

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Good Night, and Good Luck by Grant Heslov and George Clooney

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In fact, on the Grizzly People website the first rule stated is, "People should stay 100 yards from bears at all times."

So he certainly should have known that bears are nothing like people. Unlike the fox ("Timmie") he befriended, that accompanied him for several summers, bears do not have any natural affections apart from the mother-cub one. They never live in packs or family units with stable dominance systems. They have no social behavior beyond the chance meetings that lead to mating or fighting.

In spite of all that, Treadwell clearly imagined his grizzlies knew him, respected him as a fellow creature. He couldn't help himself. He gave the bears around him pet names—Booble Rowdy, Mickey, Mr. Chocolate, Daisy—talked to them familiarly, let them come close almost to touching. He films himself consoling the loser in a contest over mating rights, commenting that the prize he fought for was well worth the battle. He thanks the animals, almost in tears, for being his friend. He grieves over a cub killed by a marauding male. He prays for rain when an extended drought has lessened the salmon runs.

Over and over, he tells the camera that his hope for safety lies within himself, in showing fearlessness. He compares himself to a flower, a samurai—things beautiful and noble. His most passionate moment comes with a long outburst of rage at human beings, both for the tourists' despoiling of the wilderness and the park rangers' neglect of their charges. "They fly over less than once a month," he complains. During another confessional moment, he muses ruefully about his inability to maintain long relationships with women, though, he says, he is a good lover.

In building this complex, baffling portrait of a madman-saint, Herzog must select a small part of the wealth of material provided to him. Most of his artistry dwells in what he omits, in the spaces between the moments chosen. Then, as maybe for all artists, he has to shape his material by techniques of arrangement and proportion. From this perspective, artists create nothing, only critically choose bits and pieces from their experience or observation and decide in what order to present them. For the filmmaker especially, piecing together images and sounds to suggest meaning is the whole trick.

The first looming space in Herzog's composition is any detailed reference to Treadwell's California years, during which his autobiography (*Among Grizzlies*, with Jewel Palovac) tells of serious drinking and drug taking. Also absent is information about the nine months or so that he spent each year at his regular home in Malibu. The impression is almost that he lived continuously among his subjects of study, like Jane Goodall.

Another impression Treadwell seems to have nurtured is that he was facing the

wilderness alone. Amie Huguenard appears only in brief glimpses. In one hand-held shot she must have been operating the camera. We miss learning something of her observations, if only to check the authenticity of Treadwell's. It's possible to suspect a dismissive attitude toward women here, but more likely it is a part of his Thoreauvian fantasy of facing the wilderness alone.

Then there is the setting. The film does open with a shot of the lake as a plane lands on it, and there are occasional glimpses of the shoreline, a rocky outcrop, some distant hills. But the place where Treadwell camped is called The Maze, a confusing network of paths, tunnels really, through the thick Alaskan undergrowth. Of course, it's not a network, not really a maze like the one at Hampton Court, just the meanderings of bears as they seek the easiest way through. All that might have served as a useful metaphor, Treadwell in a featureless tangle of tunnels, with the possibility of monsters at every turn.

Finally, there is an overwhelming, controversial negation near the end that becomes the emotional center of the whole film. On the morning of his death, apparently as the bear attacked, he turned on the camera but forgot to take off the lens cap. What resulted was a six-minute audio recording of the dying man screaming to his companion to hit the attacker, sounds of a frying pan against a bear's skull, Treadwell screaming to Amie to flee. That is what we are told is on the audio, but we never hear any of it. Instead, we are shown the back of Herzog's head as he listens with earphones, facing Treadwell's former lover, Jewel Pavolak, who owns the tape. After a few minutes Herzog asks that the player be turned off, and tells Pavolak that she must never listen to it, must destroy it.

Whether the decision to impose silence on that six minutes was an act of decency or a filmmaker's deliberate strategy cannot be known, but in either case the effect is stunning, as much as when we hear of Ophelia's drowning instead of witnessing it.

In all, *Grizzly Man* comes down to a kind of metaphysical debate between Treadwell and Herzog. The filmmaker has said in public that he believes the universe is ultimately chaotic, and he repeats that view in his narrative. He fairly makes the case, however, for Treadwell's view that nature is harmonious, ultimately meaningful if not benevolent. The coroner's dispassionate description of how the bear ripped off Treadwell's skull, then grabbed his hips and tore him apart, stands, perhaps, as Herzog's closing argument.

One of the remnants the searchers found was a part of Treadwell's arm, with a watch, still ticking, attached. Jewel Pavolak tells Herzog that she has kept it, and it's still running. That small detail, that Treadwell was wearing a watch, interweaves neatly with another famous bear story. In Faulkner's

"The Bear," Ike McCaslin had to let go of his watch, a sign of his connection to the civilized world, before he could meet the bear on its own terms: "It was as if the boy had already divined what his senses and intellect had not encompassed yet: that doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with ploughs and axes who feared it because it was wilderness...where the old bear had earned a name...epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life...and absolved of mortality."

This film, whether it depicts ecstatic vision or pitiable madness, presents its issues in sharp definition.—Conrad Geller

Good Night, and Good Luck

Produced by Grant Heslov; directed by George Clooney; written by George Clooney and Grant Heslov; cinematography by Robert Elswit; production design by Jim Bissell; edited by Stephen Mirrione; original music by Jim Papoulis; costumes by Louise Frogley; starring David Strathairn, Robert Downey, Jr., Patricia Clarkson, Ray Wise, Frank Langella, Jeff Daniels and George Clooney. Color, 93 mins. A Warner Independent Pictures release.

Gather 'round the campfire, children, and hark again to the tale of the epic joust between the white knight of broadcast journalism and the fire-breathing dragon of Cold War America—on the left, but not too far left, Edward R. Murrow, templar of the profession, voice-over of World War II, and face of *See It Now* (1951-1958), television's original screen magazine; on the extreme right, sweating, snorting, and flailing in bestial fury, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, demonic personification of the 'ism' that predated and outlived him. More than fifty years later, despite spasms of revisionism and squadrons of debunkers, the journalistic creation myth remains etched in stone, kinescope, and, in its most literal version, an illustration by artist Ben Shahn entitled *Edward R. Murrow slaying the dragon of Joseph McCarthy*, which shows the newsman as Lancelot, astride a horse, skewering the lizard-like senator with a lance.

An earnest docu-drama from a card-carrying Hollywood liberal, George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck* predictably credits Murrow with the kill and bestows the requisite garlands on the victor. Yet the director and his cowriter Grant Heslov aspire to be more than troubadour hirelings singing the praises of their liege. A menace more lethal to the ethos Murrow embodied lurks in the deep recesses of the cave from which the senator slithered: commercial television—and if that behemoth cannot be slain, it can at least be punctured and poked at.

Shot in a chalky B&W film stock coated in nicotine and set almost entirely in the stuffy interiors of Studio 41, the fabled stage



CBS TV producer Fred Friendly (George Clooney, background) and Edward R. Murrow (David Strathairn) prepare for another broadcast in George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck*.

where *See It Now* was telecast live on Tuesdays at 10:30 p.m., *Good Night, and Good Luck* (the phrase was Murrow's trademark sign-off) luxuriates in the antique ambiance of a Cold War zeitgeist as yet unrocked by Elvis. The social manners and design scheme of the early Eisenhower era, not the distinctions between fellow travelers and party liners, infuse what is, at heart, more costume drama than social-problem film. Slip into a button-down, white-shirt-and-tie fashion scheme and relax to the silky strains of cool jazz with singer Dianne Reeves gliding over a swooning alto sax line (her performances permeate the soundtrack and ease transitions with jukebox exposition: "TV is the Thing This Year" for the media revolution, "I've Got My Eyes on You" for the surveillance society). Except for all that constitutional rights stuff, the retro-hip scene is seductive enough to make you want to sip a scotch neat and savor a drag on an unfiltered Camel.

But not all is cool in the Ike Age. The good music and bad habits are interrupted by Murrow's bitter 1958 speech before the Radio and Television News Directors Association in Chicago, a forum the guest of honor used to denounce a prime-time lineup programmed to "distract, delude, amuse, and insulate." However, soon after the speaker exhales, walks to the podium, and starts to bite the hand that feeds him, his jeremiad is put on pause for a flashback to a darker, if no less smoke-filled, time: 1953, when Tail Gunner Joe was firing on all cylinders and, so says the crawl, "few in the press were willing to stand up against McCarthy for fear they would be targeted."

In rewinding the oft-told tale, Clooney follows a tight, intricate timeline and makes

few concessions to the slower students in the multiplex. The morality play proper begins in October 1953, when Murrow (David Strathairn, a carbon-copy incarnation) and his producer and collaborator Fred W. Friendly (Clooney, a less than exact match for the homely original) first targeted McCarthyism via the airwaves, without ever using the word or mentioning the name. The arc closes in December 1954, when the U.S. Senate voted to condemn McCarthy in the wake of the Army-McCarthy hearings, the reality TV programming that wrought the senator's true death by video.

Though it is only best friend Friendly who gets to light the great man's cigarettes, all of Murrow's boys, and a single girl, worship the very smoke from his nostrils. No wonder staff producers Joe (Robert Downey, Jr.) and Shirley Wershba (Patricia Clarkson) are shocked to learn that Murrow has signed the CBS loyalty oath—a bit of tarnish on the armor that Clooney cannily highlights. This being the time of Patriarchy Unbound, CBS demands another contractual obligation of its employees, so Joe and Shirley must conceal their marriage from the front office. "Name me another wife who has to remind her husband to take his wedding ring off before going to work," Shirley joshes. "Ava Gardner," Joe replies, in an era-appropriate comeback.

For once, though, a politics not gendered dominates a Hollywood sojourn into the 1950's, a decision that immediately dragged the celebrity *auteur* of *Good Night, and Good Luck* into the crossfire that has not let up since February 9, 1950, when the junior senator from Wisconsin first waved his list of 205—or was it 57?—communists marauding through the State Department. Inev-

itably, the whirlpool of controversies churning around McCarthyism, that most elastic and convenient of epithets—doctrinal spats over blacklisting and name-naming, HUAC hearings and Senate investigations, red-baiting accusations and red-bagging trials—filter a spectator's vision. These days, after all, Cold War historiography is geopolitics conducted by another name.

So, then, besides the brand-name signifier himself, three real-life characters, famous long ago, structure the intersection of history and melodrama: two inspire episodes of *See It Now*, one involves a backstage vignette: Milo Radulovich, Annie Lee Moss, and Don Hollenbeck.

Telecast on October 20, 1953, "The Case of Lieutenant Milo Radulovich," was Murrow's first video shot across the bow at McCarthyism. A meteorologist and officer in the Air Force Reserve, Radulovich was being booted out of the service as a security risk. Poor hangdog Milo was the perfect hook on which to slice and gut the sharks—or rather the fish in a barrel—after some deft editing and terse commentary. The Radulovich reenactment sets a narrative pattern for the film: a preproduction newsroom huddle with 16mm film footage beaming from a flickering projection booth; a tango with a nervous CBS suit or a sinister government agent; and then a replay of the *See It Now* episode, weaving together Clooney's cast members with archival clips from the original episode. The two different casts create a visual caste system: the media players live in the action, the political players exist only in the archives.

Telecast March 16, 1954, "Annie Lee Moss Before the McCarthy Committee" depicted the persecution of an African American code clerk at the Pentagon accused by FBI informant Mary Markward of being a member of the communist party. Middle-aged, matronly, to all outward appearances guileless and tremulous before the camera lights and the august salons, Moss fit a picture of solicitous Negro servitude. She was more than met the eye: Moss's status as a security risk (she was not accused of spying) remains a matter of fierce debate (everything is in this territory) but the woman who emerges from her FBI file (which was just declassified this year) was not the Hattie McDaniel figure she played before the cameras and the committee, the 'little woman' whom Murrow and company so readily condescended to. Endlessly fascinating, the Moss case is a bracing reminder that Jim Crow blighted more lives in the McCarthy era than the marquee name. In rewinding the episode, Clooney and Heslov seem to know enough not to absolve Moss of party membership but have slyly opted to let the scenario play out as it did on *See It Now*.

Don Hollenbeck, the only principal granted a life outside the archival diegesis, was a CBS newscaster who, as played by Ray

Wise (darting eyes, forced smile, bottled-up hysteria) walks the halls of CBS under a cloud of doom so thick no viewer will need footnotes to know his days are numbered. Hollenbeck's off-stage tormenter was not the senator but a fellow journalist, Jack O'Brian, television critic for Hearst's *New York Journal-American*, who mercilessly baited Hollenbeck as a faithful comrade of the "Communist Broadcasting System." Unlike *The Front* (1976), where Zero Mostel, playing a version of blacklisted actor Philip Loeb, is persecuted beyond all human endurance by HUAC, *Good Night, and Good Luck* suggests only that McCarthyite invective might nudge an already unstable personality over the edge, not destroy a healthy personality. (I once asked former CBS President Frank Stanton about Hollenbeck. He paused, measuring his words carefully. "Don," he said, "had problems.")

As the *See It Now* episodes are reworded and reenacted, timelines are telescoped and events crisscross. The Air Force reinstated Radulovich a month after Murrow's exposé, a reversal personally announced by Secretary of the Air Force Harold E. Talbott, who appeared at the top of another anti-McCarthyism *See It Now* entitled "A Crisis in Indianapolis," about the ACLU's efforts to form a local chapter for uppity Hoosiers, telecast on November 24, 1953, not after "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy" aired on March 9, 1954, when the reversal is excitedly announced in the film. Hollenbeck killed himself on June 24, 1954 after, not during, the Army-McCarthy hearings. As a coda to McCarthy's video meltdown, the film shows a clip from Eisenhower's famous speech to the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, which was telecast live on November 23, 1953, not, as the film implies, after the Army-McCarthy hearings (April 22-June 17, 1954).

Of course, by Hollywood's usual "inspired by actual events!" standards of historical scholarship, mixing and matching program scheduling ranks as a misdemeanor. A more indictable offense is the failure to note the extra-CBS realities that contributed to McCarthy's flameout during 1953-1954—above all, the release by the Army on March 11, 1954 (the very day Annie Lee Moss testified before the McCarthy committee), of a record of phone conversations documenting attempts by McCarthy's chief counsel Roy Cohn to ease the rigors of military service for his close friend and former McCarthy staffer G. David Schine. The release of the chronology of the phone logs was the power play that culminated in the Army-McCarthy hearings and climaxed with McCarthy's on-screen self-immolation with Army attorney Joseph N. Welch tossing on the gasoline. (Clooney cannot resist cueing up the most indelible moment of video McCarthyism—Welch's "have-you-left-no-sense-of-decency" sound bite, the rhetorical question that put the

final nail in the coffin. Given the telescoping of history, however, an untutored viewer might get the impression that the hearings were Murrow's doings and not Eisenhower's.) *Good Night, and Good Luck* contains not a single exterior shot—a device that underscores the isolation of the lone warriors—but claustrophobia need not engender myopia. Events unfolding outside the walls of the CBS newsroom softened up McCarthy and encouraged Murrow to pounce.

How much of the historical compression is due to the compromises any filmmaker must make to cut a complex narrative into feature-length shape and how much is calculated obfuscation is hard to gauge. Yet whether Clooney flunks your Cold War test or gets a passing grade on the curve, the cross-examination of the film as a historical text or a polemical tract obscures the purely cinematic virtues of a rare and gutsy entry in the current marketplace. *Good Night, and Good Luck* is in B&W; it presumes a deep familiarity with the players and issues; it is packed with enough archival footage to sustain a season of *The American Experience*; and it cedes huge slices of screen time to verbatim recitations of Murrow's eloquent commentaries. In commercial terms, Clooney's labor of love is an audacious gamble—more likely, a sucker's bet.

Admittedly, the film strokes its target audience—the kind of folks who in the 1930s would have marched in a Popular Front parade and might well have joined the CP, and not just to meet girls. At times, though, even a Murrow-phile might wish that Clooney had channeled a little less Woodward and Bernstein and a little more Hecht and MacArthur—notably when, in a slow roll-back, the camera fits its subject for his halo: late at night in the newsroom, tap-tap-tapping at a manual typewriter, lit by fluorescent bulbs but beatific withal, Murrow pecks out the epochal commentary that will conclude "A Report on Joseph R. McCarthy."

Next to Murrow, Clooney's most heartfelt allegiance is to the ungainly furniture of a bygone media era. As in his quirky debut *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind* (2000), a hallucinatory bio-pic of Chuck Barris, the demented host of *The Gong Show* in the late 1970s, he dotes on the analogue technology of Paleolithic television: the helmet-sized microphones, the massive, lumbering cameras, the knobs, dials, and monitors of Flintstone-vintage control boards. Clooney's father Nick was a local television news anchorman in Cincinnati and Lexington, KY, and one imagines the little tyke crawling around the thick cables and bright lights of Dad's workplace and absorbing a lasting impression of the television soundstage as a grown-up wonderland. "The terror is right here in this room," says Murrow to his boys in the newsroom when they must search their backgrounds for a red flag on their

résumés—but in truth the real terror is in that *other* room, Studio 41, when the cameras are hot and the light is red.

Live TV, a high-wire act without a net, is what really wrings the flop sweat from these furrowed brows: the countdown to air-time, the cue cards timing the clips, Fred Friendly, off camera, literally at Murrow's feet, stopwatch in hand, signaling showtime with a tap on the anchorman's leg. (In 2000, Clooney staged a live telecast of *Fail Safe* and he is reportedly planning a live telecast of *Network*: videotape is for wimps.) The Studio 41 setting also provides myriad opportunities for the video-screen-within-the-celluloid screen framing that has smitten filmmakers since at least Elia Kazan and Budd Schulberg's *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), another tale of television and McCarthyism. Like a cloned Greek chorus, multiple Murrows peer out from the motion-picture screen and hover around the frame.

Murrow's is, however, preeminently a talking head. For the centerpiece reenactment of the storied "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy," the *coup de grâce* to which all else has been building, Murrow's closing commentary is accorded a spotlight normally reserved for Shakespearean monologues, not inappropriately considering the oratorical hook. "Cassius was right," he intones, after stabbing a pettier tyrant in the front. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in our selves."

Torn from context, the recitations come perilously close to hectoring—sometimes they cross the line. Fortunately, David Straithairn's remarkable performance makes the pulpit pounding palatable. Whether on the 'high Murrow' high horse of *See It Now*, or leaning back as the host of the 'low Murrow' cash cow *Person to Person*, he enunciates a pitch-perfect mimicry of Murrow's clipped baritone (spitting out a word, stretching out a phrasing, picking up speed when the clock was ticking) and nails the Murrow Look (the man with the radio-reverb voice brandished a killer stare: eyes flashed upwards, into the camera lens, away from his written copy, flirtatious or accusatory, depending). Naturally, too, the actor has Murrow's cigarette moves down cold, both digitally and orally.

Finally, some insightful deviations rescue the film from purblind hagiography. The corporate suits are not cut-out caricatures. CBS founder and board chairman William S. Paley (Frank Langella) and CBS News chief Sig Mickelson (Jeff Daniels) raise legitimate points—about editorial balance, about keeping management in the loop, about Murrow's own selective censorship. In fact, the Alpha male shadowing the halls of CBS is neither in the studio nor the Senate. When Friendly meets the boss by chance in the office elevator, Paley sends out waves of malevolence more potent than anything McCarthy radiates in his archival clips.

Thankfully, too, the film's high ambitions and self-seriousness are leavened by wry humor and quick wit. "Shirley, honey," says Friendly, with a sense of male entitlement his grandsons can only fantasize about, "will you go across the street and get the early editions?" Later, when Mickelson calls Shirley and Joe into his office to lower the boom over their flaunting of office rules, there can be no doubt which partner will take the pink slip. ("We're going to miss you around here, Joe," wisecracks Shirley, a double-edged joke.) Best of all is the running gag about the plague that killed more Americans than communism, delivered via the incessant lighting, flicking, and puffing of cigarettes and the fog of tobacco smoke that swirls, wafts, and billows with a density sufficient to send the denizens of Rick's Café fleeing into the streets of Casablanca for a breath of fresh air.

After the dragon is slain, it is 1958 again, their present, and, of course, ours too. Murrow is back at the lectern, contributing another sign-off line to the language. Without the desire to teach and illuminate its audience, he says ruefully, television is "merely wires and lights in a box."

Idealistic in 1958, Murrow's plea to network executives that Ed Sullivan and Steve Allen be preempted for discussions of American education and Mideast policy seems downright delusional today. Perhaps this is why Clooney's portrait of the Murrow-McCarthy duel plays more as elegy than celebration, why for all the reverence towards the icon it has none of the cocky triumphalism of the Ben Shahn illustration or, for that matter, the self-congratulatory tone that has marked so many of Hollywood's videocentric forays into Cold War America. Suggestively, Clooney's somber, retrospective version of the Murrow-McCarthy duel arrives at a humbling moment for the brand of broadcast journalism to which Murrow dedicated his life, a moment punctuated by the death of another suave, old-school newsman killed by cigarettes, the last of the old network troika, Peter Jennings (a four-pack-a-day man). (Murrow died from cancer in 1965, at age fifty-seven.)

Of course, both the journalist and the director know that the news business was never a pristine vocation unsullied by the filthy lucre of corporate bottom liners. The best Murrow hoped for was a reasonable trade-off between commerce and commitment. At the end of some vapid schmoozing with Liberace on *Person to Person*, Murrow, safely off-camera, rolls his eyes at what he must endure to perform the real work of journalism over at *See It Now*. For this I braved the Luftwaffe during the London blitz?

Sure, the hierarchy is dubious, and all the banker-director-star had to do was sleepwalk through a lame sequel. But if *Ocean's 12* is 'low Clooney,' then *Good Night, and Good Luck* is 'high Clooney.'

—Thomas Doherty

The Weeping Meadow

Produced by Phoebe Economopoulos; directed by Theo Angelopoulos; written by Theo Angelopoulos, Tonino Guerra, Petros Markaris and Giorgio Silvagni; cinematography by Andreas Sinanos; edited by Yorgos Triantafylou; music by Eleni Karaindrou; set design by Yorgos Patsas; costumes by Ioulia Stavridou and C. Dimitriadis; starring Alexandra Aidini, Nikos Poursanidis, Yorgos Armenis, Vassilis Kolovos, Eva Kotamanidou and Toulia Stathopoulou. Color, 170 mins., Greek dialog with English subtitles. Distributed by New Yorker Films.

The cinematic gaze of Theo Angelopoulos has always been epic. His current project is his most ambitious ever, a trilogy that uses the Greek national experience as a prism to probe the nature of the twentieth century in Europe. *The Weeping Meadow*, the first panel of this proposed triptych, begins with scenes of a band of haggard Greeks who have fled their homes in Odessa in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution seeking refuge in Greece. Among them is Eleni (Alexandra Aidinni), a young orphan. As the film unfolds, her life will personify a century of massive relocations and migrations that took a particularly harsh toll on the lives of women.

Eleni will fall in love with Alexis (Nikos Poursanidis), the oldest son of the family that has informally adopted her. While still a girl/woman, she gives birth to twins, Yannis and Yiorgos, who are immediately taken away from her. Eleni's life is further complicated when a widowed Spyros (Vassilis Kolovos), her surrogate 'father,' outrages his fellow villagers by insisting that she must

marry him. These relationships with a 'brother' and a 'father' echo incestuous themes rooted in classical Greek tragedy. In this instance, Angelopoulos draws on the Theban plays of Sophocles. His goal is not to parallel the ancient tragedies but to infuse contemporary events with a universal and mythic ethos. The film also contains visual references to Homer's Penelope.

As in classic theater, most of the dramatic action in *The Weeping Meadow* occurs off screen. The viewer only observes the reactions of the main characters to those events. There is considerably more silence than dialog between the characters, and facial close-ups are rare. Such distancing strategies are intended to force the viewer to think about images rather than simply being manipulated by their emotional force. A problem with this strategy is that viewers not familiar with the historic off-screen events may be left politically confused and emotionally indifferent.

When Eleni and Alexis elope on her wedding day, Spyros, the distraught father/husband, is stripped of whatever remained of his dignity. With murder in his heart, he will relentlessly pursue his son and daughter/wife. The couple have fled to Thessaloniki where they live among impoverished refugees recently arrived from the catastrophic war in Asia Minor. Alexis's musical skills with an accordion allow him to find work with a group of traveling musicians, and the couple is able to reclaim their sons. The Greece of these interwar years is chaotic. A dozen governments rise and fall. Industrial strife, social unrest, and the threat of military coups are political constants. Eleni and Alexis are further stressed by living in perpetual flight from the relentless Spyros. Although they are not ideologically sophisticated, the couple is driven to the political left by their social circumstances



Alexis (Nikos Poursanidis) and Eleni (Alexandra Aidinni) and their twins in *The Weeping Meadow*.