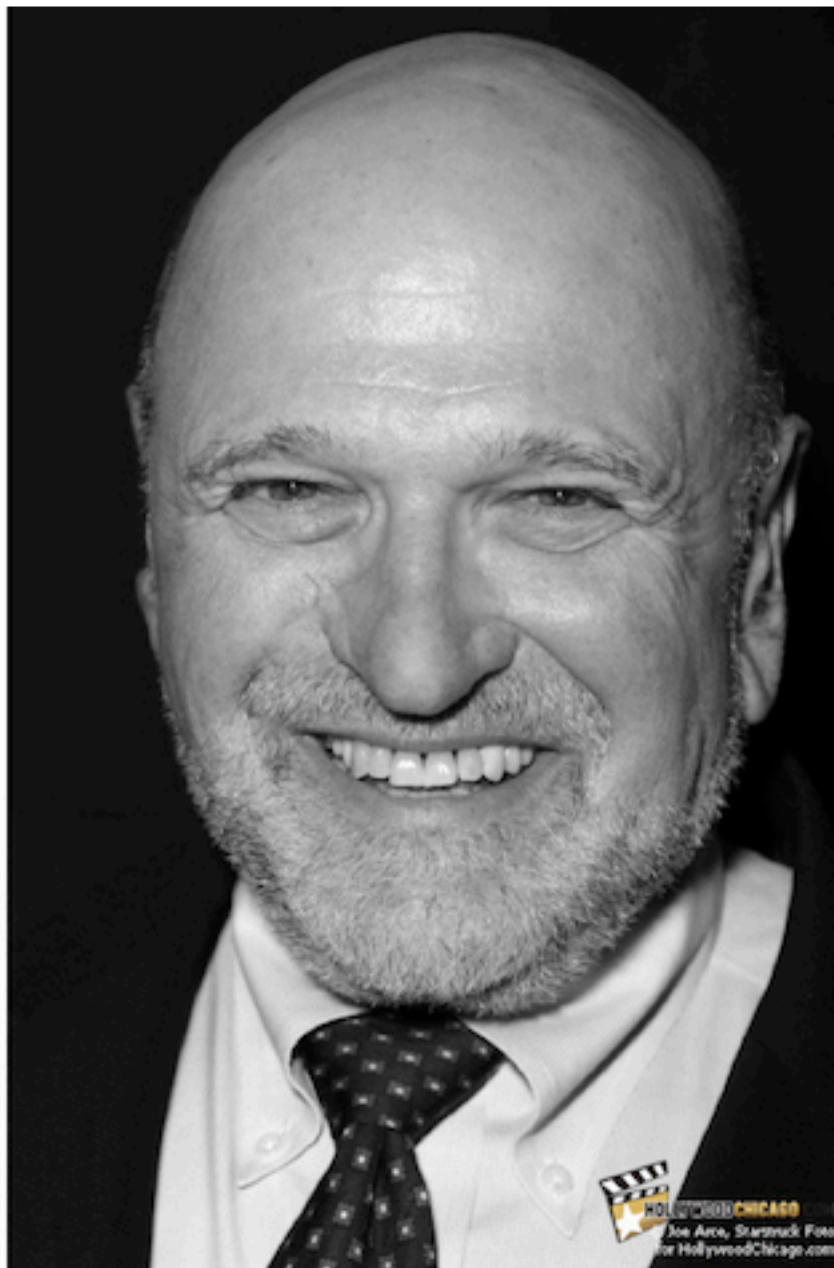


Feature: Warren Beatty, Robert Klein and 'Medium Cool' Remember Aug. 28, 1968, in Chicago

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 28, 2018 - 5:56pm

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CHICAGO – It was 50 years ago today – August 28th, 1968 – that Chicago Police and Viet Nam War protestors clashed in front of the Hilton Chicago Hotel on Michigan Avenue, while the Democratic National Convention was in town nominating Hubert Humphrey as their presidential candidate. As the police used excessive force on the protestors, the “whole world was watching.” This included witnesses actor/director Warren Beatty, comedian Robert Klein, and the production crew – including future director Andrew Davis – of the Haskell Wexler film “Medium Cool.”



Medium Coolers: Writer/Director/Cinematographer Haskell Wexler and Director Andrew Davis
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

The story of "Medium Cool" (released in 1969) is quite remarkable. Writer/Director Haskell Wexler had already won an Oscar as Director of Photography for "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf," and was one of the most sought after cinematographers during that era. Although "Medium Cool" was a narrative feature film, Wexler used a documentary style of shooting, and actually had his fictional characters walk among the protest and National Guard participants in 1968 Chicago. Part of his second unit crew was Andrew Davis, the future director of "The Fugitive." He tells of his work on that film in the audio below, and photographer Joe Arce of HollywoodChicago.com shot the Exclusive Portraits above of the Haskell Wexler (who died in 2015) in 2013, and Andrew Davis in 2018.

"Medium Cool" tells the story of John Catselas (Robert Forster), a television news cameraman who freelances at the Democratic National Convention (actor Forster also was at the actual convention at Chicago's International Amphitheatre). At the same time, he is involved with Eileen (Verna Bloom) and her son Harold (Harold Blankenship), who lived in the Uptown neighborhood. When Eileen's son goes missing, she seeks Catselas in the midst of the protest area in Lincoln and Grant Parks. They come together, not realizing that Harold had already gone home. What happens next is part of Haskell Wexler's central thesis on how the camera captures reality.



Witnesses in Chicago: Warren Beatty (left, with Robert F. Kennedy) and Robert Klein, circa 1968

Photo credit: File Photos

Also witness to the Chicago events of 8/28/68 was actor/director Warren Beatty and comedian Robert Klein, from completely different vantage points. Beatty was a political activist, and was attending the Democratic Convention by invitation of presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey. Robert Klein was doing a comedy show for The Second City and was having dinner in the nearby Old Town neighborhood, but was still affected by events happening downtown. They offer their eyewitness accounts in the audio below. The whole world was watching.

In archival audio, Warren Beatty, Robert Klein and Andrew Davis offer their accounts of participation to Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, during the Chicago history day of August 28th, 1968.

"Medium Cool" is available on Blu-Ray/DVD through Eureka Entertainment and The Criterion Collection, and through digital download.



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