

Oaks

Matt Dillon is Chris Lloyd, a somewhat reckless kid who recently quit college to race cars. When his mother goes on a trip to Europe, she prods Chris into taking this opportunity to get closer to his father. But, as Chris knows, they have nothing in common.

His father, played by Gene Hackman, is a mild-mannered man who runs a lumber yard. He's the type of man who gets lost in his thoughts at stoplights and doesn't even notice when the light is green.

But when Chris' mother is kidnapped, he and his father race to Europe to save her. Chris soon learns things about his father that he never knew, the most dramatic fact being that he used to work for the CIA. As they work together, the two men develop respect for each other and become closer than ever.

At least that's what we're supposed to believe. This film was directed by Arthur Penn, who also directed the classic movie *Bonnie and Clyde*, but *Target* is a disappointment.

Dillon and Hackman are unconvincing and seem somewhat lost in the muddled cliché-ridden script. Even worse, is the point in the movie where several CIA agents are in an abandoned building, trying to set free a hostage who is wired with enough explosives to blow them all to kingdom come. Just as two of them are cautiously undoing some of the wires, another agent near the door screams out, "Get a move on, in there!"

Who in their right mind would yell during such a dangerous and delicate operation? Only one of the characters in the unthrilling thriller, *Target*.

By Michael Giltz

That Was Then, This Is Now

Center

In the first few minutes of this movie, the relationship between Bryon and Mark is clearly established. Mark (Emi-

lio Estevez) is a rebel. When they miss the city bus, he hotwires a car. Bryon (Craig Sheffer) reluctantly gets in.

We quickly understand that Mark is still a kid, and that Bryon is beginning to grow up. Bryon has a warm relationship with a girl, while Mark has none. Bryon has a job. Mark doesn't. Bryon doesn't enjoy driving around and getting drunk anymore. Mark does.

Unfortunately, this is a one-note movie that repeats the same thing over and over. We are given countless examples of how Mark is childish and Bryon is maturing. The examples might get more extreme, but that is *all* we get. The characters don't grow or change.

Because of this, the acting is tedious and dull. The one stand-out is Barbara Babcock (Grace Gardner of *Hill Street Blues*), who plays Bryon's mother.

The script cheats in two annoying

ways. First of all, Mark is living with Bryon and his mother. Why? We don't find out until halfway through the movie, and as it turns out, the reason is an important insight into why Mark acts the way he does. There is no reason to keep us in the dark.

Also, after telling us again and again that Mark is immature and that Bryon is growing up, Bryon is allowed to do something very stupid and childish, something completely out of character, right at the very end. Why? Was Bryon too boring as a goody-goody? Was Mark right all along?

If this film had been released before the recent spate of well-made films about teenagers, such as *The Breakfast Club*, it might have been thought of as a good try, an unsuccessful attempt to treat teenagers with respect. As it stands,

That Was Then, This Is Now can only be seen as unsuccessful.

By Michael Giltz

Bring On The Night

Center

Most rock films document a band at the height of its career, or during its farewell tour. *Bring On The Night* however, purports to show the birth of a band. It is a unique and interesting angle, but one that the film never really explores.

When the movie begins, Sting has assembled a crack back-up band, composed of the hottest young jazz musicians, to join him on his solo tour. The members are rehearsing for their first concert, which will take place in Paris.

We see them working out arrangements. We see them practicing songs. We see them laughing and joking. But we never get a feel for their relationships. Sting tells them what to do, and they do it. Do the other musicians have any creative input? How do they settle disputes? We never find out.

So, this is a pretty standard rock documentary. Still, for what it is, it's not that bad. There are some pretty funny moments, like when they break into an impromptu version of the theme song from *The Flintstones*. The concert is well-shot, and the conversations with the band members are revealing.

Surprisingly, Sting is not the most interesting person in the film. We already know him well, and no new revelations are found there. But, the



Emilio Estevez and Craig Sheffer in *That Was Then . . . This Is Now*

other musicians are an eclectic and fascinating group of people.

One of the back-up singers' first jobs was as a "phone girl" for a house of prostitution. Omar Hakim, the drummer, is an energetic and fun-loving person. Branford Marsalis, the very talented saxophonist, comes across as a dedicated and funny person who says whatever comes into his mind.

The two back-up singers, Dolette McDonald and Janice Pendarvis, also appeared in *Stop Making Sense*, another rock film that was a revelation, and has quickly become the standard by which all such movies must be judged. And compared with that film, *Bring On The Night* falls short.

By Michael Giltz