



XY looks at: THE CHRISTOPHER WALKEN APPRECIATION SOCIETY

The Christopher Walken Appreciation Society is a loose group of fanatics who feel, in the words of club President David Face, that "any film, no matter how great, could have been improved by the presence of Christopher Walken."

"I'm talking about *Citizen Kane*, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Godfather*, *The Big Chill*...all of the greats. All of these films lacked one thing...Christopher Walken, and as a result, they suffer," says Face.

Walken, an Academy Award-winner for his performance in Michael Cimino's 1978 blockbuster *The Deer Hunter*, is "our country's greatest actor. Bar none," according to Face.

"Personally, I don't get the point of making a film unless Christopher Walken is starring, or at least providing major support," says Face. "I love movies. I see all of the films, but really, I'm always more than a little disappointed when [Walken] is not in a film. I feel that the film is somewhat diminished, even if the rest of the story, the direction, whatever, is well done. In every movie that I see, and this is the truth, I can always find some way, some character, that Walken could have played—and as a result, the film would have been better."

Face started his group in his Yonkers,

NY, basement along with a few friends in the early 1980's, during a bull session after viewing Walken's 1983 film, *The Dead Zone*.

"I thought, hey, this is the best adaptation of a Steven King thriller yet," says Face. "My pals and I agreed that Christopher Walken would have made a much better star for *The Shining*, another Steven King novel that was adapted for film a year or two

earlier. The studios chose Jack Nicholson for the lead in *The Shining*—and Nicholson's a fine actor, but let's face it, he's no Christopher Walken—and we wrote them to voice our feelings. I got a letter back from Stanley Kubrick, the guy who directed *The Shining*. He agreed completely. I photocopied it for the guys. Basically, that's how the newsletter and club started."

Today, the Christopher Walken Appreciation Society claims to have "hundreds" of members world-wide, including a "very substantial core membership in France." The group also continues to publish a newsletter, *Walken About*, periodically and has just released its 31st issue. And of course, the club

WALKEN ABOUT

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#29

The Official Newsletter of the
Christopher Walken Appreciation Society



THE KING OF NEW YORK

31 issues and going strong.

owns every film that Walken has appeared in, including 35 millimeter prints of most of them.

"The latest film, *McBain*, I just picked up about a week ago," explains Face, adding that since *McBain* only played for a few days in most cities before closing, the film was hard to come by.

"It's not a very good movie, but [Walken] is excellent. Without him, it's a much worse movie," claims Face.

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To obtain membership information for the Christopher Walken Appreciation Society, write to: CWAS, Box 221, Yonkers, NY, 10704. Current copies of *Walken About* are available at the same address.

The Best Films of the Last Three Decades

The Deer Hunter

1978

Walken plays Nick, a Slavic American steelworker who enlists in the army with his buddies, ends up in Vietnam and succumbs to drugs and insanity. In his last scene, playing Russian roulette, Walken shoots himself in the head. Of his character, Nick, Walken has said, "he was an awful lot like me, in terms of background and personality."

At Close Range

1986

Walken plays the head of a vicious burglary ring, who initiates his sons into the fold, only to murder one and nearly kill the other. He does manage to kill the second son's (played by Sean Penn) girl. *Runner up: Brainstorm*, a poor film, but notable because Natalie Wood drowned during its filming after Walken and her husband, Robert Wagner, argued over whether or not Walken had slept with her.

The Comfort of Strangers

1991

In perhaps his greatest role, Walken plays Robert, a white-suited international who hounds a shallow English couple through Venice. Robert is fixated on his father, a "very big man (who) all his life wore a black moustache." Robert and his wife have a remarkable sex life: in order to make love he needs to beat her until he cripples her. In his (next to) last scene, he kills the male Englishman before making love to his wife.

TALKIN WALKEN

Box 925, Yonkers, N.Y., 10704

#43

Formerly *WALKEN ABOUT*

Since 1979

The official newsletter of the Christopher Walken Appreciation Society

David Face
1952--1992

A Message from the New Editor-in-Chief

As long-time readers of this publication will undoubtedly notice, this issue is one marked by many changes. The first of which is the sad passing of our mentor David Face—the man responsible for so much in getting the word out to the masses concerning our hero, Christopher Walken.

I can't adequately express the sorrow in which I reacted upon hearing of Dave's untimely death in July following a long battle with diabetes. While many of us were aware that Dave was a sick man, I think I speak for all in saying that the news hit like a sharp blow to the solar plexus. The irony of the situation—coming on the heels of Christopher Walken's first box office success in years (*Batman Returns*)—only makes the pill more bitter to swallow. While many dismissed Christopher Walken as an over-the-hill B-rated actor, Dave knew better. His legacy is that he took the spark of an idea formed in a dingy Yonkers, N.Y., apartment and let that seed blossom into more than 40 issues of a newsletter devoted to the comings and goings of the finest thespian of our time, Mr. Christopher Walken. Current membership for the

Christopher Walken Appreciation Society stands in the hundreds and includes patrons from around the globe. The show of support, as evidenced by the gathering at Dave's July 18th memorial service held at the Polish Community Center in Yonkers, is further proof of the pudding.



Above, *Sad Christopher*, an original work by the artist Hak, created in honor of the memory of *Walken About* founder David Face.

The service was attended by celebrities ranging from former *Twisted Sister* lead singer Dee Schneider to WABC radio personality Bob Grant.

Dave, you were truly a man of vision and you will be missed by many. I know that you're up there somewhere looking down upon all this with that

same wry smile that drew my attention in the smoky confines of Foley's Club Lounge some ten years ago. God bless you man.

As for me, well I must say I reacted with surprise and no small amount of resistance when I received that call from Dave's brother Nigel, urging that I take over the reigns of *Walken About*. After much cajoling, I agreed. However, I must say that there will never be another David Face and I am not a scribe worthy to fill his shoes. Therefore, with this issue, this newsletter will henceforth be called *Talkin Walken*, as I could never hope to take the place of the editor we all knew and loved. I just hope that you loyal readers will bear with me as I make this painful transition. While I admit I'm still a bit green in this editing business, I plan to give you all a publication that Dave would be proud of—a publication heralding the acting greatness of Christopher Walken.

If you've seen my byline in past issues of *Walken About*—or managed to read my much-edited profile of Christopher Walken in the September 14, 1989 issue of *US* magazine (believe me, they cut out all the good parts)—you will know that I, too, cherish the acting accomplishments of the namesake of this publication. I just hope you give me the chance to prove myself.

Yours, in Christopher,

Glade Thompson
Editor-in-Chief
Talkin Walken



Talken About Walken About

Address new correspondence to:
Box 925 Yonkers, NY 10704



Hi guys,

A few issues back [Ed: *WalkenAbout* #39], you were asking readers to write about personal encounters with Christopher Walken. I don't know if this anecdote will qualify or not, but I offer it up anyway.

My mother-in-law lives on the Upper West of New York and has seen Christopher Walken several times on the street over the past 10 years or so (ever since seeing *The Deer Hunter* and his Academy Award-winning performance. Before that, I doubt she knew who he was). Anyway, I'm going to focus on one encounter in particular. Back in the mid-eighties, she was dropping off a roll of film at a camera store on Broadway and who should walk in, but—you guessed it—Christopher Walken. Well, as you can guess, she recognized him immediately and said something to the effect of, "I'm a big fan of yours, etc." As she tells the story, he smiled and thanked her. Then he asked the cashier at the store if he could get change for a dollar. He explained that he needed quarters for the meter. Well, the cashier (I guess she didn't recognize him. My mother-in-law says he was dressed

very casually) said, "No," and went on to say that they only gave out change for paying customers. Very politely, he said, "Okay, fine," and turned to the door. It was then that my mother-in-law spoke up, saying, "Here, I have change, Mr. Walken." She gave him four quarters and asked him to please autograph the dollar. He did.

She still has that bill, kept flat in her Bible, alongside some pressed flowers and other mementos of her past. She's very proud of the dollar and will only display it after much prompting.

But the story does not end there. A few days after their encounter, my mother-in-law saw him on the street again, this time on Amsterdam Ave. She says he actually crossed the street when he saw her and said, "I just want to thank you again."

Joseph Lombardi
Boise, Idaho

Sirs,

This is in response to your recent article, "Was Christopher Ever a Smoker?" (*WalkenAbout* #40). I was a classmate of Christopher Walken, who was then known as Ronnie Walken, at Hunter College in 1961. He was a smoker then, at least a

pack a day smoker, if I recall correctly Marlboro was his brand. We were all smokers back then. Unfortunately, that was the thing to do. We took a freshman history class together, American History 101 with a Dr. Winona Bradley. I don't remember too much else about Ronnie other than he was a smart guy and he dropped out of school the next year. He had piercing eyes and was very intense even then. I knew he was interested in acting and was not surprised to see him go on to the glory that came a few years later.

Prof. Dottie Carmichael
Pace University
Pleasantville, N.Y.

Dear *Walken About*,

Just a quick note to reaffirm Brendan Donegan's editorial in issue #41 ("The King of New York is Dead, Long Live the King"). I, too, was disgusted by much of Christopher Walken's actions on that recent (and infamous) episode of *Saturday Night Live*. Unlike Mr. Donegan, I pin the blame of that embarrassment not on Christopher, but on the talentless writers who somehow convinced him to act that in that ungodly manner.

Watching that sketch in

which Christopher Walken mocked his character of "Johnnie" in the *Dead Zone* literally made me wretch in disgust. How he could possibly mock his own brilliant performance mystifies me still to this day. Regrettably, I lost much respect for him (and he's been my favorite actor for more than six years now!) and I spent much of the next day in bed, depressed. While some of his performance (his opening tap dance, in particular) was entertaining, if not thrilling, the entirety of the show was terrible and disturbing. I agree with Mr. Donegan in that something seriously is wrong here. I, for one, am worried.

Manferd Boos
Durham, N.C.



Shroud of Walken?

This image of a maniacal Christopher Walken was found hidden in the corner of a Nov. 21 *Garfield* comic strip. Puzzling evadance!

Christopher's Dogs



A First Person Encounter

*Carol Tongue (above) has been Christopher Walken's private dog walker since 1974. **Talkin Walken's** own Nancy Droad met up with her recently for a Sunday brunch at Patso's on Broadway and 86th in Manhattan for a conversation about what it's like to be Christopher's personal canine consultant:*

Talkin Walken: Well, I guess you have what many would consider a dream job. Is this *your* dream job?

Carol Tongue: My dream job? Uh, I wouldn't say...well, I mean I enjoy walking Chris' dogs, if that's what you're asking. He's a great guy, and so is Georgianne [Ed: Walken's wife Georgianne Thon]. But, you know, (laughter), walking their dogs isn't my whole life or anything. I'm not just a dog walker (laughter). Mostly I work as a free lance editor. I work at home and I live in the neighborhood, so it works out great.

TW: Sure. What I mean is, if you *had* to walk someone's dogs, it might as well be someone as famous as Christopher Walken's, right?

CT: Uh, I guess. (laughter) Chris and Georgianne have always had really wonderful animals, really

gentle animals. I think that's in a large way them, though, you know? Their sensibilities and everything. They're very warm and generous people.

TW: Okay, yeah. Well, you've known Christopher Walken for nearly twenty years now. They say that people often take on the characteristics of their pets. How has this been the case with Christopher Walken?

CT: Uh, well, they've had several really great dogs since I started walking them for Chris and Georgianne. Really, all of them have been great dogs. Really wonderful dogs.

TW: Well, what kinds of dogs are you talking about? What breeds?

CT: Okay, well there was Dondi. She was a Collie, but she got hit by a car when Chris was crossing Broadway on his way to the park for a jog...that was in the late seventies. She was a wonderful dog. Then they got Mr. Chips, a really beautiful Doberman with an incredible auburn coat. They got Mr. Chips from Chris' father, who always kept a few Dobermans at the bakery in Queens.

TW: What happened to Mr. Chips? This was in the early eighties?



CT: Yeah, early to late eighties, actually. Uh, it's kind of tragic. Mr. Chips bit a child on the face and had to be put to sleep. It was a real heart-breaking experience.

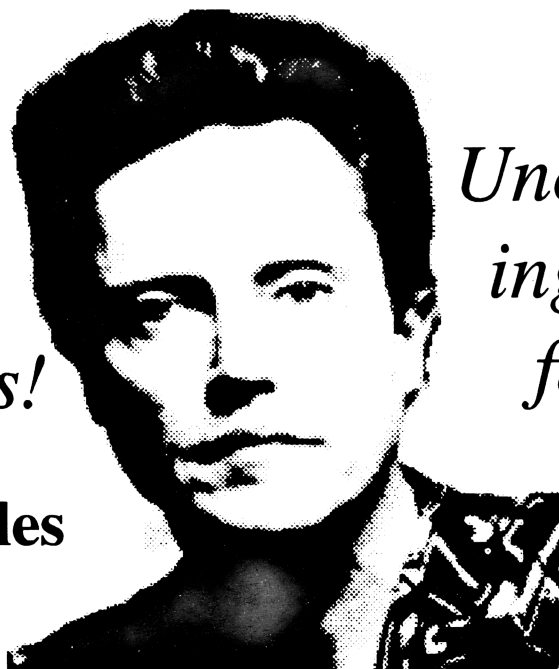
TW: Wasn't that the baby of another actor? The baby that Mr. Chips bit? Wasn't it Mel Gibson's son?

CT: Uh, I can't say who it was. You know, I just walk the dogs. All I can say is that Mr. Chips was a really wonderful dog. Anyway, now I walk Chris' dog Mitzi. She's a mutt, but she's a great dog. A poodle, mostly. Real cute and loving. I walk her when Chris and Georgianne are in New York. Otherwise, they take her with them when they're in L.A. or their other place in Westport. She's always happy to see me. I love that dog. I really do.

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- * Los Angeles' Club Blackout: *Comfort of Strangers* director Paul Schrader, actor Micky Rourke (of *HomeBoy* fame), *Batman* creator Bob Kane and TV's DeForrest Kelly (*Star Trek*)
- * London's Harris Gardens: Rock star Rod Stewart, rock star David Bowie, rock star Adam Ant, actress Natasha Richardson (*Comfort of Strangers*), TV's Alistair Cooke
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