

By Barbara Johnson

George Scott:



George C. Scott looked like this when he was a student at Missouri. He once credited Mizzou Professor Donovan Rhynsbarger with telling him this rule, "Don't act, just be." "He meant, of course," said Scott, "that a player should be the character he's interpreting and not merely try to act out the role."

The ship is not sinking. . . .

Ol' Mizzou continues sailing strong despite the resignations of its president, chancellor, and football coach over the past three months.

(And it says something about the phenomenon of big-time football and higher education to reflect that the departure of Dan Devine caused more comment than did the resignations of John Weaver and John Schwada combined [see page 6].)

Devine, of course, left to accept a five-year contract with the Green Bay Packers. The news broke just as the *Alumnus* was going to press, so there wasn't time to explore the situation further in this issue, except to say that the campus and University administration acted quickly to name Devine's long-time assistant, Al Onofrio, Mizzou's new football coach.

In the March-April issue we will tell our readers a little more about Onofrio, a key man in the Devine era who stayed pretty much in the background. We also intend to have an interview with the new dean of the School of Journalism, Roy Mac Fisher, the distinguished editor of the *Chicago Daily News*.

That appointment adds to the assurance that the ship sails smoothly. It may even be more important than a new football coach. —S. S.

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"Lions in their dens tremble at his approach."

This line uttered by the Moroccan Minister in the movie "Patton" about that controversial World War II general, George S. Patton, could also be said about actor George C. Scott. For not only does Scott do a magnificent job in portraying "Old Blood 'N Guts," as General Patton was called by those he commanded, but Scott is a particularly strong character who is renowned for a fiery temper and a fierce commitment to what he considers acting is all about.

Scott, who has been nominated twice for an Academy Award, and is almost certain to get the nod again this spring for "Patton," spoke his first lines and won his first applause as the barrister in "The Winslow Boy" on the stage in Jesse Auditorium when he was a student at the University in 1950.

"The minute I got on the stage, I knew that acting was what I had to do in life. There and then I gave up all ideas of becoming a newspaper man," Scott once said.

Whether his performance was good or bad, it sparked his interest and imagination in theatre. He dropped out of the Journalism School (which had appealed to him when he came to Columbia just out of the Marines), took up English and drama at Mizzou, and began auditioning for parts. He worked under Professor Donovan Rhynsbarger on the Columbia campus and also acted at Stephens College.

In December, the 43-year-old Scott was named best actor of 1970 by The New York film critics for his role

in "Patton." But such success has not come easy. There were 150 roles in stock productions, interspersed with odd jobs as a truck driver and rug salesman to keep in acting, a break in New York in 1957 when he played Richard III for the Shakespeare Festival, followed by several off-Broadway honors and a number of Broadway performances, a string of television productions and eight movies previous to "Patton."

Interlaced with his tremendous ability to act have been the tremendous obstacles of drink and an unpredictable temper to overcome. In 1958 Scott woke up in jail, having been charged the night before with felonious assault while drunk.

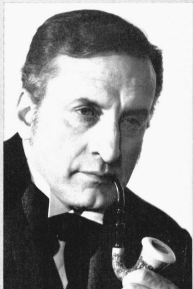
"I got scared. For the first time I realized that I was destroying myself," Scott said in a *Saturday Evening Post* interview.

He joined Alcoholics Anonymous and surmounted this problem. His temper is still unpredictable, but perhaps this basic rebel in him is what makes George C. Scott the powerful actor he is.

Whether playing the prosecutor in "Anatomy of a Murder," the gambler in "The Hustler," the general in "Dr. Strangelove," the social worker in the CBS "East Side, West Side" series or General Patton, George C. Scott almost paralyzes the set with his forcefulness.

The explosive Scott, as he has been known to some, is really Patton, say the people at 20th Century Fox who produced the movie. He has a way of getting under people's skin. His handling of the slapping scene was one of many examples, as was the lengthy opening speech delivered so flawlessly that, incredibly, only one master take was needed.

"Patton," regardless of what one feels about the general, is a superb film. It's a one-man show that goes deep into the personality really



This is Scott as he appeared last fall in his new movie, "They Might Be Giants," to be released soon.

of both Patton and Scott. Asked about his feelings toward General Patton, Scott, who analyzes thoroughly each character he is to play, said: "I believe this man was an individual in the deepest sense of the word. And the beauty of the individual soul and the individual personality is the message, isn't it? He was an actor also, very dramatic about everything he did."

Scott has strong feeling about many things, one is today's youth: "The most reprehensible thing about young people today is the herd instinct. To form together like cattle means denying the beauty of the individual soul and personality." Scott says this is the message he thinks General Patton had to give.

"I'm not talking about the respect of the individual and the absolute rejection of the cattle instinct that apparently possesses and obsesses young people today. Inwardly we should perhaps think about what war is. We have lived countless hundreds of years and apparently have not found the secret of living together as rational human beings. The history of this last quarter century might have read a little differently if anyone had listened to a man like Patton."

Scott is a mercurial critic of his own work and he flatly refuses to speculate about an Academy Award for his portrayal of General Patton. In fact, he was so against the advertising campaigns by nominees and agents that he wired the Academy in 1962 asking that his name be withdrawn for the nomination of



The Actor & the Rebel

supporting actor in "The Hustler". It wasn't, but he didn't win anyway.

What he would much rather spend his time speculating and working for is the future. He's currently directing his wife, Colleen Dewhurst, in Jean Shepard and John O'Leary's play, "A Definite Maybe."

"They Might be Giants" a new movie in which Scott plays a wealthy New York jurist and humanitarian who believes he is really Sherlock Holmes is scheduled to be released in February. He will play opposite Joanne Woodward whose husband, Paul Newman, directed the production.

In March, NBC-TV will telecast a special with Scott in "Jane Eyre," which will be shown later in movie houses around the world. Scott has been a strong and outspoken advocate of TV's potential. He hopes to help shape its quality by directing a series himself of American history programs — "theatrical biographies."

George C. Scott also thinks an important function of entertainment is to make sharp editorial comment. He says there are many vital subjects that should be tackled on television and predicts that commercial TV will change a great deal in the 70s.

One likely thing is that these changes in TV, theatre and movies will be greatly affected by the intense dedication and fiery personality of George Campbell Scott. □



Scott last visited Mizzou in 1964.



