



By DON CRAIG

The New Powell Tackles Fascists in Argentina

The new Dick Powell did a beautiful job of solving a couple of straight killings and making the crooks involved wish they hadn't done it in "Murder, My Sweet." He has a bit more trouble when he takes on the collaborationists of France and the Fascists of Argentina in "Cornered," which opened yesterday at the Metropolitan.

To be brutally honest, he almost misses, both as the new Mr. Powell and as ex-British Lieut. Gerard. You have the feeling that the former is a bit self-conscious the second time around. And you have the feeling

"Cornered" is the almost complete lack of incidental crowds. No matter whether it's a bar, a hotel lobby, a cafe, a sidewalk or even a subway station, there's never anybody on hand but Lieut. Gerard and whomsoever he is involved with at the moment.

Maybe it's art. Maybe Argentina is like that. Or maybe the picture got caught in a Hollywood extra strike. Whichever it is, it's another aspect of "Cornered" you'll probably enjoy arguing.



POWELL AND SLEZAK
Hero is outclassed.

that Lieut. Gerard is just plain stupid.

Actually, both do manage to make the grade: Powell because, as he demonstrated in "Murder, My Sweet," does pack genuine dramatic ability. And Lieut. Gerard, since he's the hero of the piece and can't help but come out on top.

HEADLINE COINCIDENCE

What really makes "Cornered" of importance — and Hollywood won a neat gamble to achieve it—is the coincidence of having a picture ripping into Nazi-Fascist sympathizers in Argentina playing day and date with the State Department's blast on the same subject in headlines all over the country.

It's a shame that what "Cornered" tries to say is of more interest, for the most part, than the way it says it. But Collaborationist Jarnac's sneering prophecy—in effect: "You defeated us once before and we rose again on the dregs of victory you carelessly let slip thru your fingers . . . and we'll do it again—is enough to make everybody who hears him stop and think, if only for a moment. So is his other warning in approximately these words: "Wherever you let poverty and disease and unrest go unheeded, you leave fertile ground for our seeds' . . ."

GERARD IS OUTCLASSED

The trouble, dramatically speaking, is that both the Fascist and the anti-Fascist are too big time for poor Lieut. Gerard.

His only interest is uncovering and summarily bumping off Collaborationist Jarnac, who gave the order to slaughter Gerard's French bride along with other townspeople during the war. It takes him from Normandy to Marseilles, Berne and, finally, Buenos Aires. It takes him in and out of more doors than have graced any one movie since "Grand Hotel." He also pulls his six-shooter out from under his belt so many times he must have developed callouses over his appendix. Despite the suspense of all this, you can't help wishing he would forget his own little peeve and help, rather than continually annoy, the intelligent patriots who are really out to bring Jarnac to public justice.

Walter Slezak does a beautiful job as International Confidence Man Inca, self-styled "camp follower of culture and fine wines." Micheline Cheirel is properly bewildered as young Mme. Jarnac. And Nina Vale makes an effectively sultry lady menace.

Most noticeable peculiarity about

Don Craig, "The New Powell Tackles Fascists in Argentina," Washington Daily News,
February 15, 1946.

Courtesy Adrian Scott Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming-Laramie.