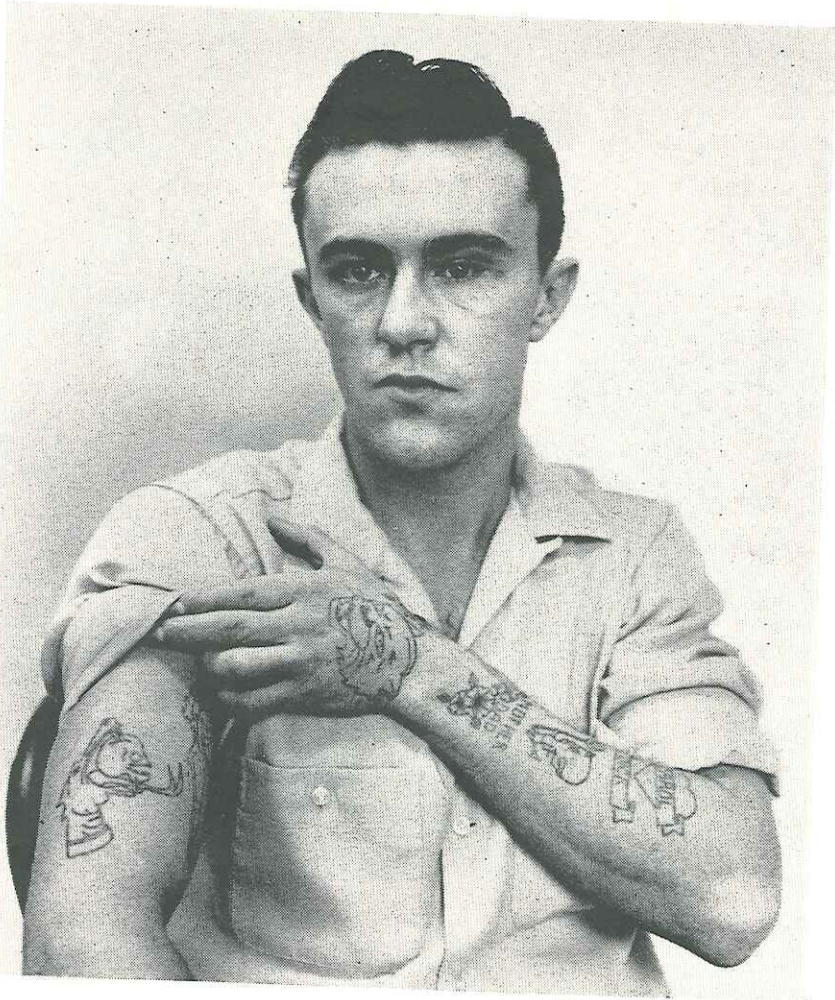
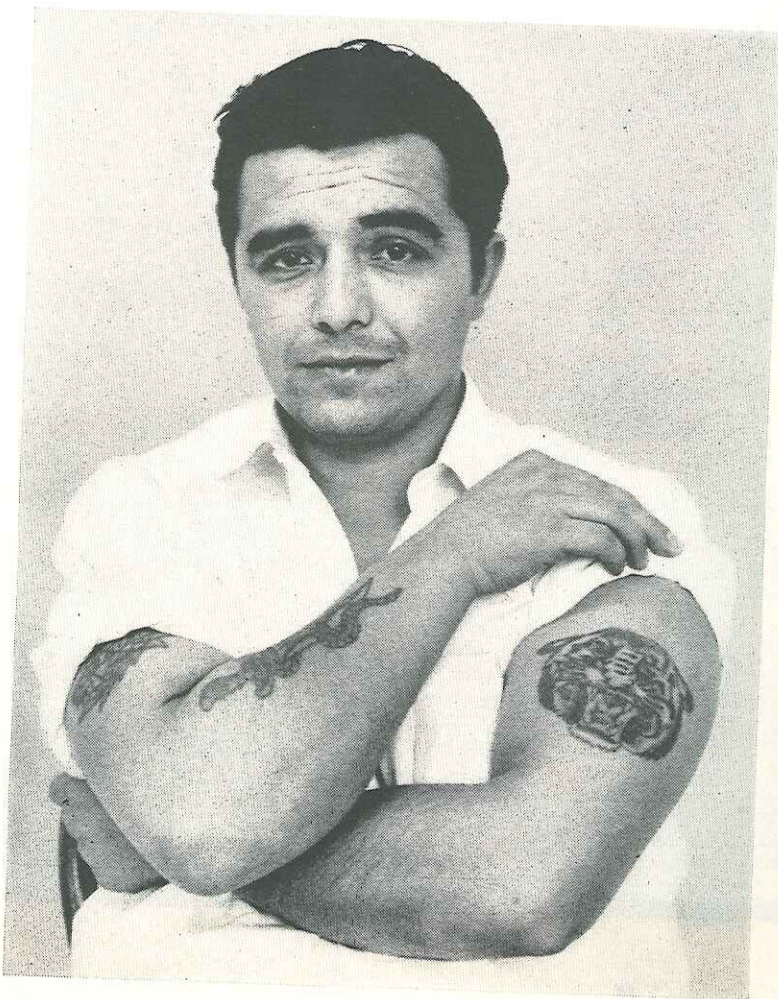


With eerie reality 'In Cold Blood' is filmed at scene of the murders

# A NIGHTMARE LIVED AGAIN



The resemblance to the real murderers they play strikes everyone who watches Scott Wilson and Robert Blake during the filming of *In Cold Blood*. Wilson (at left, standing) takes the part of Richard Hickock (above), the garage mechanic with a long record of petty offenses who plotted the Clutter murders. Robert Blake (left, seated) plays Perry Smith (right), the moody guitarist who was Hickock's cellmate in the Kansas prison while serving time for burglary. Both actors are experienced, but neither has had a previous big break, and they find themselves living their roles off screen as well as on (page 104A).



Like ghosts returned to the Kansas wheatfields, two young men go through the events that give the town of Garden City a macabre fame. The two look and behave eerily like the pair, Richard Hickock and Perry Smith, who on a November night in 1959 broke into the home of Herbert Clutter, in the village of Holcomb, 7½ miles outside town, and murdered him and three members of his family. That crime was the subject of Truman Capote's international best-seller *In Cold Blood*, which is now being made into a movie by Richard Brooks. Brooks shows a chilling insistence on re-creating reality. Not only do the actors who play the killers closely resemble their real-life counterparts but so do their victims. All play their roles in the places where the actual events occurred—in the same filling stations and pawnshops where Smith and Hickock stopped on their ride across Kansas to the Clutter farm, in the very rooms and basement of the house where Herbert, Bonnie, Nancy and Kenyon Clutter were killed. Levels of reality and illusion have piled up on the people of Garden City. First came the murders, then the trial of the killers, then the five-year wait for the hangings. A year after that it was all brought back by Capote's brilliant re-creation, first in a magazine, then in a hard-cover book and a paperback. And now comes the making of the movie, like a nightmare revived, affecting both the people who lived through the events and the actors.





In a men's room across the state from the scene of the crime, Actors Blake and Wilson play the scene in which Hickock and Smith discuss their plans to rob the Clutter home and leave "no witnesses." They expected a safe stuffed with cash but found no safe and only a few dollars. At right, the film re-creates the killing of Kenyon Clutter in the basement playroom of the Clutter house where the actual murder took place. And in the adjoining furnace room (*opposite page*) the film re-enacts the moments when Herbert Clutter was tied on a mattress box by Smith, who then cut his throat and, for good measure, shot him.



## ***In the basement of the Clutter***





**me, the murders re-enacted**

CONTINUED 101

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In the Christmas card portrait of the real Clutter family (above right) taken in 1951, Herbert Clutter stands next to his seated wife. Kenyon and Nancy are at left. Their older sisters, neither of whom was home the night of the murders, flank their parents. Above, like a double image of reality, is John McLiam, a veteran of movies and theater, who plays Herbert Clutter. At right are Paul Hough and Brenda Currin, senior drama majors at Kansas University, who portray Kenyon and Nancy.

## Double image of the victims





Richard Brooks directs a crowd of extras in Kansas City bus station where Hickock and Smith meet in the film. Brooks amazed his cast. "He can tell just by looking at you when you went to bed and if you had lunch," one actor said, "and gets things out of you you never knew were there."



Truman Capote assumes a proprietary stance in front of the post office in the village of Holcomb, where the Clutters picked up their mail. Since he described the dilapidated condition in his book, this building has been replaced by one more efficient and modern, not so picturesque.

## Actors and townspeople felt 'squirrely'

by JANE  
HOWARD

In *Cold Blood* is being shot with unknown actors and in black-and-white because, as Director Richard Brooks said, "Technicolor and famous faces would completely destroy the mood we're after." It was the real scene, oddly, that had an air of Technicolor extravaganza: the Clutter house had been painted a gala, incongruous pink and on its lawn, as the shooting proceeded, off-duty crewmen with elegant beards and Yul Brynner haircuts played touch football. Some actors awaiting their cues fed scraps of lunch to a new litter of mongrel puppies. The lady whose husband had been hired to feed the crew beamed as she talked of the Hollywood people. "Anymore," she said, "they're just like family."

But the amiability did not go deep. Periodically from within the gay pink house came the sound of gunshots as the Clutters, one by one, were murdered and re-murdered. Bobby Blake, looking frighteningly like Perry Smith, emerged from the house after a session, shuddering. "I feel so *squirrely* working in there," he said.

The townspeople felt a little squirrely, too, to have the horror elaborately brought back. Some of

them were disturbed that the aftermath of the tragedy was so profitable—motel revenues, for instance, were up one third. Some resented Capote's presence on the scene: "If he hadn't come along in the first place," one said, "we might be allowed to forget all this. Why'd he have to put us on the map this way?" "How else?" another resident asked. "For raising milo?"

The wife of the Clutters' minister, who has moved away because "staying in Garden City wasn't doing our nerves any good," says that reading headlines about the movie is "like having salt poured onto an open wound." Several people who came to watch the filming were pleased to act bit roles. But many scoffed at the proceedings. "Eight hours' work for three minutes of film," one sniffed. "It's about as fascinating as watching peaches being canned."

When the company first came to town, a nice Methodist lady walked up to Robert Blake on the street and said, "Hello there, *real* nice to have you in town." She was rewarded with a scowl. The townspeople all soon found that Blake and Wilson were deliberately unapproachable. "It's for sure," Wilson said, "that Dick and Perry never knew the Clutters or anyone else here, so we don't figure

CONTINUED





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## Haunting spirit of Perry Smith

CAPOTE CONTINUED

we should hang around with them either."

Brenda Currin, who plays Nancy Clutter, said, "There was a mutual embarrassment when we met Bobby and Scott. It was as if we were all apologizing to each other for being who we were." She and Paul Hough, who plays Kenyon, are both 21 and both hoping to graduate on schedule next month from Kansas University. They have toured with a K.U. drama troupe in Eastern Europe and Greenland and would like to try their luck in New York theater. Their real concern now is to portray the Clutters properly. "I have to remember," says Paul, "not to focus my eyes when they drag me from my bed. Kenyon couldn't see anything without his glasses."

Brenda rode Nancy Clutter's actual horse, Babe, a sway-backed 20-year-old, rented and returned to her old home for a couple of days. Brenda said, "The really spooky thing was that when I let her she'd automatically head right toward the same orchard where Nancy used to like to take her." For Brenda a moment of revelation came during the filming of the scene when Blake, as Perry, came into her room for a chat and to extinguish her life. "I felt more sympathy for Perry than I ever had in the book," she said. "It was a sudden, electric understanding."

In some ways the parallels between the lives of Wilson and Blake and the killers they play are arresting. Like Hickock, Wilson used to be very good at basketball. "I got a basketball scholarship to Southern Tech," he said, "but then I lost it when I got mononucleosis, so I hitchhiked from Atlanta to Hollywood and took lessons to get rid of my Southern accent." Until his present role he spent as much time being a parking lot attendant and carhop as before cameras.

Blake, like Perry Smith, had an itinerant, insecure childhood. As a child actor he traveled between New Jersey and Los Angeles and all around the country, got a bit part in *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and for a while played a lead role in the television series *Leave It to Beaver*. He plays the guitar and harmonica, as Perry did, and is subject to fits of temper. "I box

and lift weights," he says, "to get the anger out of my system." His motel room in Garden City, where he spent nearly all his free time, was extensively decorated. Taped to the walls were snapshots of his wife and children back in Los Angeles, and a big Magic-Marker picture captioned *The Viper—the stiller he lies, the more deadly he bites*. "I can't tell you what that means," he said, "but it has to do with my part."

Thoughts about Perry Smith keep haunting Blake. "All the time," he says, "I think how different Perry's life might have been if whatever talent he may have had for painting and music had been channeled like mine—and how easily I could have turned out the way he did. But in his whole life, except when he was a tiny baby, there was never any sunshine."

Perry Smith's spirit was also being evoked in another motel room across town—Truman Capote's, decorated with such extravagant oddments as a pair of jeweled cufflinks originally made by Fabergé for one of the czars. The author was lying there remembering the five Kansas years he spent preparing his book. "It's very strange," he said, "but the first thing every morning when I wake up, and the last thing every night, I think of Perry. You know, just a few days before he died he sent me a 100-page letter that ended, 'Life is the mother, death is the father; I'm going now to my father.'"

Not all Capote's recollections of his curious friend, the murderer, are melancholy. Earlier that day, driving past crowds of townspeople watching the actors, he suddenly began to laugh. "It isn't funny, really," he said, "but I can't help thinking how amused Perry would be if he were here now. You know how he used to like highfalutin language? How he'd correct anyone who said, 'He don't.' Well, one day when I was visiting him in Death Row, reminiscing about the day he and Dick were brought back to the Garden City courthouse to be tried, I told him how big the crowds were outside waiting for him. You know what he wanted to know? He asked me, 'Were any representatives of the cinema there?'"