

4. ADDITIONAL CLUE QUOTES: The multinationals "are the nations of today....The world is a business, Beal" (big boss). "I'm real: you can't switch to another station" (Holden to Dunnaway). "Life is bullshit" (Beal, first cast after his conversion breakthrough into [blindu] prana): "We're in the boredom killing business! You're not going to get the truth from us!" "It's the wrath of God!" (middle boss, when things fall apart from exposure). Ind. "banished" (Beal)

Tonight [23Nov76] I saw Paddy Chaevsky's "Network" because I wanted to see what had happened to him since, a decade ago, I was in the theater with him for his opening night of "Gideon," which pictured that biblical judge as a halfwit God had to sort out from the fullwits in order to find a real servant. Anybody who thinks the biblical prophets were halfwits instead of nowits can't be all bad, and can't come to no good end, so I wanted to see what end he'd come to by now. And it turned out to be a very good end indeed. I go with Judith Christ: "Bound to be America's best 1976 film."

1. It's on the mindless, money-making-mad power of the multinationals, and reminds me of what's in a Robert Bellah RIGHT ON [Nov/75] interview (p.5): "The pressures to maximize the power and wealth of large corporate structures or large government structures pull us along. It's like being possessed by demons, if you want to use the Biblical metaphor, because I don't feel human beings are in control of it. And I feel that, if we don't get in control of it, these high structures which know nothing about (p.12) love and care and concern for human beings, but only about maximizing power, income, and wealth, will take us to destruction. They will destroy the environment, they will destroy our fabric of interpersonal relations, and they will destroy our society. They will destroy, among other things, our republican form of government, government based on a human scale where everyone can participate. If everything is done by vast corporate bureaucracies, then, in fact, you have a different form of government from where we started. You have despotism instead of democracy...we have to bring these structures under control, or everything we value will be destroyed."

2. The particular multinational structure Paddy zooms in on is the OPEC cartel, which has bought "half of England" and is gradually gaining control of American decision-making beginning with TV--TV being the metier of the film. TV amounts to the Molochmouth [the TV frame, mouth-shape, though the film doesn't use the Moloch image] which ate our children, who are now coming to power as zombies ["humanoids," the film calls them] being digested in the multinational bowels--everything, even including black militants, being cooptable; and even public rage being programmable, as the scream "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore!" become a lead-in chant in a series built on the ravings of a "mad prophet".

3. Here we hit the biblical theme Chaevsky is never far from: the madness of the prophet standing between and embodying the wrath of God and the current human condition he's struggling out of into honesty. [Elia Kazan tried this once. His THE ARRANGEMENT as savagely bit Mad.Ave. as Chaevsky now has bitten TV--both, bitterly effective comedies.] "Civilize" does not mean to make human, it means to make civil. Civility may then mate with, or at least ally itself with, high or middle or low moral goals. Our century's two most powerful rebels agreed that European civility had allied itself with the false value-structure of the Western burghers, "the bourgeoisie," and pointed to the baneful, baleful effects inside the skinbag [Freud] and outside [Marx]. In our film, the skinbag has gone unfeeling, fulfilling Freud (luciously, as producer Faye Dunnaway: "All the men tell me I'm the lousiest lay they ever had"), and the society is beginning to revolt [Marx!] against its programmed unfeeling [read, civility-mated-to- $\$$]: "All of life is reduced to common banality," says older-generation-latest-Dunnaway-lay Wm. Holden, who's been fired for low ratings and has left his family for Faye, whom he calls "a humanoid," who sees TV as real and the world as unreal but food to be fed into TV. Newscaster Howard Beal is converted to truth in an audition [vision] and blurts it out on TV, the ratings zooming; then he's converted to the corporate cosmology, but his ratings go down--the film's last line being "Howard Beal, the first man ever to be executed for low ratings" [he's shot down very bloodily by the "Ecumenical Liberation Army," which has been coopted by multinational money and TV-programmed]