

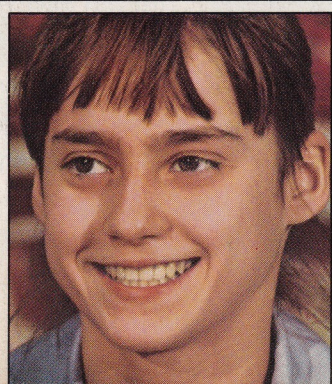
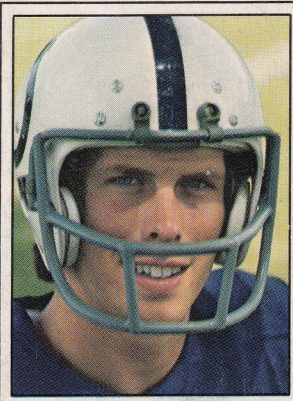
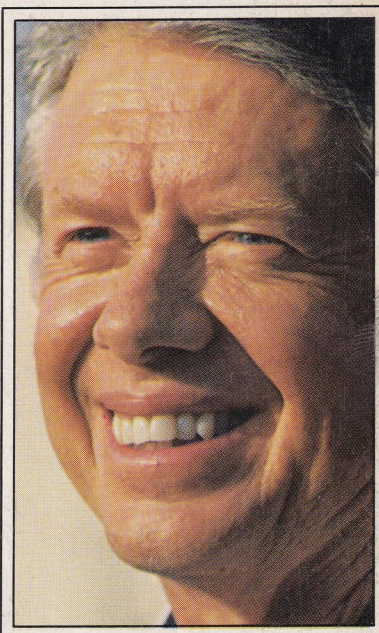
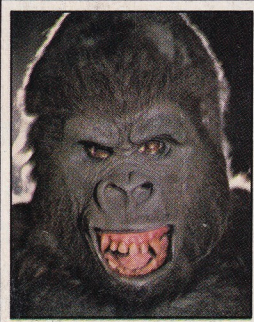
SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE

THE
25

People

weekly

MOST INTRIGUING PEOPLE OF 1976



& SOME PERSONALITIES & PREDICTIONS FOR 1977



PRODUCER DINO DE LAURENTIIS SEES AND MONKEY DOES— \$200 MILLION, HE HOPES

He first got his hairy hooks into the American psyche—and made money when practically nothing else did—in 1933. It was primal screen, an eternal beauty-and-beast fable which, according to psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, teaches children how love redeems the repressed animal side of sex. In any case, four decades later posters from that old epic still decorated the walls of U.S. teenage bedrooms, including that of an Italian émigrée named Francesca. Her mama, actress Sylvana Mangano, paid no mind, but then papa, super-producer Dino De Laurentiis, spied it and, he recalls: “I just slap my head and say, ‘Oh, my God, this is an inspiration. I remake the old [as he calls it] *Konk!*’ ”

One year, \$24 million, many mishaps (the 40-foot monster variously caught fire and fleas) and lawsuits later, *Konk* was in the can. In the meantime Paramount had perfected a distribution strategy to create not a picture but a pandemic. The swine flu forebodings may have been overblown, but no American this winter will escape the

King (rather than the Hong) Kong strain. Not only was the movie blitz-booked to open in 1,000 North American cities and hamlets on the same day, Dec. 17, but its merchandising (at no cost to the studio) is being implanted into everything from Schrafft’s candy to Slurpee soda, Sedgefield blue jeans and Jim Beam bourbon.

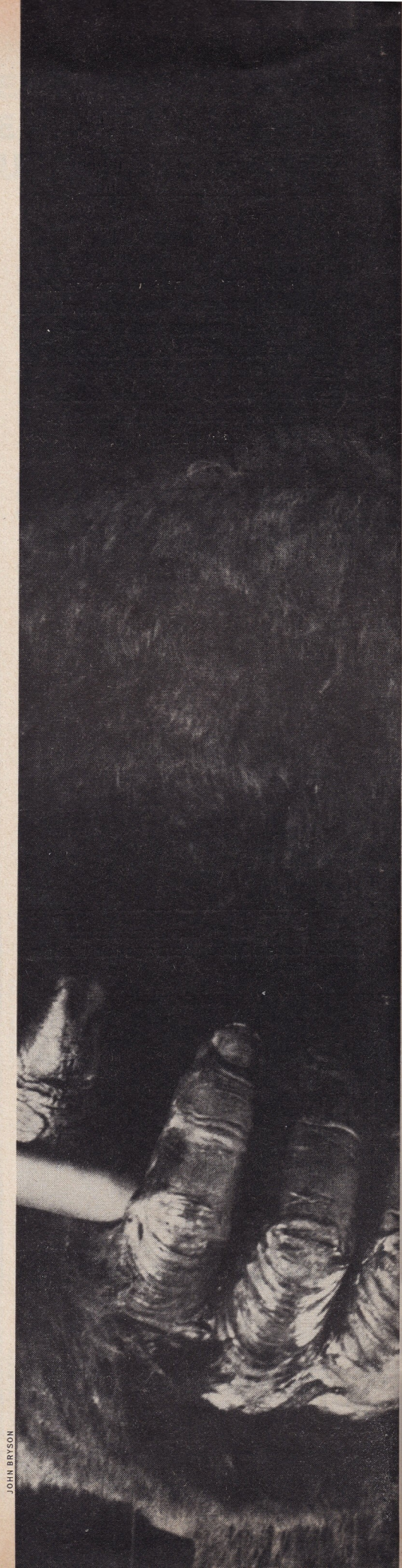
Whether or not the remake itself is a patch on the powerful if primitive RKO original, it is slicker and trendier. The Fay Wray character (played by starlet Jessica Lange) at one point chastens her anthropoid amour as “you god-damn chauvinist pig ape.” Some exegetes even see the picture as a parable condemning the West’s exploitation of the Third World. But De Laurentiis hardly seems the man to wage gorilla warfare on capitalism. Even if his projections are slightly wishful, Paramount chairman Barry Diller figures that from *King Kong* alone, and not counting the planned sequel, “Dino De Laurentiis will probably make more money next year than any other man in America.” □

OSCAR ABOLAFIA



As Hollywood would have it, this picture depicts two rather lovable monsters. The 5'4" one is Dino De Laurentiis.

The supersophisticated Kong, sighs a 'Jaws' exec, makes his shark "look like a balloon." Will its box office bite compare?



JOHN BRYSON

King Kong

