

R. CRUMB, "THE OLD OUTSIDER", GOES TO THE...

ACADEMY AWARDS

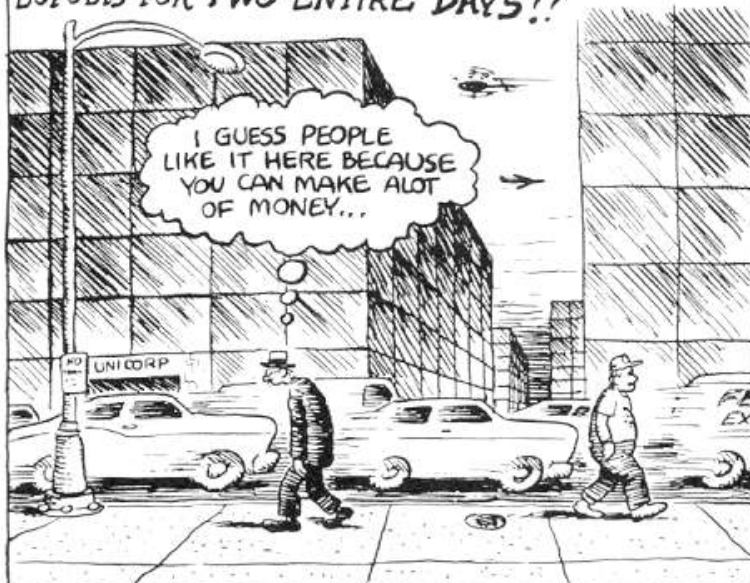
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HEY, HOW 'BOUT THOSE ACADEMY AWARDS?? THIS MAGAZINE HIRED ME TO COVER THE BIG EVENT, AND SENT ME A TICKET!?



IT WAS A JOB, AND ONE EITHER... FIRST, I HAD TO FLY TO LOS ANGELES, AND STAY IN THAT HATEFUL MEGA-LOPOLIS FOR TWO ENTIRE DAYS!!



AND THE BIG DAY IS ON! JEEZIZ, WHAT A SCENE! LINES OF POLICEMEN KEPT THE MOB FROM POURING OVER BARRICADES TO WHERE THE LIMOS WERE LETTING OUT THE MOVIE STARS...



THIS CROWD TOOK AN ACTIVE PART, CHEERING LUSTILY WHENEVER A FAMOUS CELEBRITY GOT OUT OF A LIMOUSINE... THEY SCREAMED LOUDEST FOR CELLULOID HERO OF THE DAY TOM CRUISE...



PERSONALLY, THE SCENE **BEHIND** THE BARRICADES WAS BY FAR THE MORE INTERESTING PART OF THE WHOLE CIRCUS...



GROUPS OF ANGRY PROTESTERS HELD UP SIGNS AND CHANTED THEIR GRIEVANCES, BUT NOBODY WAS PAYING ATTENTION, EXCEPT THE COPS, WHO KEPT THEM WELL IN THE BACKGROUND...



LARGE TREES IN POTS WERE SET UP TO HIDE THESE UNSIGHTLY DEMONSTRATORS FROM THE TV CAMERAS... ANYWAY, THAT'S WHAT I THINK THEY WERE FOR...



WELL, IT WAS GETTING TO BE TIME TO GO IN... I CUT ACROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE, WAVING MY "GOLDEN TICKET" AT THE COPS.



...AND THERE I WAS, WALKING ON THE RED CARPET WITH THE MOVIE STARS... I FELT ILL AT EASE IN THE EXTREME, AND VERY EMBARRASSED FOR ALL OF HUMANITY.



"TO BE AN ARTIST MEANS NEVER TO AVERT ONE'S EYES." SO SAYETH KUROSAWA, BUT I COULDN'T LOOK AT THE PEOPLE... I LOOKED DOWN AT MY FEET... IMAGES OF THE OSCAR WERE WOVEN INTO THE RED CARPET.



INSIDE, THE FILM FOLK WERE SHMOOZING IN THE LOUNGE AREA... I COWERED IN A CORNER, OBSERVING... THE ROOM WAS CHARGED WITH A HIGH VOLTAGE LEVEL OF POWER AND AMBITION... THEY ALL WANTED TO WIN SO BAD! ANXIETY STEAMED OUT OF THEIR EARS! ONCE IN A WHILE SOMEONE WOULD EYE ME SUSPICIOUSLY. THEY KNEW I WASN'T ONE OF THEM, SO WHAT WAS I DOING THERE? HOW DID I GET IN? I EXPECTED ANY MOMENT TO BE KICKED OUT IN THE STREET...



THEY STOOD AROUND TALKING CATAGORIES... LOTS OF "GOOD LUCK," "SAME TA YOU," HUGGING, ARM-AROUND, BACK MASSAGE... THEY LOVE EACH OTHER—YOU COULD TELL...

GET UP THERE!
DON'T MISS YA
MOMENT !!

WE'RE
COUNTIN'
ON YOU!



THE MEN ALL STUCK THEIR CHESTS OUT... MANY OF THEM HAD VERY HARD FACES... THEY LOOKED LIKE KILLERS... LIKE—GANGSTERS!! IT'S A HIGH-STAKES BUSINESS, THE MOVIES... (I DUNNO... MAYBE THEY WERE JUST CHARACTER ACTORS...)



AND THE WOMEN—OH LORD SAVE ME—THE WOMEN WERE TRULY TERRIFYING, WITH ALL THEIR "GLAMOUR," THEIR PREDATORY EYES, THEIR CRUEL, LIPSTICKED MOUTHS... EEK!



I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ANY STARS EXCEPT SPIKE LEE, WHO SEEMED TO BE WANDERING AROUND BY HIMSELF LOOKING LOST. I THOUGHT OF SAYING SOMETHING TO HIM BUT DIDN'T...



I LOVE WHAT I DO—I REALLY DO—IT'S GREAT TO BE IN THIS INDUSTRY—

A BILLION PEOPLE ARE WATCHING THIS SHMUCK...

UP IN THE THIRD BALCONY

A black and white cartoon illustration. In the center, a man with glasses and a bow tie, wearing a suit, is shown from the chest up. He has a pained or angry expression, with his mouth open as if shouting. Above him, a rectangular sign with the word "APPLAUSE" in large, outlined letters is mounted on a wall. The sign is being hit by a mallet, which is also hitting the man's head. The word "CLAP" is repeated multiple times in a circular pattern around the sign and the man. In the top right corner, a speech bubble contains the text "FUCK YOU - I WON'T DO IT!". The background is filled with radiating lines, suggesting a chaotic or intense scene.

I CAN'T BREATHE... GOTTA GET OUTA HERE...

PLOP

BORING DANCE ROUTINE

WHEW!
TOMORROW I
CAN GET OUT
OF HERE!

... KEEP AS FAR AWAY
AS YOU CAN FROM THE
PLACES WHERE THEY
GATHER TO CHEAT AND
INSULT ONE ANOTHER,
TO EXPLOIT ONE ANOTHER... OR TO MOCK ONE
ANOTHER WITH THEIR
FALSE GESTURES OF
FRIENDSHIP.

—THOMAS MERTON

HEY, I RENTED A COUPLE A' MOVIES FOR TONIGHT.' I THOUGHT WE COULD RELAX AN'—

MOVIES? DID YOU SAY... MOVIES?

SLOWLY I TURNED...
STEP BY STEP... INCH BY INCH...

END