic plates beneath the back lots began to shift, shattering the verities of the Cold War—the universal fear of the Soviet Union, the paranoia of the Red Scare, the menace of the bomb—freeing a new generation of filmmakers frozen in the ice of '50s conformity. Then came, pell-mell, a series of premonitory shocks—the civil rights movement, the Beatles, the pill, Vietnam, and drugs—that combined to shake the studios badly, and send the demographic wave that was the baby boom crashing down about them.

Because movies are expensive and time-consuming to make, Hollywood is always the last to know, the slowest to respond, and in those years it was at least half a decade behind the other popular arts. So it was some time before the acrid odor of cannabis and tear gas wafted over the pools of Beverly Hills and the sounds of shouting reached the studio gates. But when flower power finally hit in the late '60s, it hit hard. As America burned, Hells Angels gunned their bikes down Sunset Boulevard, while girls danced topless in the street to the music of the Doors booming from the clubs that lined the Strip. "It was like the ground was in flames and tulips were coming up at the same time," recalls Peter Guber, then a trainee at Columbia and later head of Sony Pictures Entertainment. It was one long party. Everything old was bad, everything new was good. Nothing was sacred; everything was up for grabs. It was, in fact, a cultural revolution, American style.

By the late '60s and early '70s, if you were young, ambitious, and talented, there was no better place on earth to be than Hollywood. The buzz around movies attracted the best and the brightest of the boomers to the film schools. Everybody wanted to get in on the act. Norman Mailer wanted to make movies more than he wanted to write novels; Andy Warhol wanted to make movies more than he wanted to reproduce Campbell's soup cans. Rock stars like Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, and the Beatles couldn't wait to get in front of and, in Dylan's case, behind the camera. As Steven Spielberg puts it, "The '70s was the first time that a kind of age restriction was lifted, and young people were allowed to come rushing in with all of their naïveté and their wisdom and all

of the privileges of youth. It was just an avalanche of brave new ideas, which is why the '70s was such a watershed."

In 1967, two movies, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate*, sent tremors through the industry. Others followed in quick succession: *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Rosemary's Baby* in 1968, *The Wild Bunch, Midnight Cowboy*, and *Easy Rider* in 1969, *M*A*S*H* and *Five Easy Pieces* in 1970, *The French Connection, Carnal Knowledge, The Last Picture Show*, and *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* in 1971, and *The Godfather* in 1972. Before anyone realized it, there was a movement—instantly dubbed the New Hollywood in the press—led by a new generation of directors. This was to be a directors' decade if ever there was one. Directors as a group enjoyed more power, prestige, and wealth than they ever had before. The great directors of the studio era, like John Ford and Howard Hawks, regarded themselves as nothing more than hired help (over-) paid to manufacture entertainment, storytellers who shunned self-conscious style lest it interfere with the business at hand. New Hollywood directors, on the other hand, were unembarrassed—in many cases rightly so—to assume the mantle of the artist, nor did they shrink from developing personal styles that distinguished their work from that of other directors.

The first wave, comprised of white men born in the mid- to late '30s (occasionally earlier), included Peter Bogdanovich, Francis Coppola, Warren Beatty, Stanley Kubrick, Dennis Hopper, Mike Nichols, Woody Allen, Bob Fosse, Robert Benton, Arthur Penn, John Cassavetes, Alan Pakula, Paul Mazursky, Bob Rafelson, Hal Ashby, William Friedkin, Robert Altman, and Richard Lester. The second wave was made up of the early boomers, born during and (mostly) after World War II, the film school generation, the so-called movie brats. This group included Scorsese, Spielberg, George Lucas, John Milius, Paul Schrader, Brian De Palma, and Terrence Malick.

When all was said and done, these directors created a body of work that included, in addition to the titles mentioned above, *The Last Detail; Nashville; Faces; Shampoo; A Clockwork Orange; Reds; Paper Moon; The Exorcist; The Godfather, Part II; Mean Streets; Badlands; The Conversation; Taxi Driver; Raging Bull; Apocalypse Now; Jaws; Cabaret; Klute; Carnal Knowledge; American Graffiti; Days of Heaven; Blue Collar; All That Jazz; Annie Hall; Manhattan; Carrie; All the President's Men; Coming Home;* and *Star Wars.* So rich was the soil of this decade that it even produced a compelling body of secondary work, then regarded as aesthetically or commercially wanting, that nevertheless has considerable merit, including *Scarecrow; Payday; Night Moves; The King of Marvin Gardens; Next Stop, Greenwich Village; Straight Time; Diary of a Mad Housewife; Silent Running; Bad Company; Tracks; Performance; The Wind and the Lion;* and many of the films of Cassavetes. The revolution also facilitated ready access to Hollywood and/or studio distribution for Brits like John Schlesinger (*Midnight Cowboy*), John Boorman (*Deliverance*), Ken Russell

(*Women in Love*), and Nicholas Roeg (*Don't Look Now*). And Europeans like Milos Forman, who made *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; Roman Polanski, who made *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown*; Bernardo Bertolucci, who made *Last Tango in Paris* and *1900*; Louis Malle, who made *Pretty Baby* and *Atlantic City*; and Sergio Leone, who made *The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly* and *Once Upon a Time in the West*. As well as veterans like Don Siegel, Sam Peckinpah, and John Huston, who suddenly found the freedom to do some of their best work, pictures like *Dirty Harry*, *Straw Dogs*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, and *Fat City*. It brought out the best in journeyman directors like Sydney Pollack and Sidney Lumet, who respectively made *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, and *Serpico* and *Dog Day Afternoon*; and allowed an actor such as Clint Eastwood to develop a body of work as a director.

The new power of directors was legitimized by its own ideology, "auteurism." The auteur theory was an invention of French critics who maintained that directors are to movies what poets are to poems. The leading American proponent of the auteur theory was Andrew Sarris, who wrote for the *Village Voice*, and used this pulpit to promote the then novel idea that the director is the sole author of his work, regardless of whatever contribution the writers, producers, or actors may make. He ranked directors in hierarchies, which had an instant appeal for the passionate young cineastes who now knew that John Ford was better than William Wyler, and why. Recalls Benton, "Reading Sarris was like listening to Radio Free Europe."

The young directors employed a new group of actors—Jack Nicholson, Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino, Gene Hackman, Richard Dreyfuss, James Caan, Robert Duvall, Harvey Keitel, and Elliott Gould—who banished the vanilla features of the Tabs and the Troys, and instead brought to the screen a gritty new realism and ethnicity. And the women—Barbra Streisand, Jane Fonda, Faye Dunaway, Jill Clayburgh, Ellen Burstyn, Dyan Cannon, Diane Keaton—were a far cry from the pert, snub-nosed Doris Days of the '50s. Most of these new faces were schooled in the Method by Lee Strasberg at the Actors Studio, or trained by the other celebrated New York teachers: Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, or Uta Hagen. In fact, a lot of the energy that animated the New Hollywood came from New York; the '70s was the decade when New York swallowed Hollywood, when Hollywood was Gothamized.

By this time it has become a cliché to insist that this was, by any measure, a remarkable era, the likes of which we will very probably never see again. Every age gone by is lit up by a retrospective glow of nostalgia, and the specialness of the '70s was by no means evident at the time. As Scorsese puts it, "We were just guys who wanted to make movies, and we knew we could be cut down any second by these people at the studios." Certainly this period had its share of schlock. But *Airport*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, *Earthquake*, and *The Towering Inferno* to one side, the '70s was truly a golden age, "the last great time," in the

words of Peter Bart, who was vice president of production at Paramount until mid-decade, "for pictures that expanded the idea of what could be done with movies." It was the last time Hollywood produced a body of risky, high-quality work—as opposed to the errant masterpiece—work that was character-, rather than plot-driven, that defied traditional narrative conventions, that challenged the tyranny of technical correctness, that broke the taboos of language and behavior, that dared to end unhappily. These were often films without heroes, without romance, without—in the lexicon of sports, which has colonized Hollywood—anyone to "root for." In a culture inured even to the shock of the new, in which today's news is tomorrow's history to be forgotten entirely or recycled in some unimaginably debased form, '70s movies retain their power to unsettle; time has not dulled their edge, and they are as provocative now as they were the day they were released. Just think of Regan stabbing her crotch with a crucifix in *The Exorcist* or Travis Bickle blowing his way through the ending of *Taxi Driver*, fingertips flying in all directions. The thirteen years between *Bonnie and Clyde* in 1967 and *Heaven's Gate* in 1980 marked the last time it was really exciting to make movies in Hollywood, the last time people could be consistently proud of the pictures they made, the last time the community as a whole encouraged good work, the last time there was an audience that could sustain it.

And it wasn't only the landmark movies that made the late '60s and '70s unique. This was a time when film culture permeated American life in a way that it never had before and never has since. In the words of Susan Sontag, "It was at this specific moment in the 100-year history of cinema that going to movies, thinking about movies, talking about movies became a passion among university students and other young people. You fell in love not just with actors but with cinema itself." Film was no less than a secular religion.

Finally, the dream of the New Hollywood transcended individual movies. At its most ambitious, the New Hollywood was a movement intended to cut film free of its evil twin, commerce, enabling it to fly high through the thin air of art. The filmmakers of the '70s hoped to overthrow the studio system, or at least render it irrelevant, by democratizing filmmaking, putting it into the hands of anyone with talent and determination. The avatars of the movement were "filmmakers," not "directors" or "editors" or "cinematographers"; they tried to break down the hierarchies that traditionally dominated the technical crafts. Indeed '70s people were the original "hyphenates," starting as writers, like Schrader, or editors, like Ashby, or actors, like Beatty, then moving into directing without necessarily giving up their original vocation.

The New Hollywood lasted barely a decade, but in addition to bequeathing a body of landmark films, it has a lot to teach us about the way Hollywood is run now, why today's pictures, with a few happy exceptions, are so unrelievedly awful, why Hollywood is in a perpetual state of crisis and self-loathing.

If this book had been written during the '70s, it would have focused exclusively on directors. It would have been a book about the art of the director, how director Y made X shot with Z lens because he was crafting a homage to *Citizen Kane* or *The Searchers*. Many excellent studies and innumerable biographies with exactly this approach already exist. If this book had been written in the '80s, when executives and producers became media darlings, it would have been about the film business. But written in the '90s, it tries to look at both sides of the equation, the business and the art, or more precisely, the businessman and the artist. This is a book about the people who made the movies of the '70s, and who more often than not destroyed themselves in the process. It tries to explain why the New Hollywood happened, and why it ended.

THE NEW HOLLYWOOD implies an Old Hollywood, of course. In the mid-'60s, when *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate* were gestating, the studios were still in the rigor-mortis-like grip of the generation that invented the movies. In 1965, Adolph Zukor at ninety-two, and the only slightly younger Barney Balaban, seventy-eight, were still on the board of Paramount; Jack Warner, seventy-three, ran Warner Bros. Darryl F. Zanuck, sixty-three, was firmly in command at 20th Century-Fox. "If you were these guys, you weren't going to give this up," says Ned Tanen, who at the time was a young man with the music division of MCA, and later headed motion pictures at Universal. "To do what, go sit at Hillcrest Country Club and play pinochle?"

In the palmy days of the old studios, there was something of an apprentice system that allowed the sons of union members to enter the industry. When the studios cut back in the '50s, these men, often veterans back from World War II, were last hired and the first to go. The day-to-day operations were still in the hands of the prewar generation of producers, directors, department heads, and crews who were in their fifties, sixties, and seventies. New Hollywood producer Irwin Winkler likes to tell the story of his first job as a young man, in 1966, at MGM. As a novice, Winkler got stuck with an Elvis Presley movie, *Double Trouble*. Having obviously read too much Sarris, he puzzled Presley's manager, the famously ill-humored Col. Tom Parker, by asking, "Please, sir, I'd like to meet the director." Parker replied, "You be in front of the Thalberg Building at eleven o'clock in the morning, your director will be there." Sure enough, at eleven o'clock in the morning a car pulled up, not a limousine, but a Chevy, with a black chauffeur. Next to the chauffeur was the man Winkler wanted to meet, an elderly gentleman named Norman Taurog, a Hollywood veteran best known for *Boys Town* with Spencer Tracy in 1938. He got out of the car with difficulty, tottered slowly up the steps, and extended a frail hand, covered with liver spots, as Winkler burbled, "Mr. Taurog, sir, great to meet you, isn't that nice you have a driver and all, that's wonderful." Taurog replied, "I like to drive myself, but I can't see very well."

"You can't see?"

"No, I'm blind in one eye, and the other eye is going real fast." Two years after Taurog completed *Double Trouble*, he lost his eyesight entirely.

In those days, there was apparently nothing anomalous about a blind director. Way back in the '30s and '40s, the producer on the studio payroll was the only person who would see a picture through from beginning to end. Directors, on salary, were there to make sure the actors hit their marks while the camera was running. They exited the production after the shooting phase was over. They were low on the totem pole, barely higher than writers. "Directors weren't even allowed in the room," says John Calley, who headed production at Warners throughout the '70s and now is president and COO of Sony Entertainment. "Warner would run the dailies, would tell the producer what he wanted —'I want a close-up on Jimmy Cagney'—and the producer would tell the director, who only then was allowed to see the dailies."

There was only one maverick in this producer-dominated system: United Artists. This was a company that had empowered directors from its inception, back on January 15, 1919, when it was founded by Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and D. W. Griffith. The idea was that the filmmakers would control their own destinies, cut out the middlemen, the meddling moguls who got rich off their labor. It seemed like a great idea, but it never quite worked the way it was supposed to, and by the end of the '40s, the company was losing $100,000 a week. The surviving owners, Chaplin and Pickford, were not speaking to each other, and in 1951 they sold the company to Arthur Krim and Bob Benjamin, two smart lawyers with some motion picture experience.

With the divorcement decrees of the late '40s separating the studios from their theater chains, the courts invalidating the old contract system with which the studios held the talent in veritable thralldom, and a growing number of stars participating in profits and starting their own production companies, Krim recognized, before anyone else, that the staggering investments in overhead—back lots with their wardrobe departments, acres of props, contract players, and so on—were a thing of the past. Krim understood that the only way for a motion picture company to prosper was to be run as a studio without a lot, that is, as a financing and distribution entity. What UA had to sell, the thing that would make the tiny company more desirable than its big brothers, was artistic freedom, and a bigger slice of the profits. By the mid-'60s, the upstart that no one would take seriously had become fat and saucy. UA prospered with the hugely successful James Bond pictures, the *Pink Panther* series, and Sergio Leone's spaghetti Westerns with Clint Eastwood. They even cornered the movie rights to the Beatles before anyone had ever heard of them, and would mint money with *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*

But even UA was a geriatracy. If you didn't know someone, didn't have an uncle in distribution or a cousin in costumes, it was almost impossible to crack

the system, especially for directors. It was a catch-22 situation: you couldn't direct a picture unless you had already directed a picture. True, by the mid-'60s, the first students had entered what few film schools there were, but they were told they couldn't get there from here. Sound designer Walter Murch started at USC in 1965. He says, "The first day that we all got together, the head of the camera department surveyed us with a baleful eye, and said, 'My advice to you, is quit now. Get out fast. Don't continue with this because you all have expectations that are not going to be fulfilled.' "

"It was not like the older generation volunteered the baton," says Spielberg. "The younger generation had to wrest it away from them. There was a great deal of prejudice if you were a kid and ambitious. When I made my first professional TV show, *Night Gallery*, I had everybody on the set against me. The average age of the crew was sixty years old. When they saw me walk on the stage, looking younger than I really was, like a baby, everybody turned their backs on me, just walked away. I got the sense that I represented this threat to everyone's job."

Still, the studios, which seemed impregnable from afar, had been rotting from within since the late '40s, when the judgments against them had made the industry more vulnerable to the onslaught of television. The old men who ran the studios were increasingly out of touch with the vast baby boom audience that was coming of age in the '60s, an audience that was rapidly becoming radicalized and disaffected from its elders. The studios were still churning out formulaic genre pictures, an endless stream of Doris Day and Rock Hudson vehicles; big-budget epics, like *Hawaii*, *The Bible*, and *Krakatoa, East of Java*; war films, like *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and *D-Day the Sixth of June*. Even when a few of the expensive musicals, like *My Fair Lady* and *The Sound of Music*, did spectacular business in the mid-'60s, they spawned an orgy of imitations like *Camelot*, *Doctor Dolittle* and *Song of Norway*, whose budgets spiraled out of control. At the same time, the stars who ornamented these creaky vehicles were not drawing the way they used to. *The Sound of Music* represented the last gasp of family entertainment, and in the half decade that followed, the war in Vietnam grew from a blip on the map somewhere in Southeast Asia to a reality that might easily claim the life of the boy next door.

The net result was that by the late '60s, the studios were in dire financial shape. According to *Variety*, 1969 marked the beginning of a three-year slump. Attendances, which hit an all-time high of 78.2 million a week in 1946, plunged to a low of 15.8 million a week in 1971. Box office was down, inventories were up. Money was tight, therefore costly to borrow. According to Bart, "The movie industry was more on its ass than any time in its history, literally almost wiped off the face of the earth."

To change metaphors, the once proud studio system, already a leaky vessel, was listing badly, and the conglomerates were circling beneath the chop, looking for dinner. Although Hollywood watchers looked on gloomily as studio after

studio became no more than an appetizer for some company whose primary business was insurance, zinc mining, or funeral homes, there was a ray of sunshine. The same upheavals that had left the studios bruised and battered made room for fresh blood in the executive suites.

Youthful veterans of the Golden Age of live television in the '50s joined the rebellious refugees from the New York theater and other mavericks to fashion a new kind of movie, light years ahead of the prevailing fare. In 1960, Cassavetes scraped together enough money to make a feature called *Shadows* in New York, entirely outside the system. Kubrick, working in England, made *Lolita* in 1962, and then followed it with *Dr. Strangelove* in 1964, a savage and scathingly funny demolition of Cold War culture. Lumet directed *The Pawnbroker* the following year, and the year after that, Mike Nichols made Edward Albee's scabrous *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for Warners, which did for the family what *Strangelove* did for the arms race.

Still, the handful of daring American movies was nothing compared to what was going on in the rest of the world. Wherever you looked—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Sweden, Japan, Latin America—directors with unpronounceable names were making stunning movies. It was the Golden Age of postwar European and Japanese cinema, the era of the French New Wave, of Ingmar Bergman, of Akira Kurosawa, of Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fellini. Although these films were "foreign," they seemed more immediate, more "American" than anything Hollywood was turning out. They hit home with a shock of recognition. Sean Daniel, who grew up to become an executive at Universal and shepherded *National Lampoon's Animal House* to the screen, was an antiwar activist in high school in Manhattan in the '60s. He recalls, "You saw *The Battle of Algiers* ten times so you could memorize how to build the proper cell structure. I'll never forget seeing a platoon of Black Panthers, in matching black leather jackets and berets, sitting in front of me, taking notes during the show."

In America, real innovation was coming not so much from feature directors as from the practitioners of cinema verité like Richard Leacock, D. A. Pennebaker, and the Maysles brothers, who had developed cheap, lightweight equipment that enabled a whole generation to take to the streets to capture a reality that was rapidly becoming more fantastical than anything springing from the febrile brow of even the most inventive screenwriters. Assassinations, love-ins, prison breaks, bombings, airplane hijackings, hundreds of thousands of people flocking to Washington to levitate the Pentagon, dollar bills tumbling slowly through the air onto the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, were daily occurrences.

There were no maps to this wilderness of change. No one had blazed a trail. "When the movie factories were blown apart by television in the '50s, there weren't a bunch of people who said, 'This is where we go now,' " says Scorsese. "People had no idea. You pushed here, and if it gave there, you slipped in. And as all that pushing and shoving was going on, the equipment was changing,

getting smaller and easier to use. Then the Europeans emerged. Combine all those elements together, and suddenly by the mid-'60s, you had a major explosion."

In the context of the financial hemorrhaging of the late '60s, the new group of young executives was considerably more inclined to take risks than its predecessors, especially if the risks were confined to picking up the occasional American independent or stray British or European art film, such as *Alfie*, *Georgy Girl*, or Antonioni's *Blow-Up*. Not only did Antonioni's picture afford the first glimpse of full frontal female nudity in the living memory of filmgoers, it also boasted of a meandering, opaque narrative structure that left most of the older executives scratching their heads. They didn't have a clue, but they knew it, and were flailing about for help. When neophyte director Paul Williams, then in his early twenties, went to MGM to pitch a project in 1967, he was told, " 'No, no, no, we want to make movies that aren't about anything. Like that *Blow-Up* picture.' " Williams adds, "*Blow-Up* had confused the hell out of them. People really started feeling they didn't know what was going on. It was much easier to get stuff going." While Winkler was making Presley movies, next door at the same studio British director John Boorman was making *Point Blank* (1967), a groundbreaking elliptical thriller bristling with sudden bursts of violence. "There was a complete loss of nerve by the American studios at that point," says Boorman. "They were so confused and so uncertain as to what to do, they were quite willing to cede power to the directors. London was this swinging place, and there was this desire to import British or European directors who would somehow have the answers."

Adds Paul Schrader, who was then the film critic for the major underground newspaper in L.A., the *Free Press*, "Because of the catastrophic crisis of '69, '70, and '71, when the industry imploded, the door was wide open and you could just waltz in and have these meetings and propose whatever. There was nothing that was too outrageous." Says Guber, "If you were young or you came out of film school, or you made a little experimental film up in San Francisco, *that* was the ticket into the system. It was like a petri dish with an enormous amount of agar, so that anything you dropped in there grew."

When the hippies finally did come knocking, in other words, the gates swung wide open, creating the illusion, as Milius puts it, that the citadel was empty. But this was only an illusion, and a dangerous one at that. The citadel was filled with land mines and booby traps. And although the decade of the '70s contains shining monuments to its great directors, the cultural revolution of that decade, like the political revolution of the '60s, ultimately failed. As writer-director Leonard Schrader, Paul's older brother, puts it, "This group of people started to make really interesting films, and then just took a toboggan ride into the gutter. How the hell did that ever happen?"

How indeed?