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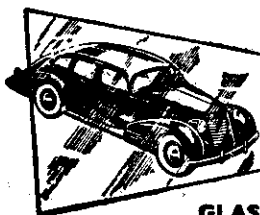


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Film Reviews, by F.A.J.

DIFFERENT WORLDS

THE YELLOW BALLOON

(Associated British-Marble Arch)

IN very different ways both this week's films are good entertainment, and both also have besides a something else which isn't so easy to generalise about. *The Yellow Balloon* is a thriller, and a pretty good one. I'm told that it resembles *The Window*, which I didn't see. A small boy, Frankie Palmer, loses sixpence which he has begged from his father to buy a balloon. In his disappointment he snatches a balloon from a neighbour's child and leads him a dance into the heights of a blitzed building. The other boy falls, and for the rest of the film Frankie lives close to panic under the influence of a young criminal who persuades him that the police might blame him for the other boy's death. That's the simple outline of the thriller, and even if it does pinch a bit from other films—there's a quite effective sequence of pure *Third Man*—it makes a tense and exciting piece of cinema.

The something extra which for me set *The Yellow Balloon* apart was its close and sympathetic study not only of the boy but of a whole working class setting. The trouble started over sixpence, which in the sort of home Frankie came from is not something that can be thrown away. This home (with its teapot where the holiday money goes), the neighbours and the neighbourhood, the policeman on his beat, the costermonger, the cheap eating house and fun parlour, the Sunday school, the pub, the dancing teacher who befriends Frankie—all are presented in a way that brings vividly to life the district where Frankie lives. The makers of this film were concerned, I imagine, to set a not too ingeniously plotted story against this background, and in doing so were prepared to sacrifice something of the slickness of the thriller pure and simple—and personally, I wouldn't have it otherwise.

Young Andrew Ray (who was in *The Mudlark*) isn't called on to show a very wide range of emotions as Frankie, but his sustained series of variations on a

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "The Yellow Balloon."
FAIR: "Woman's World."

note of fear are wonderfully well done. As his father and mother, Kathleen Ryan and Kenneth More could not be better; there are some beautifully natural touches in their home life scenes, and I must say it was refreshing to see Mr. More again in a part nearer the one he played in *Chance of a Lifetime*. The part of the criminal has been written with a complete lack of sympathy (possibly a criticism in a film of this sort), and it's played with most convincing plausibility by William Sylvester. Some of his acting in close-up is quite memorable. As might be expected, the minor parts also have been filled with care.

The Yellow Balloon was directed by J. Lee-Thompson, who also worked with Anne Burnaby on the script from her story; and the photography is by Gilbert Taylor.

WOMAN'S WORLD

(20th Century-Fox)

THE new CinemaScope production takes a very different world for its setting. Doing New York at the expense of the fabulously successful Gifford Motors are three of its branch managers, whom Mr. Gifford himself is looking over in a search for a new general manager. He's also looking over the wives. One husband and one wife are go-getters—the rest are pretty decent people. Who's going to get the big job? You'll have to wait to find out, and if you're anything like me you'll stay entertained till the end.

Clifton Webb is as smooth a big shot as ever signed an annual report, and his managers and their wives—Van Heflin and Arlene Dahl, Fred MacMurray and Lauren Bacall, Cornel Wilde and June Allyson—turn out to be quite interesting and, for the most part, human folk. As the title suggests, women have a big say in what men make



ANDREW RAY
"A note of fear"

of themselves, and the film has a word for something better than marriage to the top job. Making the best of both worlds, it also thoroughly exploits the rich and bibulous life encountered at the top and on the way up (I ended up just about under the table), leaving the impression that though the G.M.'s job mightn't be worth the price for all of us it must be jolly d to go on wallowing on the fringe. CinemaScope comes into its own in a few brief shots, and among many scenes which would be entertaining on any width of screen is a very funny one in a women's bargain store. There are some good lines, too. Jean Negulesco directed.