

FIFSTA

THE MAG FOR MEN AND NAUGHTY LADIES

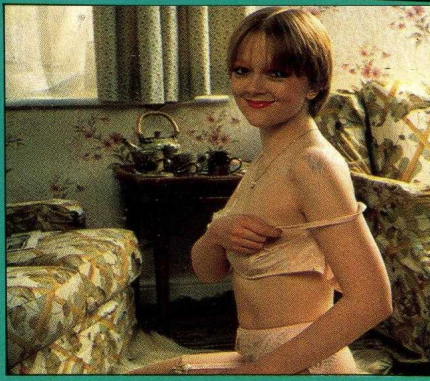
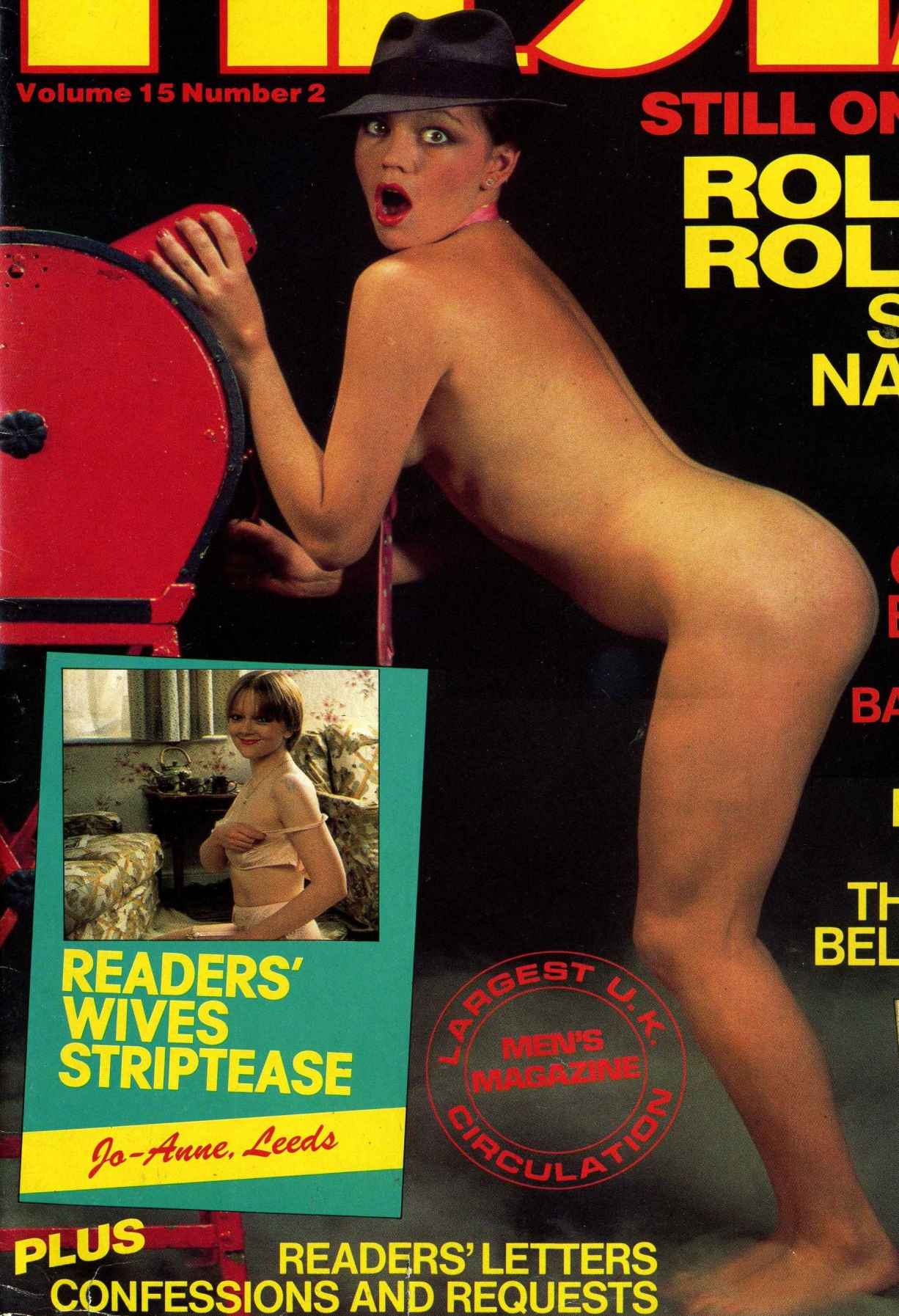
Volume 15 Number 2

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**ROLL UP!
ROLL UP!
SEE THE
NAUGHTY
NAKED
LADIES**

**CALIGULA
EXPOSED-
ALL THE
BACK SCREEN
BALLYHOO!**

**DON'T MISS
HULA-
THE BRIXTON
BELLY DANCER**



**READERS'
WIVES
STRIPTease**

Jo-Anne, Leeds



**PLUS READERS' LETTERS
CONFESSIONS AND REQUESTS**

FIESTA

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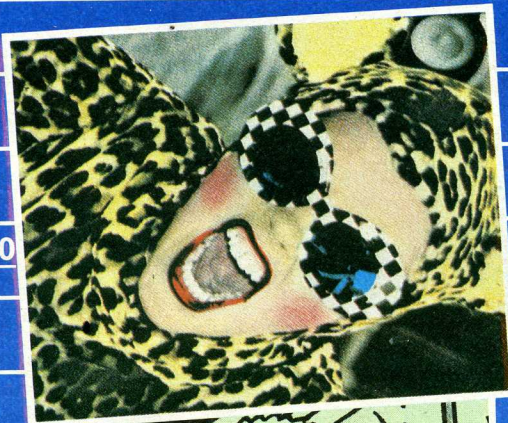
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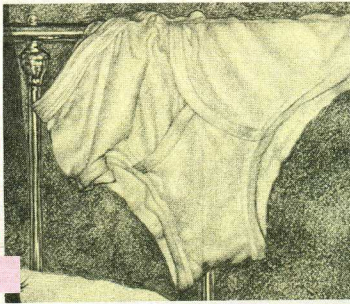
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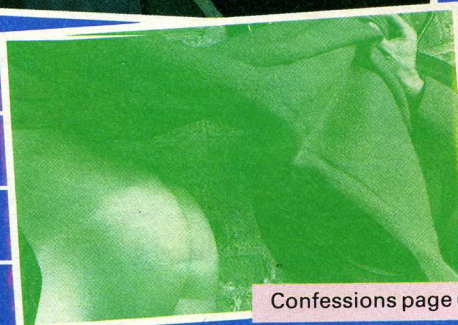
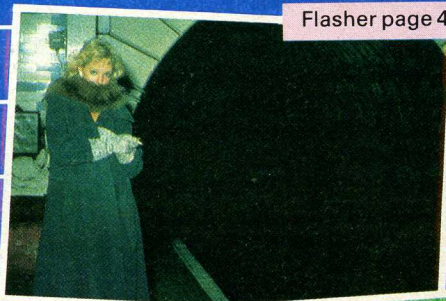


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CALIGULA COMETH (THOUGH NOT AS MUCH AS IT USED TO)

Lady Chatterly's Lover, Last Exit To Brooklyn, Last Tango In Paris – and now Caligula...The dividing line between art and obscenity is a very thin one indeed, changing almost from day to day. The newspapers which stir up public affront at the latest attack on decent Christian society one day are disagreeing with themselves the next. Now it's Caligula, the Roman epic of lust, power-mania and butchery that they're all screeching about. Art or obscenity? The age

old question.

Producer, Penthouse boss Bob Guccione wouldn't even let the press in for a preview, so scared was he of honest opinion. Instead he took full advantage of the ill-informed and titillating rumours in the popular press. That's his free publicity.

But Fiesta's film buff, Bobby Dupea, saw it over a year ago in Cannes. Here we bring you his frank comments on the film behind the headlines...

AND SO, it's here. The 'obscene' film I never expected to see opening in puritanical Britain in any shape or form: cut, uncut, club screenings only, general release or on open video-cassette sale. But my goodness, here it comes (though not as often as it used to) – *Caligula*, the multi-million-dollar epic that set out to give hard-core porno an elegant name. And only just failed...by the merest of pubic whiskers.

By now, you've seen the headlines. You've heard all, or most of the rumours. You've probably even read the horny novelisation. Now for the truth. Let's see what's left of the movie. Not, as they say, a lot.

Not, come to that, that I'm supposed to be able to write about the film. The producer, Penthouse chief Bob Guccione, banned any Press screenings...18

months too late in my case. I first saw the film when he first unveiled it to the world during the Cannes festival of 1979. I've also seen the version he's running in Paris which is, give or take the odd snippet, the same as is now unleashed upon Britain.

And so, despite Mr Guccione's holier-than-thou view about British journalists, I can comment on the film(s). And I will. First off, let me say that what you see in Britain is more *Cal* than *Caligula*. A much cut, whitewashed, not to say downright castrated adaptation of the lusty original.

If Mr Guccione wishes to impugn my abilities to discuss his work (and it is all his now, since sacking his chosen director, photographing extra scenes and wholly re-editing Tinto Brass' original

format), I can only do likewise and impugn Guccione's method of appeasing the foul British hypocrisy regarding sex films – whether full-blown epics like this one, or the latest Black/Yellow/Pink/Green Emmanuelle rip-offs.

Obviously Guccione wants to earn all his money back, and as many times over as he can manage. But he should have held out, fought our archaic censorship, rented his own theatre, turned it into a club if necessary – and, dammit, finally broken the back of the Establishment which is still banning hard-core films in normal cinemas. He's right when he complains that British critics may not like his film – but then they've not seen it.

The original (close on three hour) version had some of the finest porno action ever filmed, and utilised its hard-core in a

winning fashion of gradual exposure. First a little...then a lot. Whether real fucking and sucking is offensive, obscene or just plain nasty is a debate I don't need to get into here – obviously it's not so for Fiesta readers.

My argument is that Guccione should have gone to court to win the freedom to show this film, uncut, as he has done in various American courts. He would then have won our respect. become the champion of our civil rights. *Caligula* could have been to movies what *Lady Chatterly's Lover* was to books. Guccione would have written himself into history and finally paved the way for porno films (high-class like his, or the average dross) in this blighted isle. Instead of which, he simply protects his investment by releasing a tamer version of the film, and then has the unmitigated gall to say the Press won't understand it.

Wrong, Mr G. The film, or what's left of it, we can understand; it's your purely financial motives in releasing this cut-down version of it, that we don't exactly appreciate. And in typical British censorship fashion, it's the sex that's gone...not the extremely bloody violence!

What you get in the British *Caligula* is the same story, of course, as any other version around, most of which is, I would suppose, historically (at times, hysterically) accurate. It's the rise and rise and fall of the house pervert of ancient Rome, Caligula. Also known, would you believe, as Little Boots. Peter O'Toole's crone of a Tiberius calls him 'the viper in Rome's bosom' while John Gielgud's Nerva simply dubs him 'that reptile'.

We see how Cal kills off his syphilitic grandfather, Tiberius, in order to take over as 'emperor of Rome, lord of the world'...and rather than wait until death for the ultimate honours, defies himself while alive and (un)well on the throne.

"I am all man and I am no man. Therefore, I am a god."

God of lust, of course. For with or without his cinematic gonads (not that Malcolm McDowell ever showed his), Caligula is no saint. Your average Roman epileptic, incestuous, bisexual, nutter is what he is, totally corrupted long before he steals total power.

He fucks anyone that moves. His sister, Drusilla. His wife, Caesonia, 'the most promiscuous woman in Rome' (who eventually gives birth to Caligula's baby in public, rather like a Talk of the Town cabaret show). Plus any other lady or gent with an open orifice within handy reach. Including taking both cherries of a young couple on their wedding night. Wifey first, with a fistful of lard to ease rear entry. Then, it's hubby's turn...

Now, none of all this was hard-core to begin with, which is why it stays (or most of it) on British screens. The really hot stuff – simply splendid, lustrous hard-core action it was too – remains on view in America. Freddy Laker's number is in the phone book, chaps...

From the outset – filming began in Rome way back in 1977 – *Caligula* was to be the first super-duper sexually explicit ten-million-dollar epic. Certainly, it's one



slice of history that calls for such sexual frankness. But to keep the record (and rumours) straight, one has to point out that none of the illustrious star names – and the film is brimming over with them: Malcolm McDowell, Peter O'Toole as Tiberius, Helen Mirren as Caesonia, and as mentioned, even Sir John Gielgud – none of these took part in any of the wall-to-wall fuck 'n' suck set pieces.

They do (hmm! I mean they did) seem to walk in and around and among it all. But that was probably more due to the magic of movie-making. Clever cutting can place people into scenes they were not shot in.

Malcolm McDowell has admitted that he was asked to join in the hard-core fucking. He refused. Even so, he gets damned near it at times. Particularly with the wedding night couple. He also pisses (or appears to) rather well...

With the stars refusing to bare all – or if baring it, refusing to use it – the film's porno highlights starred the extras, chosen one hears for reasons of girth of cock, balls and accommodating cunts. Their warming lack of inhibitions were

featured in various orgy and brothel scenes, mixing gay and hetero copulation, fellatio and cunnilingus...plus one sequence of a bunch of guys wanking to ejaculation in order to provide a sperm shampoo for Adriana Asti. "Is it any good for hair?" asks Caligula, passing by.

That these – and many other – sex-travagant scenes had all the hallmarks of a Penthouse centrespread come (literally) to life, and depicted that which is fairly commonplace in positioning and gyrating for any good American hard-core film, is perhaps hardly a justifiable complaint. The Ancient Romans screwed in much the same way as we do, I suppose – though one wonders if the birds at court were such absolute stunners. That is (was?) one undeniable fact about Guccione's girls – I've never seen such incandescent beauties fucking and sucking in porno scenes before. They were all...adorable!

Whatever I can find wrong with the film – well, it's not the film that's at fault, so much as the acting; and it's rather disconcerting to suddenly hear the dubbed voices of our King of the Commercials,



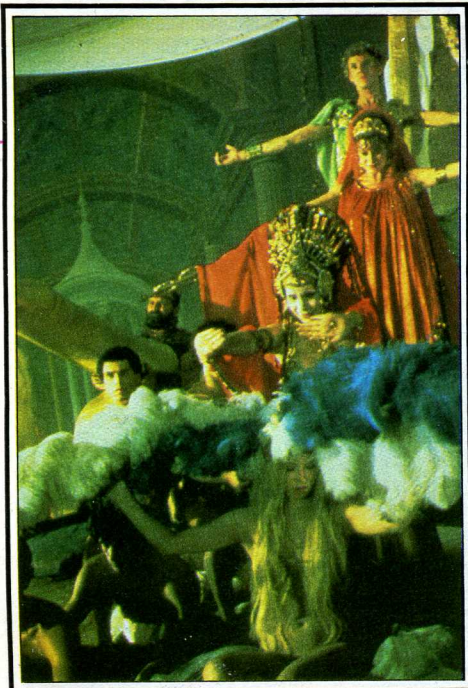
Patrick Allen, and later on, Joss Ackland, pouring out of Italian mouths...not to mention *The Onedin Line's* theme tune forever welling up on the soundtrack – it was the hard core action that saved the day.

Minus the real sex, *Caligula* is like Wimbledon without Borg – rather mundane and average. We've seen it all before, even if in Cecil B. De Mille's day the birds sported bikini-style costumes instead of letting everything hang out. De Mille must be churning in his grave – with envy. He did his (hypocritical) best about Rome sex in his Biblical schmepics. But this is 1980 and magazines like *Penthouse* and, of course, *Fiesta*, are more explicit now – and so, therefore, is, or was, *Penthouse's* film.

Since sacking his director, Bob Guccione apparently restructured the movie – with his London editor, Russell Lloyd. Guccione also shot new porno scenes, probably for reasons of swopping his elegance for director Tinto Brass' love of sheer vulgarity. The result was a film Guccione should have gone to court to defend.

Unlike the porno norm, sex was never shoved down your throat by Guccione. He paced and spaced the magnificently staged hard-core superbly throughout the movie. At first, just a little to make you think you'd imagined it...later, longer glimpses...then, much more explicit and close-up sex-play...until the ripe royal ejaculatory climax of a blow job in the staggering scenes of *Caligula's* Imperial Brothel, when he has all the senators' wives charging for it for once, to assist Rome's depleted economy. (How about it, Mrs T?).

And so, here was a porno film that was the perfect number to introduce hardcore to backward countries like Britain. The porno had a point (if you'll pardon the pun) in such a decadent tale. The sex, in fact, was not so much gratuitous as germane, and first-time porno audiences would have warmed to it and thoroughly



appreciated the majesty of the scenes.

That's why Bob Guccione should have fought to release his original version here (and made even more money!). As in America, he would have had better fortune in any court than someone trying to release, say, the tawdry sex in *Deep Throat*. *Caligula*, after all, has history on its side, plus a great deal of cinematic art. Or it did. What Britain is left with is...well, just a rather long trailer for what might have been. John Hurt's tele-Caligula was more decadent and sexier...

The film's acting is uniformly bad, as is always the case when a foreigner directs in English. O'Toole, looking rather like the morning after *Macbeth's* opening night before, is passable; Gielgud, superb; Helen Mirren, okay; but Malcolm McDowell is terrible in the title role. Having refused to indulge in hard-core sex, he simply indulges himself in a weak re-run of his Alex from *A Clockwork Orange*. Or, given his character's sexual proclivities, perhaps one should say *A Clockwork Banana*...

THE STAR

Maria Schneider stormed out of *Caligula* because of the heavy sex trip. Why she was so surprised about the sex angle is anyone's guess. No version of *Caligula's* life (not even his chapter in BBC-TV's, *I, Claudius*) could be shot in a Disney manner. Maria was, as it happened, anking a lot of movies at the time, and usually connected with sex. Obviously, because of her buttery *Last Tango* image, Bob Guccione felt she'd agreed to hardcore. She didn't. She quit. We should thank her.

By leaving, Maria actually contributed the greatest service to the untidy movie. More so than Tinto Brass, the director, whose credit now reads 'principal photography by...' More so than Gore Vidal, the scriptwriter, whose name no longer appears on the credits at his insistence; even though his script is better transferred to the screen than the over-campy Hollywood version of his *Myra Breckinridge* book was. And yes, more so than Bob Guccione, for all his porno additions...

In leaving *Caligula*, Maria Schneider allowed Tinto Brass to bring in as the new Drusilla, the star of his previous censorial headache, *Salon Kitty* – the British stunner, Teresa Ann Savoy.

Teresa used to type letters in a London office concerned with selling TV sets. Next, she became a salesgirl in a Chelsea boutique. By 17, she'd saved enough money for an Italian holiday – and never came home.

A photographer found her, shot her nude for *Playmen* magazine. Italian director Alberto Lattuada saw the spread – and spread she was – and signed her for his erotic movie, *La Bambina*. By 1975, Tinto Brass put her in erotic Nazi number, *Salon Kitty*, then Miklos Jancso starred her in *Private Vice and Public Virtues* – as a hermaphrodite, complete with bare tits and a cock!

Without any drama training, Teresa

Ann – London born, July 18, 1956 – acts all the big names off *Caligula's* steamy screen. She has the very musk of eroticism about her every limb. She gets into her role – as Cal's incestuous sister – more deeply than any of her colleagues tackle their parts. She's into the drama of it, and above all the sex. She's never shy and hides nary a vaginal crack as she rolls in bed with McDowell, bum up, legs akimbo, showing her pubes match the hair under her arms. Teresa Ann is a supremely erotic actress and one cannot help feeling that she would have gone all the way if her co-stars agreed.

Sadly, they did not. Which is why in her grandstand number – in bed together with her brother and his wife (Helen

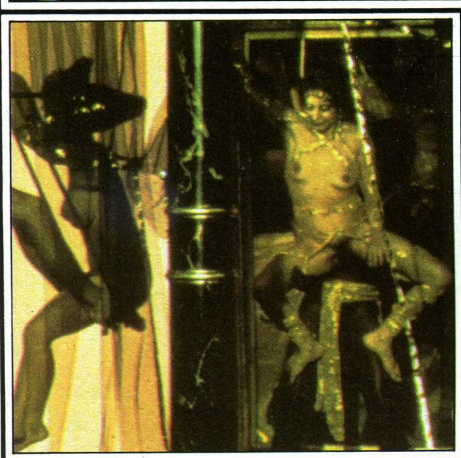
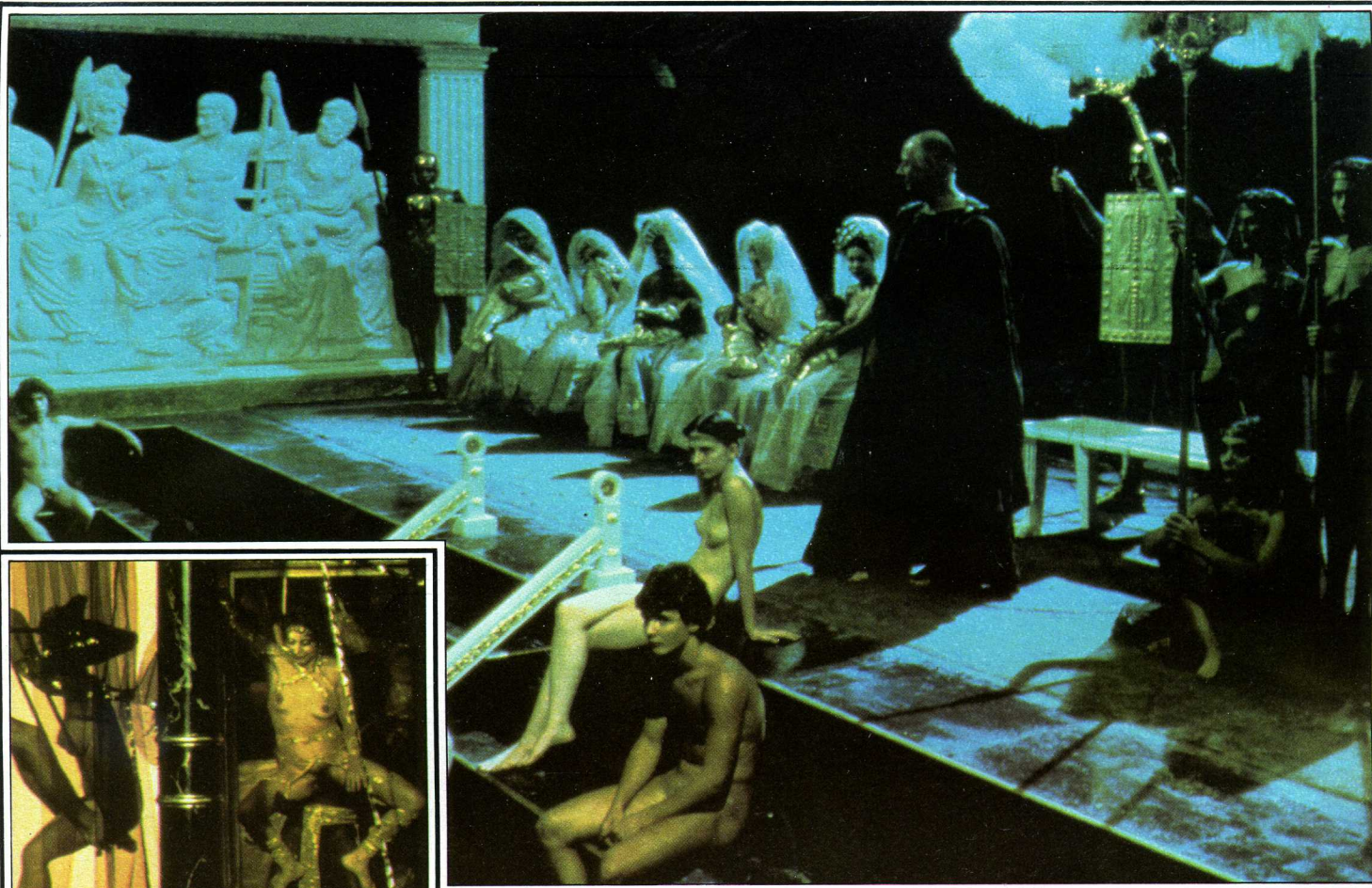


Mirren) – the camera moves away to a hole in the wall where two spying maid-servants are so turned on by watching the trio's supposed ensemble fucking, that they perform (or did in the original) one of the horniest Lesbian encounters ever put on film. As good as these gymnastic chicks are, Teresa Ann Savoy would have been better. She is the revelation of the film...a new wet-dream hot momma for us all...

THE DIRECTOR

Just how much of the *Caligula* hotspots were shot by Tinto Brass, and how much added by Bob Guccione and Giancarlo Lui has never been revealed. Given Brass' erotic track-record, I would think he did most of it. Hence, he still can't understand why he was bounced off the film while in the middle of editing it in London.

"They came to me," he says of how the



movie began...and understandably so after the success of *Salon Kitty*, and previous hot numbers like *Heart In Their Mouths*, *Black On White* (made in London), and the pair of movies which brought Vanessa Redgrave and Franco Nero together as co-stars and eventual lovers – *Dropout* and *Vacation*.

Ironically, Giovanni Tinto Brass has had more rows with his producers than censors. *Salon Kitty*, for example, was fairly butchered by its producer long before Tinto's rows with Guccione on *Caligula*. Tinto fights, goes to court, and then moves on to his next sex movie.

"I like pornography," he has stated. "Because it's vulgar. I like everything that's vulgar. With *Salon Kitty*, I set out to make a kind of vulgar film...With *Caligula*...but no, I don't want to give them publicity now. I just exalt pornography because it is a vulgar way to approach the problem of (screen) sex. Just take it for what it is, without any taboo, any surprise, any guilt-complex – anything. Sex is serious. As serious as eating. Sex is everything. There can never be enough."

THE BAN

At the eleventh hour in London, *Caligula* producer Bob Guccione cancelled any British Press screenings of his film. His reasons, in a too-clever-by-half nutshell, was that his movie was so unique the Press could not understand it, or even

like it – only the public would.

Furthermore, Guccione added, "Because of its extremely controversial nature, its impact and general history, I believe that it would exceed the average journalist's ability to remain objective and therefore fair in his comments."

Fair to whom, I wonder? To Guccione...or poor old Caligula himself?

Brave man, Mr G. He's asking for a barrel or two of the best Fleet Street shit to be poured over his Italianate head and hefty gold necklaces. I think his move was unwise, may well have done his film more harm than good. But, when all is said and done, it is *his* film and he can obviously do exactly as he likes with it. (Which he already has by cutting it rather than invest in any court actions).

Guccione has, though, a rather better record in movies than, say, Playboy's chief bunny, Hugh M. Hefner. Most of the cinema (as opposed to TV) movies Hef has put money into have flopped badly: *The Naked Ape* and Polanski's *Macbeth*. Guccione chose more carefully. His investments include Polanski in better form with *Chinatown*.

So maybe he has a point when he says, "the public should have the opportunity to fully experience this landmark motion picture for themselves."

On the other hand, the real truth of the ban is (a) trying to avoid bad reviews and (b) too many disclosures that the film is not all that it was, that the hard-core is gone apart from the tiniest and out-of-focus glimpse of cock-sucking. News of such castration could lose Guccione a few extra bums on seats. Well that's his

fault. As I say, he could have fought legally to show the full film – and put thousands more bums on seats as a result.

He was, though, too late to stop me running off at the mouth. I saw the film at Cannes in 1979. Not an event I can easily forget. Friday May 11, 1979, was one helluva day: *Apocalypse Now* in the morning...*Caligula* in the early evening! You could go blind that way...

Guccione's London ban is a form of censorship which demeans both the film and its producer. On the other hand, if only David Sullivan would allow us the same privilege of being banned from his trash, life would smell so much more sweetly. ♣

CALIGULA'S HOT NIGHTS

Caligula seems to be a new slang word for money in Italy. Bob Guccione has released these few colour shots from the film to his British distributors – with the understanding that if they lose any, they'll stump up \$1,000 per photo. And the makers of a Carry On *Caligula*-type comedy rip-off in Rome – *Caligula's Hot Nights* available in both hard and soft core versions – recently offered us 110 colour shots from the movie for a fee of \$2,500. We refused. Well, Teresa Ann Savoy wasn't in that movie...!
