

Entertainment Beachcombers finale

By BOB SPENCE
Thomson News Service
Nick Adonidas is about to walk away from the beach for the final time.

Beachcombers, Canada's longest-running television drama series, ends Dec. 12 with an hour-long special episode at 7 p.m.

All 12 regular characters will appear in the finale of the series that has been a staple of CBC-TV for 19 seasons. The number of viewers has been declining in recent years and the CBC announced before the season opened that this would be the final season.

In the finale, Adonidas (Bruno Gerussi) reveals his growing disenchantment with salvaging logs in Howe Sound, B.C. Because of the antics of some of the new breed of beachcombers, he questions whether beachcombing is still an honorable profession and whether it is time to move on.

The final episode was written by Marc Strange, one of the originators of the series.

Guitar strings will be vibrating on Hot Licks, a one-hour music documentary on Global TV.

Among the guitarists featured are the late Stevie Ray Vaughan (in his last major interview), Jimmie Vaughan, Carlos Santana, Bruce Cockburn, Joan Jett, Vernon Reid (Living Color), Alex Lifeson (Rush), Rick Nielsen (Cheap Trick) and Neal Schon (Journey, Bad English).

Hot Licks, which airs at 9 p.m., Dec. 17, was filmed in a number of North American cities.

If you want to relax over the holidays with a good mystery or action tale, there are many novels to choose from, including a pair set in the racing world.

Dick Francis, who went from being Britain's champion jockey to an award-winning career as a mystery writer, has another

engrossing tale, Longshot (Michael Joseph/Penguin). John Kendall, a starving writer who knows nothing about the horse-racing world, accepts a commission to write the biography of a trainer and finds himself enmeshed in a strange web of violence and murder.

William Murray, whom the New York Times Book Review rates higher than Francis (we'd reverse that order), also has a new racing tale, The Getaway Blues (Bantam). Shifty Lou Anderson (who, when not betting on horses, often plies his trade as a magician) takes a temporary job as a driver for a millionaire racehorse owner who is planning to commit suicide. His death would reveal something that others are prepared to go to any lengths to keep covered up.

Bernard Cornwell has a pair of interesting books out. He is best known for his historical novels - about an unorthodox British officer during the Napoleonic Wars. Sharpe's Waterloo (Collins), is the 11th novel in the entertaining and enlightening series. This novel has Sharpe struggling to survive at the historic Battle of Waterloo, where Wellington beat Napoleon.

And Michael Joseph/Penguin has released Cornwell's third contemporary novel - set in the violent money-saturated world of Colombian drug smugglers. Crackdown is a fast-paced novel with yet another unconventional hero.

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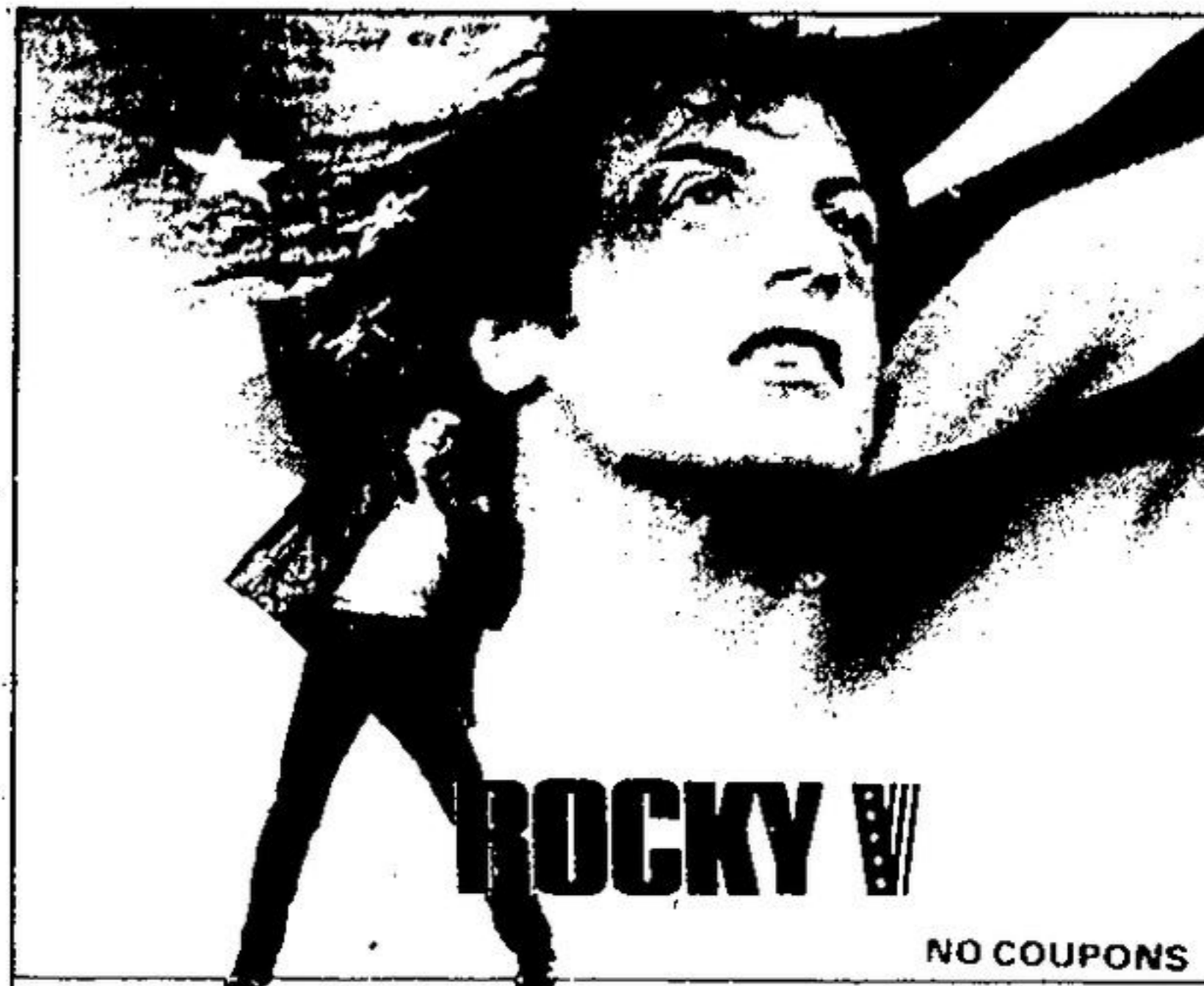
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