

Best-seller into Film

MY SIX CONVICTS

(Stanley Kramer-Columbia)

WHATEVER it is that Donald Powell Wilson has—and I haven't read his book myself to find out—he certainly has something. His account of his experiences as a prison psychologist, *My Six Convicts*, appears to have been enjoyed by people not usually found reading over one another's shoulders, and though the film of the book (director, Hugo Fregonese) doesn't, I gather, have as much resemblance to its best-selling parent as it might, the two seem to share a sort of willingness to please everyone. In a film which at first looks so much like becoming a social document this is a serious weakness. It doesn't knit together like such Kramer productions as *The Men* and *The Sniper*, and as a result it lacks real punch. Perhaps it was never meant to have any.

The prison setting is impressively established in the opening shots, and throughout this recurs as a notable strength of the film—the barred doors, the long rows of cells, the armed guards patrolling the walls, the many shadow-filled scenes. It's clear from the start

BAROMETER

FAIR: "My Six Convicts."
FAIR: "Anything Can Happen."
FAIR TO FINE: "The Sound of Fury."

that the psychologist (John Beal) isn't going to have an easy time. The warden is sceptical, and the boss man among the convicts (Gilbert Roland) seems likely to stop the psychologist getting together a staff of convicts to help with his aptitude testing. Even when this difficulty is overcome the psychologist's six convicts, including the boss man and another entertaining fellow played by Millard Mitchell, co-operate from motives that are not all socially desirable. Still, the psychologist wins the loyalty of most of his staff, and I suppose the film could be taken as a plea for a more understanding attitude to the social misfit. Even if it hasn't great depth, as far as it goes with its serious intention it is reasonably convincing. There's an effective scene when one of the six is treated under hypnosis for loss of speech, and a sequence in which a riot is threatened conveys something of the terror of the occasion.

But laughter keeps breaking through, and while some of the funny scenes arise

naturally enough from the story, one has the feeling at times that the fun is carried a bit far—for instance in the safebreaker's account of his day spent on the outside. Undoubtedly this is an entertaining film, but you'll find it satisfying only if you have an unlimited willingness to take it as it comes.

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN

(Paramount)

WHEN Turks and Armenians can sit at the same table anything can happen, says Georgi (Jose Ferrer), a most engaging Georgian recently arrived in the United States, and as a glance through a book of American national biography will show almost anything can happen to a foreign immigrant to America. All the same you might find yourself thinking of the McCarran Act or the more recent events in Mr. Chaplin's life when the camera rests briefly on the New York skyline and the most expensive statue in the world, but if you can get over the feeling that this may be a bit of a boost for the land of the free you'll enjoy *Anything Can Happen*. I did, anyway. Mr. Ferrer is a delightful actor whose range of facial expression I envy and whose feeling for anyone who happens to be really Miss Kim Hunter I find very easy to understand. Having tried his hand at various jobs Mr. Ferrer chases Miss Hunter across the continent to California, where he decides to grow oranges and become a rich man. Of course a fair crowd of his compatriots

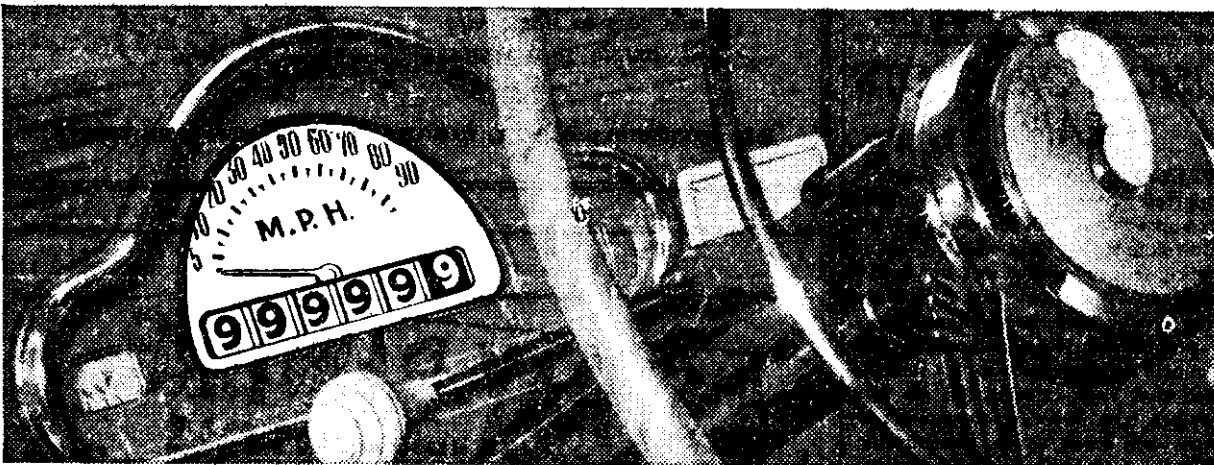
goes along in the car with him, and when the film ends there's the promise of many gregarious and noisy goings on in the future. I imagine that this film, which George Seaton directed, gives a pretty fair picture of life among immigrants of this sort in America. There's plenty of humour—one scene with Mr. Ferrer and a parcel of dough in a crowded bus on a hot day is very funny—there are some very good performances from the supporting players, and in spite of the temptations of the story the film never really becomes over-sentimental.

THE SOUND OF FURY

(Robert Stillman-United Artists)

RATHER belatedly I want to mention briefly an American sociological shocker. *The Sound of Fury* tells how Howard Tyler (Frank Lovejoy), an unemployed husband and father, is lured into a job driving a getaway car for Jerry Slocum (Lloyd Bridges), a rather small-time hold-up man. Before long they are involved in a cold-blooded kidnapping and murder, and because the local newspaper has been stirring up public hysteria with stories about a "crime wave" Tyler's confession starts a chain of events that ends in a lynching in the worst American tradition. The horrifying mob scenes are extremely well done. This film (which is directed by Cyril Endfield) has an undisguised message—that we must try to cure the disease of violence by reason rather than

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