

# Film allows Clooney to spread creative wings

*Good Night, and Good Luck*

Starring David Strathairn, George Clooney, Patricia Clarkson, Robert Downey Jr., Frank Langella and Ray Wise

Written and directed by George Clooney

George Clooney is a gifted man — a terrific comic actor, a credible serious actor, bon vivant, well-mannered, well-liked in the industry and admired by the public. Well, he's something new now — a historical scholar, serious screenwriter and deft director.

His first such project is a tightly bound tale of CBS newsmen Edward R. Murrow and his struggles to tell the truth on air and take on the most feared man in the United States, Communist hunter Sen. Joe McCarthy.

The film is set in four rooms of the CBS news operation, circa 1953. There are a couple of scenes in a bar, but we never see outside. It's shot in unforgiving black and white and nearly every character smokes incessantly. The hysteria and confinement of the film echoes the growing paranoia spawned by the House of Un-American Activities Committee as it harassed citizens in that dark time.

Accusations of Communist sympathies led to ruined lives, job loss, loss of reputation and suicide. The phrase "naming names" took on a sinister tone.

But the film looks, not at the rattling out of friend, parent, neighbour and star, but why the McCarthy era even



Anne Brodie

### On Movies

existed, how the American democratic system broke down for a time and how a man with a platform helped fix it.

Mr. Murrow was one of the great heroes of the time, whose intellectual and measured critiques of Sen. McCarthy led to his downfall.

He is best remembered as the Person to Person celebrity interviewer, who chatted with Marilyn Monroe and her friends at their Connecticut home and Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz at theirs.

He secretly hated doing fluff pieces. He was intent on serving society through his medium, the TV show See It Now and in 1953, that meant revealing Commie hysteria for what it was — a knee-jerk response to the Cold War.

Mr. Murrow went on the air and said, "We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven in fear into an age of unreason."

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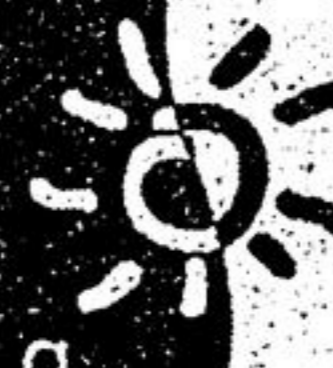
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