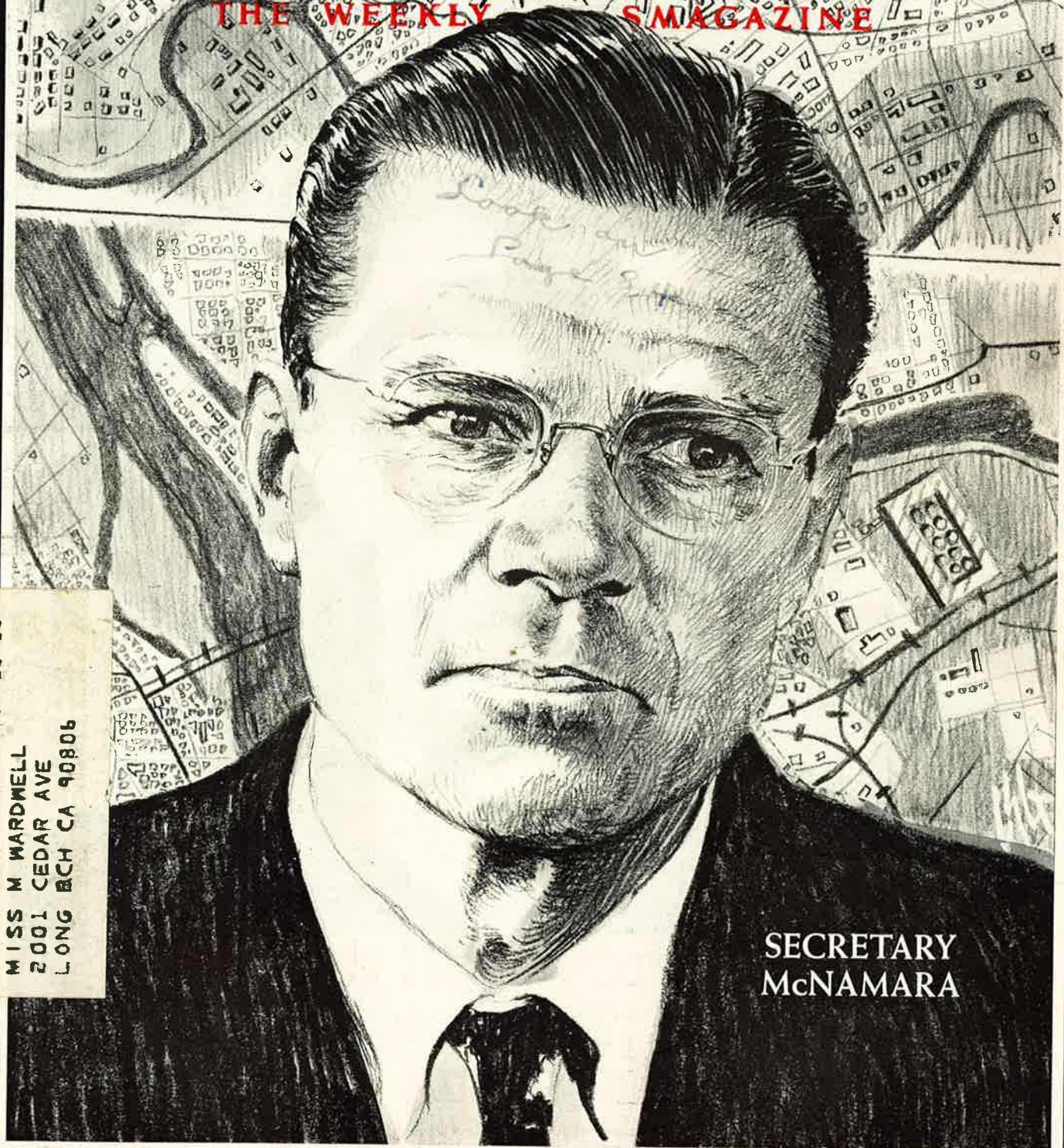


TIME

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Raising the Price of Aggression



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MISS M WARDWELL
2001 CEDAR AVE
LONG BCH CA 90806

Non-Compos Comedy

A Fine Madness. "He's writing this big poem, and it just won't come out," says Joanne Woodward, pleading with Psychiatrist Patrick O'Neal to take an interest in her husband's work. As the sleazy wife of a roughneck Greenwich Village poet, Joanne belts out her best lines with actressy intensity and proves only that she is too bright a blonde to play dumb. Somewhat more at home with his role—a poet with a sex life as breezy as James Bond's—is Sean Connery, who displays some proof of his versatility by shouting a lot. While earning a buck on the payroll of Athena Carpet Cleaners, Connery seduces a private secretary in a private office that slowly fills up with suds. Sent away to a mental rest camp where Lady Psychiatrist Colleen Dewhurst spoils him with massage, he reaps greater benefits from hydrotherapy by coaxing Dr. O'Neal's neglected wife (Jean Seberg) into a ripple bath.

Though the resemblance of *Madness* to *Bondomania* is otherwise superficial, Director Irvin Kershner savors the joke to excess. The rest of Elliott Baker's screenplay, adapted from his own 1964 novel and filmed with careful fidelity on the seedy side of Manhattan, is a fitfully funny satire based on a portrait of the artist as the natural enemy of all Establishment norms. This voguish half-truth worked well enough in book form, where nearly every character was a well-managed mass of lunatic impulses. In the movie, everyone seems to be racing against the threat of imminent condensation. Director Kershner pounces upon an idea without developing it, and his commendable desire to do a different sort of comedy boils down into more of the same old wheeze—just another nonconformist nut matching wits with even nuttier psychiatrists.

Heels in the Air

The Blue Max. Vintage air-planes are currently among the most accomplished scene-stealers in movies. Grouped like angry mosquitoes in the grey-green skies over France during World War I, a handful of meticulously reconstructed biplanes and triplanes give this ambitious battle drama its only real sting. Goggled pilots, scarves tucked into their leather daredevil jackets, scramble aloft to trigger a full-throttle facsimile of the epic aerial combats of 1918. Of course, as members of an enemy German squadron, the men in their flying machines are shown to be less than magnificent.

Hopping purposefully in and out of the open cockpits is Anti-hero George Peppard, cast as Stachel, an upstart fly-boy whose killer instincts devastate both friend and foe before he can claim "the Blue Max," pilot slang for Germany's equivalent of the Medal of Honor.* In the novel by Jack D. Hunter, Stachel was a murderous, alcoholic blackmailer, but a trio of adapters has softened the edges of Peppard's role, following the unwritten Hollywood law that a hero-heel must be boyish, winning, and a terror abed. As a nod to custom, death in the last reel redeems him.

As Peppard's fellow pilots, Jeremy Kemp and Karl Michael Vogler convincingly uphold the glory of the German officer class, rattling off performances unalloyed with conventional tin soldiery and Prussian steel. Playing a hero-collecting countess who adds Peppard and Kemp to her trophy shelf, Ursula Andress is considerably hand-capped by high-cut period costumes, though she manages to slither out of them from time to time.

Diffuse and emotionally flat despite its expert airborne excitement, *The Blue Max* sets out to be a caustic essay on honor, ends up posing questions no more timeless and universal than Who will get Ursula? and Who will be the next ace to fell 20 British planes? The only way to help such synthetic melodrama to a climax is to reveal, once more, the startling news that the Kaiser's forces are about to lose World War I.

Surf's Up

The Endless Summer. To surfboard enthusiasts, a new wave film is an epic celebrating the cool of a bronzed athlete atop a ten-foot slab of polyurethane foam, shooting through a tunnel of sea-green water formed by a breaker's curl. "The ultimate thing in surfing is to be

* A tribute to German Aviator Max Immelmann, best remembered for the looping flight maneuver that bears his surname.



PEPPARD IN "BLUE MAX"
From biplane to bed.

covered up by the wave," says **Bruce Brown**, a blond, 28-year-old Californian who probably qualifies as the world's foremost exponent of pleasure before business. A Bergman of the boards, Brown makes his pleasures pay, and has pushed his income into a fun-filled six-figure bracket as producer, director, narrator and promoter of documentary movies about the idle life.

Summer, Brown's sixth film, is an uncritical ode to sun, sand, skin and surf that first came to light on the West Coast lecture circuit, proved its box-office potential with a splashdown in landlocked Wichita, Kans. Now audiences everywhere, surf-bored by the dry run of Hollywood's beach-party musicals, may relish the joys of *Summer* as it follows a pair of skillful California surfers, Mike Hynson and Robert August, on a three-month, round-the-world tour in search of the perfect wave.

The paradise found by two young men with almost nothing else on their minds is remote Cape St. Francis in South Africa, where the small, perfectly curling waves give a long, loose ride. From the shores of Ghana to Tahiti's black sand beaches to Hawaii's perilous "Pipeline"—the Mount Everest of surf-dom—chills and spills crowd onto the screen. Some are caught by a waterproofed camera that behaves like a frolicsome seal, nuzzling close enough to eye a surfer's footwork, or leaving the viewer breathless and upended under a cascade of angry white water.

As narrator, Brown sounds most at sea whenever he ventures a comment on activities ashore. Like any loquacious neighborhood hobbyist who has gone overboard for home movies, he mixes obtuse observations of native customs with exuberant how-dy-do's ("Say hello, Lance. Atta baby!") to some of his surfing pals visited along the way. Perhaps wisely, Brown leaves analysis of the surf-cult mystique to seagoing sociologists, but demonstrates quite spiritedly that some of the brave souls mistaken for beachniks are, in fact, converts to a difficult, dangerous and dazzling sport.

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