Abbie Then and Now: tales of Hoffman

redressing of that incarnation of themselves to the film's subjects. Their reaction to themselves peaks at something quite hilarious. Former White Panther John Sinclair admits that the dead-eyed boy he was would blacken the family-crazed father he has become. "If somebody walked up to me today and started talking like this, I'd probably be frightened, you know. Get this guy outta here," he laughs. Eat. Hat. Har.

Allen Ginsberg tries to forgive himself for saying the "wrong mantra all around", Jerry Rubin talks about waking up one morning in 1964 and finding that the whole scene he has been involved in had disappeared. Everyone had disconnected their phones and moved away.

The saddest confrontations of them and now are revealed in the lives of the two black in the film. Don Cox, a Black Panther who fled the country and now lives in Paris, speaks of the French-English, English-French no-man's language. He has had none of the '60s' second chances which seemed to have amounted to the white and not surprisingly, views his life as a kind of shadow of reality. "Nobody cares as long as I don't break the law. I'm satisfied here. I really don't want any attention," he says. We have no idea how he survives except as a kind of Kafkaesque Hunger Artist made up to look like God's lost Watusi.

Fred Hampton's wife and son have plunged from the poetry of the Movement into the reality of the '80s. The political dreams of the Fashers have been replaced by street-rapping. What is most interesting is that those of the '60s who changed least, Abbie Hoffman and movement lawyer William Kunstler, come across in some sense like the film's true conservatives. They found a space for themselves and a truth and it has protected them from worrying about the hereafter of other realities.

Nette Wild's

A Rustling of Leaves: Inside the Philippine Revolution

A Rustling of Leaves, Nette Wild's feature-length documentary about political conflicts in the Philippines, is a riveting film experience. It is beautifully photographed, dramatically constructed and overlaid with the sort of spontaneous footage that sticks in the mind weeks after viewing. Unfortunately, it fails a little short of providing the complete picture we need to understand the complexities of Third World power struggles.

Cinematographer Raul Tongas handed up a crew which collected an astounding 64,000 feet of film, much of it during two months of living underground with left-wing guerrillas (the New People's Army). From the opening shots of grossly underpaid workers harvesting bamboo it's clear the filmmakers were on the front line of the conflict. Even the talking heads are alive, especially in a disturbing interview with right-wing radio announcer Jim Pala, who, when he's not talking with Wild, is broadcasting the names of suspected leftists. This public service radio with a gruesome twist: those named are about to be decapitated by the 'bad boys' or death squads.

The camera also corners behind a truck as guerrillas wait to stage an ambush. The attack fails and, to his everlasting credit, Tongas keeps the camera rolling as he, the crew and the guerrillas flee for their lives.

Wild follows the debate as the guerrillas decide whether to execute a member-turning-traitor and cut away only as the trigger is pulled. The requisite is short; moments later she films the executioner consulting the father of the dead man.

Her support and affection for those of the left is unmistakable, perhaps no surprise after weeks of shared hardship and political action. But she's sold them a little short.

The opening moments of A Rustling of Leaves promise that "the six of clock news will never be the same again", implying that what we're about to see is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is not, however, quite whole. For example, Wild makes early mention of the six families who for all intents and purposes control the Philippines and are therefore the ultimate enemies of the leftists, legal and illegal. Yet that's the last we hear of the power-brokers. She doesn't tell us who they are, how they won the power or how they manage to hang onto it. Nor does she talk to them. Instead we see their presumed mouthpiece, Jim Pala, at work. He's a frightening individual but, ultimately, one-dimensional without some explanation of who he represents and how the hell a radio station can be made to resemble the fact-death announcements. Granted, the evening news rarely tells the full story of what's going on in lands far away, but even the most cursory television journalism involves giving the bad guy a chance to strull his stuff.

And, apart from a few distant shots of Cory Aquino being presidential, we don't see evidence of any changes the 'People's Revolution' might have achieved. Is her government nothing more than the military puppet show Wild implies? If so, such startling revelation needs to be backed up more by the animated graphics she uses to portray the evils of capitalism, imperialism and other philosophies this film so clearly opposes.

It's not that Wild and her crew don't have the skills. Their comprehensive coverage of leftist Bernabe Bescayno's unsuccessful attempt to win the election is superb. Sequences shot at his rallies leave the viewer dazed with perspiration from both the tropical heat and the ever-present threat of violence (Bescayno survived an assassination attempt).

A Rustling of Leaves is well seen. Even with the flaws it's a gripping two hours made all the more worthwhile by the four years it took Wild and her crew to complete the project. She's a filmmaker with imagination, tenacity and social conscience who deserves encouragement. If future projects make a greater effort to penetrate...
Janis Cole's and Holly Dale's

Calling The Shots

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ome are called bitches. Others are accused of being too weak. These are the women in the film industry who have given up the subordinate positions of continuity and production assistant to become "bosses," directors and producers; and they are the latest subjects to come under the scrutiny of documentary filmmakers Janis Cole and Holly Dale. Over 30 women, with a wide variety of interests and styles, are interviewed in different parts of North America and Europe. However, they all have one goal in common—they are determined to make films in an overwhelmingly male-dominated, highly-competitive industry.

The opening entry on the film Janis Cole portrays the dilemma of Dorothy Arzner, one of the few female directors from Hollywood's golden era of studio domination, was one of the first to prove that women are not completely "foul".

Themes are developed and tales unfolded from the impressive list of directors interviewed by Cole and Dale. Some of Europe's finest such as Agnes Varda, Chantal Ackerman and Jeanne Moreau compare experiences with their American counterparts: Donna Deitch, Lizzie Borden and Penelope Spheere.

Unfortunately, Calling The Shots is for the converted. One suspects that Cole and Dale decided on their thesis and then set out to prove it. Claudia Weill told them that she got out of making documentaries because it cost her so much money. Sandy Wilson says, "People think of economics as a barrier, but I think it's an opportunity." But as much as one might want to be sympathetic to the cause, Calling The Shots is ultimately disappointing. It is a premise that has great potential but regrettably it does not succeed beyond a competent, rather dull film. Cole and Dale selected some of the most intelligent and creative talents in the industry, and then treated them in a very formulaic manner. They use the endless "talking heads" method, with precious little additional texture by way of background, or atmosphere to differentiate one filmmaker from another. Only short film clips are shown as introduction.

Cole and Dale seem so delighted to meet some of these women—many of whom, presumably, are role models—that they counted on their subjects' personality and intelligence to carry the film through. Very little discussion is initiated about their diverse styles and feminist perspectives, although this is hinted at near the end of the film. But as much as one might want to be sympathetic to the cause, Calling The Shots is ultimately disappointing. It is a premise that has great potential but regrettably it does not succeed beyond a competent, rather dull film. Cole and Dale selected some of the most intelligent and creative talents in the industry, and then treated them in a very formulaic manner. They use the endless "talking heads" method, with precious little additional texture by way of background, or atmosphere to differentiate one filmmaker from another. Only short film clips are shown as introduction.

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