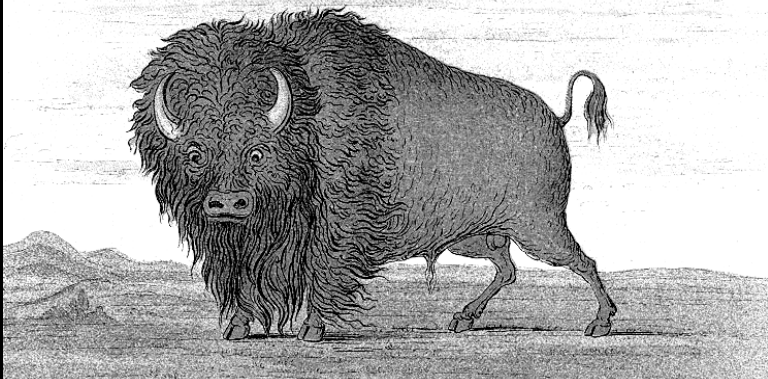


# The Buffalo Film Seminars



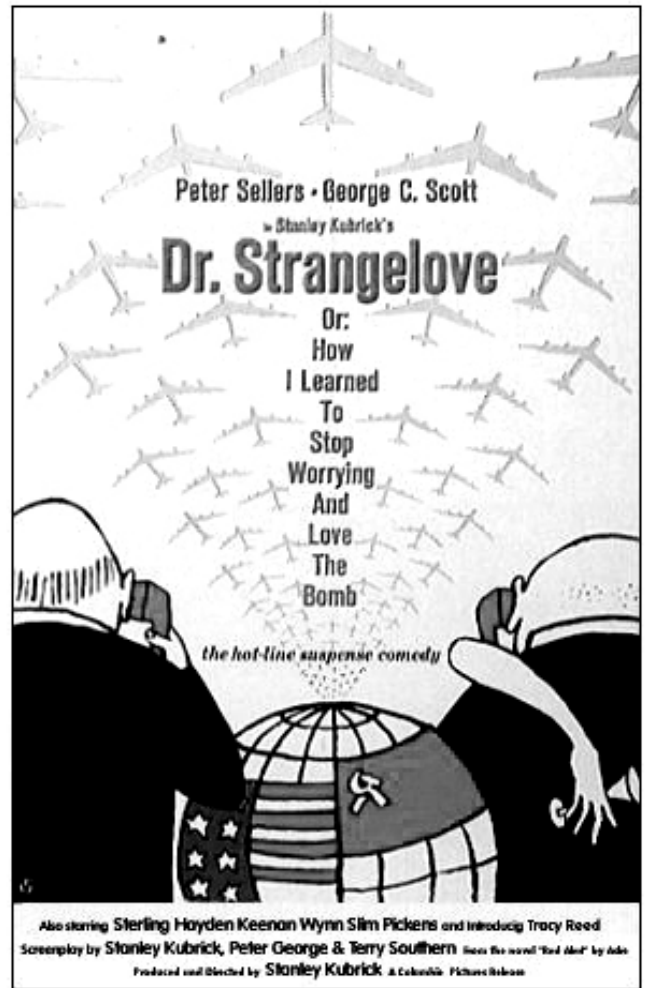
Conversations about great films with Diane Christian and Bruce Jackson

## Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964) 93 min

Produced and Directed by Stanley Kubrick  
 Script by Stanley Kubrick, Terry Southern and Peter George  
 based on Peter George's novel *Red Alert*  
 Original music by Laurie Johnson  
 Cinematography by Gilbert Taylor  
 Film Editing by Anthony Harvey  
 Production Design by Ken Adam  
 Special effect advisor....Arthur 'Weegee' Felleg  
 Travelling matte....Vic Margutti

Peter Sellers....Group Capt. Lionel Mandrake/President Merkin Muffley/Dr. Strangelove  
 George C. Scott....General 'Buck' Turgidson  
 Sterling Hayden....Brigadier General Jack D. Ripper, Commanding Officer Burpelson Air Force Base  
 Keenan Wynn....Colonel 'Bat' Guano  
 Slim Pickens....Major T.J. 'King' Kong, Pilot  
 Peter Bull....Russian Ambassador Alexi de Sadesky  
 James Earl Jones....Lieutenant Lothar Zogg, Bombardier  
 Tracy Reed....Miss Scott, Gen. Turgidson's Secretary

*Strangelove* was nominated for four Academy Awards: Sellers for Best Actor in a Leading Role, Kubrick for Best Director and Best Picture, and George, Kubrick and Southern for Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium. It fared better at the British Academy Awards: Best British Art Direction, Best British Film, and Best Film from any Source. Even though *Strangelove* is really a British film, the US National Film Preservation Board has selected it for the National Film Registry.



**STANLEY KUBRICK** (26 July 1928, New York, New York—7 March 1999, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, England), generally regarded as one of the greatest directors, made only 13 feature films. He so loathed the first of these (*Fear and Desire* 1953) that he withdrew it from circulation. The others are: *Killer's Kiss* 1955, *The Killing* 1956, *Paths of Glory* 1957, *Spartacus* 1960, *Lolita* 1962, *Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* 1964, *2001: A Space Odyssey* 1968,



*A Clockwork Orange* 1971, *Barry Lyndon* 1975, *The Shining* 1980, *Full Metal Jacket* 1987, and *Eyes Wide Shut* 1999.

He produced and shared the screenwriting credit on most of his films. He also edited and photographed *Killer's Kiss*, *Fear and Desire*, and two of the three short documentaries he did before he turned to features. There's a story that Kubrick was so dissatisfied with the work cinematographer Russell Metty was doing on *Spartacus*, that he told Metty to just sit there while Kubrick did his job. Metty did as he was told—and won that year's Academy Award for cinematography. Kubrick also did much of the "documentary" footage in *Dr. Strangelove*. "A film," Kubrick said, "is - or should be - more like music than like fiction. It should be a progression of moods and feelings. The theme, what's behind the emotion, the meaning, all that comes later." Kubrick was nominated for 12 Academy Awards for best screenplay, director, or picture, but the only one he ever got was for Special Visual Effects in *2001*.

**TERRY SOUTHERN** (1 May 1924, Alvarado, Texas – 29 October 1995, New York, New York) is best known as the novelist who wrote *Candy* (1968), but he also wrote other fiction and wrote or collaborated on the scripts of *End of the Road* (1970), *Easy Rider* (1969), *Barbarella* (1968), *Casino Royale* (1967), *The Loved One* (1965), and *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965).

**GILBERT TAYLOR** (12 April 1914, Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire, England) also shot *Dracula* (1979), the Israeli locations for *Damien: Omen II* (1978), *Star Wars* (1977), *The Omen* (1976), *Frenzy* (1972), *Macbeth* (1971), *The Bedford Incident* (1965), *Repulsion* (1965), *Ferry Cross the Mersey* (1965), *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), "The Avengers" (TV series, 1961), plus several dozen films none of us has seen or, in all likelihood, will ever see.

**PETER SELLERS** (Richard Henry Sellers, 8 September 1925, Southsea, Hampshire, England – 24 July 1980, London, England, heart attack) first came to public attention when he worked with Spike Milligan and Harry Secombe in BBC Radio's "The Goon Show" in the early 1950s. The Goons continued in tv and even made some films, including one of Bruce's favorite films: *The Mukkinese Battle Horn*. His bio in *Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia* reads, in part: "In 1959 he won the British equivalent of the Oscar for his performance as a labor leader in *I'm All Right Jack*, starred in Richard Lester's very funny short-subject *The Running, Jumping, and Standing-Still Film*, then showed off his versatility by playing three roles in the hilarious satire *The Mouse That Roared*. Multiple role-playing is an honored tradition among British comic actors, and Sellers apotheosized that tradition while simultaneously bringing it up to date on the big screen. His one-role-only turns of the early 1960s are rather colorless compared with his multifaceted Clare Quilty in Stanley Kubrick's *Lolita* (1962). The director was reportedly so taken with Sellers' abilities that he kept expanding the movie's scenario to accommodate them, and he subsequently had Sellers play a Milquetoast U.S. president, a pragmatic British soldier, and a mutant German scientist in *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964, an Oscar-nominated performance). After Kubrick, the director with whom Sellers fared best was Blake Edwards, for whom he played the indefatigably inept French detective Inspector Clouseau in the *Pink Panther* series (beginning with 1964's *The Pink Panther* and encompassing six films featuring Sellers, the last of which, 1982's *Trail of the Pink Panther*, Edwards assembled out of previously unseen footage). He was also memorable as a luckless Indian actor in Edwards' slapstick gagfest *The Party* (1968). When not in Edwards' movies, Sellers spent the late 1960s and early 1970s in faux-hip films of varying success, including *What's New, Pussycat?* (1965) and the James Bond spoof *Casino Royale* (1967). In 1979 he fulfilled a longtime ambition by playing Chauncey Gardener, a human tabula rasa, in the film adaptation of Jerzy Kosinski's novel *Being There*. The role won Sellers a great deal of acclaim from critics and audiences alike, and an Oscar nomination. It was a welcome return to form for Sellers, who'd been squandering his talent of late in a string of (mostly) awful films on both sides of the Atlantic. Unfortunately, this turned out to be something of a last hurrah; long troubled by a weakened heart, he died the following year."



**GEORGE C. SCOTT** (18 October 1927, Wise, Virginia – 22 September 1999, Westlake Village, California, ruptured abdominal aortic aneurism) was the first actor ever to refuse an Academy Award (1970 – for Patton). "The (Academy Awards) ceremonies," he said, "are a two-hour meat parade, a public display with contrived suspense for economic reasons." His biography from *Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia: An actor's actor*, George C. Scott has carved a solid reputation as a charismatic screen performer, although the body of his work is not nearly as imposing as memory would have us believe. Coming to the theater after service in the Marines, Scott became a familiar figure on stage and TV in New York in the late 1950s. His first film was *The Hanging Tree* (1959), a Gary Cooper Western, in which he showed promise as a supporting player. In fact, he received a Best Supporting Actor nomination for his role as the prosecuting attorney in his second picture, Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder* (also 1959). During that period Scott was riding high on Broadway in plays like "Comes a Day" and "The Andersonville Trial," and making prominent guest appearances on television as well. He earned another Oscar nomination for his supporting performance in *The Hustler* (1961), then costarred in *The List of Adrian Messenger* (1963), *Dr. Strangelove* (1964, a memorable turn as the gung ho Gen. Buck Turgidson), *The Yellow Rolls-Royce* (also 1964), *The Bible* (1966, as Abraham), and *Not With My Wife You Don't!* (also 1966). He also received critical acclaim for his starring role in the New York-based TV series "East Side, West Side," which lasted just one season, 1963-64. He starred in *The Flim Flam Man* (1967), as a roguish con artist, and *Petulia* (1968), as a recently divorced doctor, before taking on the role for which he's best remembered, the eccentric but brilliant General George S. Patton in *Patton* (1970). His galvanizing performance in this sweeping and intelligent biopic won him an Academy Award, but ever since *The Hustler* he'd openly disdained acting honors, and true to form, refused to accept the Oscar—the first actor ever to do so. Undeterred by this rebuff, Academy voters nominated him again the following year for his electrifying performance in Paddy Chayefsky's black comedy *The Hospital* (1971). That same year he played a delightfully deranged man who thinks he is Sherlock Holmes in *They Might Be Giants*. He also starred in a TV production of Arthur Miller's "The Price," for which he won an Emmy—which, naturally, he refused. This was Scott's busiest and most fruitful period. He starred in *The New Centurions* (1972), *Oklahoma Crude* (a rare and welcome chance to play comedy), *The Day of the Dolphin* (both 1973), *Bank Shot* (1974, another comedy), *The Hindenburg* (1975), *Islands in the Stream* (1977), *Crossed Swords*, the Hollywood parody *Movie Movie* (both 1978), and *The Changeling* (1979). He was particularly effective in *Hardcore* (also 1979), as a middle-aged, midwestern Calvinist drawn into the seedy world of urban

decay while searching for his runaway daughter. He also directed two films in which he starred with his wife Trish Van Devere, *Rage* (1972) and *The Savage Is Loose* (1974), but neither was especially well received. Since the early 1980s, Scott has assumed roles in feature films only infrequently, with *The Formula* (1980), *Taps* (1981), *Firestarter* (1984), and *The Exorcist III* (1990) as his only significant efforts, but he has continued to be a busy TV actor in specials and long-form dramas ....

**STERLING HAYDEN** (Sterling Relyea Walter, 26 March 1916, Upper Montclair, New Jersey – 23 May 1986, Sausalito, California, cancer) acted in war, gangster and adventure movies – and hated it. He was a real-life war hero and adventurer – and loved it. He got the "Hayden" after his father died and his mother remarried. His bio from IMDB: "Grew up in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., and Maine. Though very poor, attended prep school at Wassookeag School in Dexter, Maine. Ran away to sea at 17, first as ship's boy, then as doryman on the Grand Banks, as a seaman and fireman on numerous vessels before getting his first command at 19. He sailed around the world a number of times, becoming a well-known and highly respected ship's captain. At urging of friends, met with producer Edward H. Griffith who signs him to a Paramount contract. Fell for his first leading lady, Madeleine Carroll, and married her. Prior to Pearl Harbor, abandoned Hollywood to become a commando with the COI (later the OSS). Joined Marines under pseudonym "John Hamilton" (a name he never acts under), eventually running guns and supplies to Yugoslav partisans through the German blockade of the Adriatic, as well as parachuting into Croatia for guerilla activities. Won Silver Star and citation from Tito of Yugoslavia. Briefly flirted with Communist Party membership due to friendship with Yugoslav Communists. Returned to film work, which he despised, in order to pay for a succession of sailing vessels. As Red Scare deepens in U.S., he cooperated with the House Un-American Activities Committee, confessing his brief Communist ties. Ever after regretted this action, holding himself in enormous contempt for what he considered "ratting". Offered role of Tarzan as replacement for Lex Barker, but refused. Made headlines defying court order not to sail to Tahiti with his children following divorce decree. Published autobiography *Wanderer* in 1963, and novel *Voyage* in 1976, both to great acclaim. Cast as Quint in *Jaws* (1975) but unable to play due to tax problems. Died of cancer in 1986." **Some of his other films:** *Nine to Five* (1980), *Winter Kills* (1979), *King of the Gypsies* (1978), *1900* (1976), *The Long Goodbye* (1973), *The Killing* (1956), *The Last Command* (1955), *Johnny Guitar* (1954), *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) and *Virginia* (1941).

**Sterling Hayden said:**

I have yet to invest the first dime because I don't believe in unearned income. The question is inevitable: 'If you don't believe in taking what you don't earn, then how could you be reconciled to the astronomical figures [you make]?' I never was. Furthermore, I couldn't stand the work.

"There's nothing wrong with being an actor, if that's what a man wants. But there's everything wrong with achieving an exalted status simply because one photographs well and is able to handle dialogue.

**On his films:** Bastards, most of them, conceived in contempt of life and spewn out onto screens across the world with noxious ballyhoo; saying nothing, contemptuous of the truth, sullen, and lecherous.

**On his fling with Communism:** What did I care for labor? For racial discrimination? For civil liberties and the war between the classes? Oh, I

**Billy Wilder on Stanley Kubrick (from *Conversations with Wilder*)**

[Kubrick] has never made a bad picture. Each picture he trumps the trump.

The first half of *Full Metal Jacket* was the best picture I ever saw. Where the guy sits on the toilet and blows his head off? Terrific. Then he lost himself with the girl guerilla. The second half, down a little. It's still a wonderful picture. You know, if he does a thing, he really *does* it. But this is. . . this is a career to discuss. Every picture, he trumps the trump. These are all pictures any director would be proud to be associated with, much less make. At a picture like *The Bicycle Thief* [1947], you forget that this is your profession. You just get lost in the picture.

CC: What did you think of *Dr. Strangelove* [1964]?

BW: Oh, I love that. That's one of my favorite pictures, *Dr. Strangelove*.

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**Adrian Turner, Kubrick entry in *World Film Directors V. II. Ed. John Wakeman. The H.H. Wilson Co. NY 1988:***

At the age of 17 Kubrick was hired by *Look* as a staff photographer. During his 4 years there he enrolled as a nonmatriculated student at Columbia and attended screenings at MOMA. "I was aware that I didn't know anything about making films, but I believed I couldn't make them any worse than the majority of films I was seeing. Bad films gave me the courage to try making a movie."

Beginning his study of Kubrick, Alexander Walker wrote that "only a few directors possess a conceptual talent—that is, a talent to crystallize every film they make into a cinematic concept. It transcends the need to find a good story. An absorbing story. . . It is the talent to construct a form that will exhibit the maker's vision in an unexpected way. It is this conceptual talent that most distinguishes Stanley Kubrick.

Kubrick's next three films [after *Lolita*], made with ever increasing deliberation and secrecy, comprise a trilogy on humanity in the technological age. It begins with *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1963), scripted by Kubrick, Terry Southern, and Peter George from the latter's novel *Red Alert*. Originally

cared in my own fashion. I cared just enough to embrace these things as props, flailing away night after night at semi-drunken parties.

I wonder whether there has ever before been a man who bought a schooner and joined the Communist Party all on the same day.

I'm not a member of the Party. I'm not under the discipline or influence of the Party, not that I know of. What's more, I never was, even when I was a member.

**On acting:** You don't need talent to star in a motion picture. All you need is some intelligence AND the ability to work freely in front of the lens. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of bombers. I played kick-the-can with E-boats when all we had was a lousy forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Yet whenever I get a closeup in a nice warm studio, I curl up and die.

conceived as a "serious treatment of the problem of accidental war," like the novel, it modulated into satire when Kubrick found the theme too blackly absurd to be treated in any other way.

Nuclear catastrophe is unleashed by Air Force General Jack D. Ripper, who believes that his sexual impotence is due to a Communist conspiracy to pollute "his precious bodily fluids." Despite the efforts of a decent but ineffectual President to placate the Russians, despite all the technical fail-safe procedures and mechanisms, lunacy triumphs and Major "King" Kong (Slim Pickens) gleefully rides his great phallic bomb to the apocalypse.

Slim Pickens, Sterling Hayden as the impotent Ripper, George C. Scott as the virile Pentagon hawk Turgidson: they are all mad, and the maddest of all is Dr. Strangelove himself, a former Nazi scientist now employed by the Pentagon, a paraplegic with dark glasses and a mechanical arm constantly snapping into uncontrollable *Sieg Heils*. He is marvelously realized by Peter Sellers, who also plays a clipped RAF group captain and the President of the United States.

[Orson Welles in 1964 remarked that "amongst the younger generation, Kubrick is a giant."]

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**from *Stanley Kubrick Directs* expanded edition. Alexander Walker. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich NY**

This irony—that the sexual neuroses of two militarists should be at the heart of the holocaust—is only the first of the disparities that *Dr. Strangelove* points up between the smallness of the cause and the enormity of the result.

As the crisis grows, the scene expands—into the Pentagon War Room. This is one of the most functional and imaginative sets ever designed for film. It was created by Ken Adam, a German-born architecture student, whose designs for other movies did much to create the larger-than-life feelings of the James Bond films. It is no accident, therefore, that we see shades of Fritz Lang's work, especially *Metropolis*, in this cavernous

design.

[Turgidson] urges all-out war, figuring out the possible megadeaths like a lip-smacking computer. "I'm not saying we wouldn't get our hair mussed. I am saying only ten to twenty million people killed, tops, depending on the breaks." The speech, says Kubrick, is almost a précis of what has been published in military journals, even to euphemisms, not unlike "hair mussing," for human casualties. It would be difficult, and dramatically redundant, Kubrick observes, to try to top the statistical and linguistic inhumanity of nuclear strategists.

**Elaine Dundy, "Stanley Kubrick and *Dr Strangelove*," in *Stanley Kubrick Interviews*. Edited by Gene D. Phillips. U Miss Press, 2001:**

[on set during filming a conversation with Dundy, Associate Producer Victor Lyndon and Ken Adam the art director] Adam: "Stanley's been doing research on this film for two years now. He's so steeped in his material that when we first met to discuss it his conversation was full of fail-safe points, gyro-headings, strobe markings, and CRM-114S—I didn't know what he was talking about. You learn fast though. You have to, working with him. I like him. He's a funny combination of coldness and hypersensitivity. He walked by my wife on the set the other day as if totally unaware of her existence and then rang her that evening to apologize. When he's working, he just doesn't take in anything else.

**from Richard Schickel, *Schickel on Film*. Wm. Morrow & Co. NY 1987 "Stanley Kubrick The Unbearable Brevity of Being"**

Kubrick's virtuosity as a filmmaker, and the range of his subjects, have served to disguise his near-obsessive concern with these two matters—the brutal brevity of the individual's span on earth and the indifference of the spheres to that span, whatever its length, whatever achievements are recorded over its course. His works, whatever their ostensible themes, must always be seen as acts of defiance against this tragic fate.

On both points he has been quite specific. Here, for example, is Kubrick on the subject of individual mortality: "Man is the only creature aware of his own mortality and is at the same time generally incapable of coming to grips with this awareness and all its implications. Millions of people thus, to a greater or lesser degree, experience emotional anxieties, tensions and unresolved conflicts that frequently express themselves in the form of neuroses and a general joylessness that permeates their lives with frustration and bitterness and increases as they grow older and see the grave yawning before them." (This was, of course, the theme of the great, and greatly misunderstood *Barry Lyndon*, in which Kubrick time-traveled deeper into the past than he ever has into the future. . . .)

*Dr. Strangelove* is not to be read solely as a cautionary tale comically put, though it is surely a great comedy, one that we can see, two decades after its release, is going to hold up for a very long time. That is because it is a true black comedy, a comedy that proceeds from a bleak, but deeply felt, view of human nature and is not dependent for its best thrusts on its situation—the desperate attempt by the American high command to recall an atomic strike against the Soviet Union launched by a madman—or upon its satire of the already outmoded technology of the strike and the recall effort it details. What Kubrick is contemplating here are both the ironies of accident and the failure of rationalism to estimate the effects of chance on human endeavors and to build into its contingency planning compensation for these effects.

What he is saying in this film is that though man is sufficiently advanced to imagine a rational world and to build intricately rational systems for governing it, he has not progressed far enough in his evolution to rid himself of his irrational impulses or to rid society of those institutions and arrangements that are projections of that irrationalism.

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THE NEXT BUFFALO FILM SEMINAR IS TWO WEEKS AWAY...

No Buffalo Film Seminar next week (it's UB spring break), but we'll be back Tuesday, April 2, with Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel/Der Blaue Engel* 1930. This story of a professor out of his element was supposed to be silent star Emil Jannings' showcase entry into the talkies, but Marlene Dietrich ran away with the show. Her performance as cabaret performer Lola Lola in this story of Weimar decadence made her an international star. Paulene Kael called it "one of the most frightening movies ever made." This was originally released with German and English soundtracks. Most critics found the German version superior, because Jannings and Dietrich were both more comfortable in their native language. For many years, the only version available here was a shortened and badly subtitled print of the German version. We'll be viewing a print released only a few months ago, which restores the film to its original length and has far better subtitles.

#### JAZZ TALK THIS THURSDAY

Many American academics get all la-la and theory-goopy at the sound of certain French names: say "Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze" three times without stumbling and they'll be sure you're a smart and a decent person. French academics are far less interested in those guys than American empiricists, particularly Howard S. Becker, author of *Outsiders*, *Art Worlds*, and other books about the way people define, label, and locate themselves in their worlds. He's also a fine jazz pianist. Becker will be lecturing at the Albright-Knox at 7:30 p.m. next Thursday night, March 21. The title of his talk is "Jazz Places." During or after the talk he'll also play some music, with an upright bassist for company. The lecture/performance is free and open to the public. Highly recommended.

#### BUFFALO REPORT

Another issue of *Buffalo Report*, the twice-monthly web newsletter, is online. The issue contains an update on Peace Bridge expansion activities, two magnificently absurd pages from Kaleida Health's Hunter Group report, an architect's models of what a rehabilitated Children's Hospital might look like, a conversation between filmmaker Emile de Antonio and Bruce Jackson about one of Joe McCarthy's favorite snitches, and more. The site also contains earlier articles on Buffalo's health care crisis and an obit for Norman Mailer's trophy convict. To take a look, go to <http://buffaloreport.com>.

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