

John Wayne: Playboy Interview / MAY 1971

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*For more than 41 years, the barrel-chested physique and laconic derring-do of John Wayne have been prototypical of gung-ho virility, Hollywood style. In more than 200 films—from *The Big Trail* in 1930 to the soon-to-be-released *Million Dollar Kidnapping*—Wayne has charged the beaches at Iwo Jima, beaten back the Indians at Fort Apache and bloodied his fists in the name of frontier justice so often—and with nary a defeat—that he has come to occupy a unique niche in American folklore. The older generation still remembers him as Singing Sandy, one of the screen's first crooning cowpokes; the McLuhan generation has grown up with him on *The Late Show*. With Cooper and Gable and Tracy gone, the last of the legendary stars survives and flourishes as never before.*

*His milieu is still the action Western, in which Wayne's simplistic plotlines and easily discernible good and bad guys attest to a romantic way of life long gone from the American scene—if indeed it ever really existed. Even his screen name—changed from Marion Michael Morrison—conveys the man's plain, rugged cinematic personality. Fittingly, he was the first of the Western movie heroes to poke a villain in the jaw. Wearing the symbolic white Stetson—which never seemed to fall off, even in the wildest combat—he made scores of three-and-a-half-day formula oaters such as *Pals of the Saddle* in the Thirties before being tapped by director John Ford to star in *Stagecoach*—the 1939 classic that paved the way for his subsequent success in such milestone Westerns as *Red River*, the ultimate epic of the cattle drive, and *The Alamo*, a patriotic paeon financed by Wayne with \$1.5 million of his own money.*

*By 1969, having made the list of Top Ten box-office attractions for 19 consecutive years, Wayne had grossed more than \$400 million for his studios—more than any other star in motion-picture history. But because of his uncompromising squareness—and his archconservative politics—he was still largely a profit without honor in Hollywood. That oversight was belatedly rectified when his peers voted the tearful star a 1970 Oscar for his portrayal of Rooster Cogburn, the tobacco-chewing, hard-drinking, straight-shooting, patch-eyed marshal in *True Grit*—a possibly unwitting exercise in self-parody that good-naturedly spoofed dozens of his past characterizations. President Nixon remarked several months later at a press conference that he and his family had recently enjoyed a screening of *Chisum*, adding: "I think that John Wayne is a very fine actor."*

Long active in Republican politics, Wayne has vigorously campaigned and helped raise funds for Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George Murphy, Barry Goldwater and Los Angeles' maverick Democratic mayor Sam Yorty. Before the 1968 campaign, a right-wing Texas billionaire had urged Wayne to serve as vice presidential running mate to George Wallace, an overture he rejected. Not least among the Texan's reasons for wanting to draft Wayne was the actor's obdurately hawkish support of the Indochina war—as

*glorified in his production of *The Green Berets*, which had the dubious distinction of being probably the only pro-war movie made in Hollywood during the Sixties.*

*Last fall, Wayne's first television special—a 90-minute quasi-historical pageant dripping with God-home-and-country hyperbole—racked up such a hefty Nielsen rating that it was rebroadcast in April. At year's end, Wayne was named one of the nation's most admired entertainers in a Gallup Poll. Assigned by *Playboy* shortly afterward to interview the superstar, Contributing Editor Richard Warren Lewis journeyed to Wayne's sprawling (11-room, seven-bath) \$175,000 bayfront residence on the Gold Coast of Newport Beach, California, where he lives with his third Latin wife—Peruvian-born Pilar Pallete—and three of his seven children. Of his subject, Lewis writes:*

"Wayne greeted me on a manicured lawn against a backdrop of sailboats, motor cruisers and yachts plying Newport harbor. Wearing a realistic toupee, Wayne at first appeared considerably younger than he is; only the liver spots on both hands and the lines in his jut-jawed face told of his 63 years. But at 6'4" and 244 pounds, it still almost seems as if he could have single-handedly mopped up all those bad guys from the Panhandle to Guadalcanal. His sky-blue eyes, though somewhat rheumy from the previous night's late hours, reinforced the image.

"Adjourning to the breakfast room, we spoke for several hours while Wayne enjoyed the first Dungeness crabs of the season, drank black coffee and fielded phone calls. One of the calls settled details of an imminent visit from the Congolese ambassador. (Wayne and several associates own lucrative mineral rights in the Congo.) Another call confirmed a \$100 bet on the Santa Anita Handicap, to be contested later that day. (Wayne lost.)

"'Christ, we better get going,' he said shortly before one o'clock. 'They're holding lunch for us.' He led the way past a den and trophy room stacked with such memorabilia as photos of his 18 grandchildren and the largest collection of Hopi Indian katchina dolls west of Barry Goldwater. Outside the house, past jacaranda and palm trees and a kidney-shaped swimming pool, we reached a seven-foot-high concrete wall at the entryway and boarded Wayne's dark-green Bonneville station wagon, a production model with only two modifications—a sun roof raised six inches to accommodate the driver's 10-gallon hat, and two telephone channels at the console beside him.

*"At Newport harbor, we boarded Wayne's awesome *Wild Goose II*, a converted U.S. Navy mine sweeper that saw service during the last six months of World War II and has been refitted as a pleasure cruiser. After a quick tour of the 136-foot vessel—which included a look at the twin 500-horsepower engines, clattering teletype machines (*A.P.*, *U.P.I.*, *Reuter's*, *Tass*) on the bridge disgorging wire dispatches, and the lavishly appointed bedroom and dressing suites—we were seated at a polished-walnut table in the main saloon.*

"Over a high-protein diet lunch of char-broiled steak, lettuce and cottage cheese, Wayne reminisced about the early days of Hollywood, when he was making two-reelers for \$500 each. Later that afternoon, he produced a bottle of his favorite tequila. One of the eight

crew members anointed our glasses with a dash of fresh lemon juice, coarse salt and heaping ice shards that, Wayne said, had been chopped from a 1000-year-old glacier on a recent Wild Goose visit to Alaska. Sustained by these potent drinks, our conversation—ranging from Wayne's early days in filmmaking to the current state of the industry—continued until dusk, and resumed a week later in the offices of Wayne's Batjac Productions, on the grounds of Paramount Pictures—one of the last of Hollywood's rapidly dwindling contingent of major studios."

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about the state of the motion-picture business today?

WAYNE: I'm glad I won't be around much longer to see what they do with it. The men who control the big studios today are stock manipulators and bankers. They know nothing about our business. They're in it for the buck. The only thing they can do is say, "Jeez, that picture with what's-her-name running around the park naked made money, so let's make another one. If that's what they want, let's give it to them." Some of these guys remind me of high-class whores. Look at 20th Century-Fox, where they're making movies like Myra Breckinridge. Why doesn't that son of a bitch Darryl Zanuck get himself a striped silk shirt and learn how to play the piano? Then he could work in any room in the house. As much as I couldn't stand some of the old-time moguls—especially Harry Cohn—these men took an interest in the future of their business. They had integrity. There was a stretch when they realized that they'd made a hero out of the goddamn gangster heavy in crime movies, that they were doing a discredit to our country. So the moguls voluntarily took it upon themselves to stop making gangster pictures. No censorship from the outside. They were responsible to the public. But today's executives don't give a damn. In their efforts to grab the box office that these sex pictures are attracting, they're producing garbage. They're taking advantage of the fact that nobody wants to be called a bluenose. But they're going to reach the point where the American people will say, "The hell with this!" And once they do, we'll have censorship in every state, in every city, and there'll be no way you can make even a worthwhile picture for adults and have it acceptable for national release.

PLAYBOY: Won't the present rating system prevent that from happening?

WAYNE: No. Every time they rate a picture, they let a little more go. Ratings are ridiculous to begin with. There was no need for rated pictures when the major studios were in control. Movies were once made for the whole family. Now, with the kind of junk the studios are cranking out—and the jacked-up prices they're charging for the privilege of seeing it—the average family is staying home and watching television. I'm quite sure that within two or three years, Americans will be completely fed up with these perverted films.

PLAYBOY: What kind of films do you consider perverted?

WAYNE: Oh, Easy Rider, Midnight Cowboy—that kind of thing. Wouldn't you say that the wonderful love of those two men in Midnight Cowboy, a story about two fags, qualifies? But don't get me wrong. As far as a man and a woman is concerned, I'm awfully happy there's a thing called sex. It's an extra something God gave us. I see no reason why it shouldn't be in pictures. Healthy, lusty sex is wonderful.

PLAYBOY: How graphically do you think it should be depicted on the screen?

WAYNE: When you get hairy, sweaty bodies in the foreground, it becomes distasteful, unless you use a pretty heavy gauze. I can remember seeing pictures that Ernst Lubitsch made in the Thirties that were beautifully risqué—and you'd certainly send your children to see them. They were done with intimation. They got over everything these other pictures do without showing the hair and the sweat. When you think of the wonderful picture fare we've had through the years and realize we've come to this shit, it's disgusting. If they want to continue making those pictures, fine. But my career will have ended. I've already reached a pretty good height right now in a business that I feel is going to fade out from its own vulgarity.

PLAYBOY: Don't gory films like *The Wild Bunch* also contribute to that vulgarity?

WAYNE: Certainly. To me, *The Wild Bunch* was distasteful. It would have been a good picture without the gore. Pictures go too far when they use that kind of realism, when they have shots of blood spurting out and teeth flying, and when they throw liver out to make it look like people's insides. *The Wild Bunch* was one of the first to go that far in realism, and the curious went to see it. That may make the bankers and the stock promoters think this is a necessary ingredient for successful motion pictures. They seem to forget the one basic principle of our business—illusion. We're in the business of magic. I don't think it hurts a child to see anything that has the illusion of violence in it. All our fairy tales have some kind of violence—the good knight riding to kill the dragon, etc. Why do we have to show the knight spreading the serpent's guts all over the candy mountain?

PLAYBOY: Proponents of screen realism say that a public inured to bloody war-news footage on television isn't going to accept the mere illusion of violence in movies.

WAYNE: Perhaps we have run out of imagination on how to effect illusion because of the satiating realism of a real war on television. But haven't we got enough of that in real life? Why can't the same point be made just as effectively in a drama without all the gore? The violence in my pictures, for example, is lusty and a little bit humorous, because I believe humor nullifies violence. Like in one picture, directed by Henry Hathaway, this heavy was sticking a guy's head in a barrel of water. I'm watching this and I don't like it one bit, so I pick up this pick handle and I yell, "Hey!" and cock him across the head. Down he went—with no spurting blood. Well, that got a hell of a laugh because of the way I did it. That's my kind of violence.

PLAYBOY: Audiences may like your kind of violence on the screen, but they'd never heard profanity in a John Wayne movie until *True Grit*. Why did you finally decide to use such earthy language in a film?

WAYNE: In my other pictures, we've had an explosion or something go off when a bad word was said. This time we didn't. It's profanity, all right, but I doubt if there's anybody in the United States who hasn't heard the expression son of a bitch or bastard. We felt it was acceptable in this instance. At the emotional high point in that particular picture, I felt it was OK to use it. It would have been pretty hard to say "you illegitimate sons of so-and-so!"

PLAYBOY: In the past, you've often said that if the critics liked one of your films, you must be doing something wrong. But *True Grit* was almost unanimously praised by the critics. Were you doing something wrong? Or were they right for a change?

WAYNE: Well, I knew that *True Grit* was going to go—even with the critics. Once in a while, you come onto a story that has such great humor. The author caught the flavor of Mark Twain, to my way of thinking.

PLAYBOY: The reviewers thought you set out to poke fun at your own image in *True Grit*.

WAYNE: It wasn't really a parody. Rooster Cogburn's attitude toward life was maybe a little different, but he was basically the same character I've always played.

PLAYBOY: Do you think *True Grit* is the best film you've ever made?

WAYNE: No, I don't. Two classic Westerns were better—*Stagecoach* and *Red River*—and a third, *The Searchers*, which I thought deserved more praise than it got, and *The Quiet Man* was certainly one of the best. Also the one that all the college cinematography students run all the time—*The Long Voyage Home*.

PLAYBOY: Which was the worst?

WAYNE: Well, there's about 50 of them that are tied. I can't even remember the names of some of the leading ladies in those first ones, let alone the names of the pictures.

PLAYBOY: At what point in your career were you nicknamed Duke?

WAYNE: That goes back to my childhood. I was called Duke after a dog—a very good Airedale out of the Baldwin Kennels. Republic Pictures gave me a screen credit on one of the early pictures and called me Michael Burn. On another one, they called me Duke Morrison. Then they decided Duke Morrison didn't have enough prestige. My real name, Marion Michael Morrison, didn't sound American enough for them. So they came up with John Wayne, I didn't have any say in it, but I think it's a great name. It's short and strong and to the point. It took me a long time to get used to it, though. I still don't recognize it when somebody calls me John.

PLAYBOY: After giving you a new name, did the studio decide on any particular screen image for you?

WAYNE: They made me a singing cowboy. The fact that I couldn't sing—or play the guitar—became terribly embarrassing to me, especially on personal appearances. Every time I made a public appearance, the kids insisted that I sing *The Desert Song* or something. But I couldn't take along the fella who played the guitar out on one side of the camera and the fella who sang on the other side of the camera. So finally I went to the head of the studio and said, "Screw this, I can't handle it." And I quit doing those kind of pictures. They went out and brought the best hillbilly recording artist in the country to Hollywood to take my place. For the first couple of pictures, they had a hard time selling him, but he finally caught on. His name was Gene Autry. It was 1939 before I made *Stagecoach*—the picture that really made me a star.

PLAYBOY: Like Stagecoach, most of the 204 pictures you've made—including your latest, Rio Lobo—have been Westerns. Don't the plots all start to seem the same?

WAYNE: Rio Lobo certainly wasn't any different from most of my Westerns. Nor was Chisum, the one before that. But there still seems to be a very hearty public appetite for this kind of film—what some writers call a typical John Wayne Western. That's a label they use disparagingly.

PLAYBOY: Does that bother you?

WAYNE: Nope. If I depended on the critics' judgment and recognition, I'd never have gone into the motion-picture business.

PLAYBOY: Did last year's Academy Award for True Grit mean a lot to you?

WAYNE: Sure it did—even if it took the industry 40 years to get around to it. But I think both of my two previous Oscar nominations—for She Wore a Yellow Ribbon and Sands of Iwo Jima—were worthy of the honor. I know the Marines and all the American Armed Forces were quite proud of my portrayal of Stryker, the Marine sergeant in Iwo. At an American Legion convention in Florida, General MacArthur told me, "You represent the American serviceman better than the American serviceman himself." And, at 42, in She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, I played the same character that I played in True Grit at 62. But I really didn't need an Oscar. I'm a box-office champion with a record they're going to have to run to catch. And they won't.

PLAYBOY: A number of critics claim that your record rests on your appeal to adolescents. Do you think that's true?

WAYNE: Let's say I hope that I appeal to the more carefree times in a person's life rather than to his reasoning adulthood. I'd just like to be an image that reminds someone of joy rather than of the problems of the world.

PLAYBOY: Do you think young people still feel strongly about you?

WAYNE: Luckily so far, it seems they kind of consider me an older friend, somebody believable and down-to-earth. I've avoided being mean or petty, but I've never avoided being rough or tough. I've only played one cautious part in my life, in Allegheny Uprising. My parts have ranged from that rather dull character to Ralls in Wake of the Red Witch, who was a nice enough fella sober, but bestial when he was drunk, and certainly a rebel. I was also a rebel in Reap the Wild Wind with De Mille. I've played many parts in which I've rebelled against something in society. I was never much of a joiner. Kids do join things, but they also like to consider themselves individuals capable of thinking for themselves. So do I.

PLAYBOY: But isn't your kind of screen rebellion very different from that of today's young people?

WAYNE: Sure. Mine is a personal rebellion against the monotony of life, against the status quo. The rebellion in these kids—especially in the SDSers and those groups—seems to be a kind of dissension by rote.

PLAYBOY: Meaning what?

WAYNE: Just this: The articulate liberal group has caused certain things in our country, and I wonder how long the young people who read Playboy are going to allow these things to go on. George Putnam, the Los Angeles news analyst, put it quite succinctly when he said, "What kind of a nation is it that fails to understand that freedom of speech and assembly are one thing, and anarchy and treason are quite another, that allows known Communists to serve as teachers to pervert the natural loyalties and ideals of our kids, filling them with fear and doubt and hate and down-grading patriotism and all our heroes of the past?"

PLAYBOY: You blame all this on liberals?

WAYNE: Well, the liberals seem to be quite willing to have Communists teach their kids in school. The Communists realized that they couldn't start a workers' revolution in the United States, since the workers were too affluent and too progressive. So the Commies decided on the next-best thing, and that's to start on the schools, start on the kids. And they've managed to do it. They're already in colleges; now they're getting into high schools. I wouldn't mind if they taught my children the basic philosophy of communism, in theory and how it works in actuality. But I don't want somebody like Angela Davis inculcating an enemy doctrine in my kids' minds.

PLAYBOY: Angela Davis claims that those who would revoke her teaching credentials on ideological grounds are actually discriminating against her because she's black. Do you think there's any truth in that?

WAYNE: With a lot of blacks, there's quite a bit of resentment along with their dissent, and possibly rightfully so. But we can't all of a sudden get down on our knees and turn everything over to the leadership of the blacks. I believe in white supremacy until the blacks are educated to a point of responsibility. I don't believe in giving authority and positions of leadership and judgment to irresponsible people.

PLAYBOY: Are you equipped to judge which blacks are irresponsible and which of their leaders inexperienced?

WAYNE: It's not my judgment. The academic community has developed certain tests that determine whether the blacks are sufficiently equipped scholastically. But some blacks have tried to force the issue and enter college when they haven't passed the tests and don't have the requisite background.

PLAYBOY: How do they get that background?

WAYNE: By going to school. I don't know why people insist that blacks have been forbidden their right to go to school. They were allowed in public schools wherever I've been. Even if they don't have the proper credentials for college, there are courses to help them become eligible. But if they aren't academically ready for that step, I don't think they should be allowed in. Otherwise, the academic society is brought down to the lowest common denominator.

PLAYBOY: But isn't it true that we're never likely to rectify the inequities in our educational system until some sort of remedial education is given to disadvantaged minority groups?

WAYNE: What good would it do to register anybody in a class of higher algebra or calculus if they haven't learned to count? There has to be a standard. I don't feel guilty about the fact that five or 10 generations ago these people were slaves. Now, I'm not condoning slavery. It's just a fact of life, like the kid who gets infantile paralysis and has to wear braces so he can't play football with the rest of us. I will say this, though: I think any black who can compete with a white today can get a better break than a white man. I wish they'd tell me where in the world they have it better than right here in America.

PLAYBOY: Many militant blacks would argue that they have it better almost anywhere else. Even in Hollywood, they feel that the color barrier is still up for many kinds of jobs. Do you limit the number of blacks you use in your pictures?

WAYNE: Oh, Christ no. I've directed two pictures and I gave the blacks their proper position. I had a black slave in *The Alamo*, and I had a correct number of blacks in *The Green Berets*. If it's supposed to be a black character, naturally I use a black actor. But I don't go so far as hunting for positions for them. I think the Hollywood studios are carrying their tokenism a little too far. There's no doubt that 10 percent of the population is black, or colored, or whatever they want to call themselves; they certainly aren't Caucasian. Anyway, I suppose there should be the same percentage of the colored race in films as in society. But it can't always be that way. There isn't necessarily going to be 10 percent of the grips or sound men who are black, because more than likely, 10 percent haven't trained themselves for that type of work.

PLAYBOY: Can blacks be integrated into the film industry if they are denied training and education?

WAYNE: It's just as hard for a white man to get a card in the Hollywood craft unions.

PLAYBOY: That's hardly the point, but let's change the subject. For years American Indians have played an important—if subordinate—role in your Westerns. Do you feel any empathy with them?

WAYNE: I don't feel we did wrong in taking this great country away from them, if that's what you're asking. Our so-called stealing of this country from them was just a matter of survival. There were great numbers of people who needed new land, and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves.

PLAYBOY: Weren't the Indians—by virtue of prior possession—the rightful owners of the land?

WAYNE: Look, I'm sure there have been inequalities. If those inequalities are presently affecting any of the Indians now alive, they have a right to a court hearing. But what happened 100 years ago in our country can't be blamed on us today.

PLAYBOY: Indians today are still being dehumanized on reservations.

WAYNE: I'm quite sure that the concept of a government-run reservation would have an ill effect on anyone. But that seems to be what the socialists are working for now—to have everyone cared for from cradle to grave.

PLAYBOY: Indians on reservations are more neglected than cared for. Even if you accept the principle of expropriation, don't you think a more humane solution to the Indian problem could have been devised?

WAYNE: This may come as a surprise to you, but I wasn't alive when reservations were created—even if I do look that old. I have no idea what the best method of dealing with the Indians in the 1800s would have been. Our forefathers evidently thought they were doing the right thing.

PLAYBOY: Do you think the Indians encamped on Alcatraz have a right to that land?

WAYNE: Well, I don't know of anybody else who wants it. The fellas who were taken off it sure don't want to go back there, including the guards. So as far as I'm concerned, I think we ought to make a deal with the Indians. They should pay as much for Alcatraz as we paid them for Manhattan. I hope they haven't been careless with their wampum.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about the government grant for a university and cultural center that these Indians have demanded as "reparations"?

WAYNE: What happened between their forefathers and our forefathers is so far back—right, wrong or indifferent—that I don't see why we owe them anything. I don't know why the government should give them something that it wouldn't give me.

PLAYBOY: Do you think they've had the same advantages and opportunities that you've had?

WAYNE: I'm not gonna give you one of those I-was-a-poor-boy-and-I-pulled-myself-up-by-my-bootstraps stories, but I've gone without a meal or two in my life, and I still don't expect the government to turn over any of its territory to me. Hard times aren't something I can blame my fellow citizens for. Years ago, I didn't have all the opportunities, either. But you can't whine and bellyache 'cause somebody else got a good break and you didn't, like these Indians are. We'll all be on a reservation soon if the socialists keep subsidizing groups like them with our tax money.

PLAYBOY: In your distaste for socialism, aren't you overlooking the fact that many worthwhile and necessary government services—such as Social Security and Medicare—derived from essentially socialistic programs evolved during the Thirties?

WAYNE: I know all about that. In the late Twenties, when I was a sophomore at USC, I was a socialist myself—but not when I left. The average college kid idealistically wishes everybody could have ice cream and cake for every meal. But as he gets older and gives more thought to his and his fellow man's responsibilities, he finds that it can't work out that way—that some people just won't carry their load.

PLAYBOY: What about welfare recipients?

WAYNE: I believe in welfare—a welfare work program. I don't think a fella should be able to sit on his backside and receive welfare. I'd like to know why well-educated idiots keep apologizing for lazy and complaining people who think the world owes them a living. I'd like to know why they make excuses for cowards who spit in the faces of the police and then run behind the judicial sob sisters. I can't understand these people who

carry placards to save the life of some criminal, yet have no thought for the innocent victim.

PLAYBOY: Who are "these people" you're talking about?

WAYNE: Entertainers like Steve Allen and his cronies who went up to Northern California and held placards to save the life of that guy Caryl Chessman. I just don't understand these things. I can't understand why our national leadership isn't willing to take the responsibility of leadership instead of checking polls and listening to the few that scream. Why are we allowing ourselves to become a mobocracy instead of a democracy? When you allow unlawful acts to go unpunished, you're moving toward a government of men rather than a government of law; you're moving toward anarchy. And that's exactly what we're doing. We allow dirty loudmouths to publicly call policemen pigs; we let a fella like William Kunstler make a speech to the Black Panthers saying that the ghetto is theirs, and that if police come into it, they have a right to shoot them. Why is that dirty, no-good son of a bitch allowed to practice law?

PLAYBOY: What's your source for that statement you attribute to Kunstler?

WAYNE: It appeared in a Christian Anti-Communism Crusade letter written by Fred Schwarz on August 1, 1969. Here, I'll read it to you: "The notorious left-wing attorney, Bill Kunstler, spoke on political prisoners and political freedom at the National Conference for a United Front Against Fascism, which was held in Oakland, California, July 18, 19 and 20, 1969. He urged blacks to kill white policemen when they entered the black ghetto. He told the story of how a white policeman, John Gleason, was stomped to death in Plainfield, New Jersey. The crowd broke into prolonged applause. Kunstler proceeded to state that, in his opinion, Gleason deserved that death.... Kunstler pointed out that no white policeman has set foot in the black ghetto of Plainfield, New Jersey, since July 1967." That could turn out to be a terrible thing he said. Pretty soon there'll be a bunch of whites who'll say, "Well, if that's their land, then this is ours. They'd better not trespass on it." It can work two ways.

PLAYBOY: What's your opinion of the stated goals of the Black Panthers?

WAYNE: Quite obviously, they represent a danger to society. They're a violent group of young men and women—adventurous, opinionated and dedicated—and they throw their disdain in our face. Now, I hear some of these liberals saying they'd like to be held as white hostages in the Black Panther offices and stay there so that they could see what happens on these early-morning police raids. It might be a better idea for these good citizens to go with the police on a raid. When they search a Panther hideout for firearms, let these do-gooders knock and say, "Open the door in the name of the law" and get shot at.

PLAYBOY: Why do you think many young people—black and white—support the Panthers?

WAYNE: They're standing up for what they feel is right, not for what they think is right—'cause they don't think. As a kid, the Panther ideas probably would have intrigued me. When I was a little kid, you could be adventurous like that without hurting anybody. There were periods when you could blow the valve and let off some steam. Like

Halloween. You'd talk about it for three months ahead of time, and then that night you'd go out and stick the hose in the lawn, turn it on and start singing Old Black Joe or something. And when people came out from their Halloween party, you'd lift the hose and wet them down. And while you were running, the other kids would be stealing the ice cream from the party. All kinds of rebellious actions like that were accepted for that one day. Then you could talk about it for three months afterward. That took care of about six months of the year. There was another day called the Fourth of July, when you could go out and shoot firecrackers and burn down two or three buildings. So there were two days a year. Now those days are gone. You can't have firecrackers, you can't have explosives, you can't have this—don't do this, don't do that. Don't...don't...don't. A continual don't until the kids are ready to do almost anything rebellious. The government makes the rules, so now the running of our government is the thing they're rebelling against. For a lot of those kids, that's just being adventurous. They're not deliberately setting out to undermine the foundations of our great country.

PLAYBOY: Is that what you think they're doing?

WAYNE: They're doing their level worst—without knowing it. How 'bout all the kids that were at the Chicago Democratic Convention? They were conned into doing hysterical things by a bunch of activists.

PLAYBOY: What sort of activists?

WAYNE: A lot of Communist-activated people. I know communism's a horrible word to some people. They laugh and say, "He'll be finding them under his bed tomorrow." But perhaps that's because their kid hasn't been inculcated yet. Dr. Herbert Marcuse, the political philosopher at the University of California at San Diego, who is quite obviously a Marxist, put it very succinctly when he said, "We will use the anarchists."

PLAYBOY: Why do you think leftist ideologues such as Marcuse have become heroes on so many of the nation's campuses?

WAYNE: Marcuse has become a hero only for an articulate clique. The men that give me faith in my country are fellas like Spiro Agnew, not the Marcuses. They've attempted in every way to humiliate Agnew. They've tried the old Rooseveltian thing of trying to laugh him out of political value of his party. Every comedian's taken a crack at him. But I bet if you took a poll today, he'd probably be one of the most popular men in the United States. Nobody likes Spiro Agnew but the people. Yet he and other responsible government leaders are booed and pelted when they speak on college campuses.

PLAYBOY: Beyond the anti-administration demonstrations on campuses, do you think there's any justification for such tactics as student occupation of college administrative offices?

WAYNE: One or two percent of the kids is involved in things like that. But they get away with it because 10 percent of the teaching community is behind them. I see on TV how, when the police are trying to keep the kids in line, like up at the University of California at Berkeley, all of a sudden there's a bunch of martyr-professors trying to egg the police into violent action.

PLAYBOY: If you were faced with such a confrontation, how would you handle it?

WAYNE: Well, when I went to USC, if anybody had gone into the president's office and shit in his wastepaper basket and used the dirt to write vulgar words on the wall, not only the football team but the average kid on campus would have gone to work on the guy. There doesn't seem to be respect for authority anymore; these student dissenters act like children who have to have their own way on everything. They're immature and living in a little world all their own. Just like hippie dropouts, they're afraid to face the real competitive world.

PLAYBOY: What makes you, at the age of 63, feel qualified to comment on the fears and motivations of the younger generation?

WAYNE: I've experienced a lot of the same things that kids today are going through, and I think many of them admire me because I haven't been afraid to say that I drink a little whiskey, that I've done a lot of things wrong in my life, that I'm as imperfect as they all are. Christ, I don't claim to have the answers, but I feel compelled to bring up the fact that under the guise of doing good, these kids are causing a hell of a lot of irreparable damage, and they're starting something they're not gonna be able to finish. Every bit of rampant anarchy has provoked a little more from somebody else. And when they start shooting policemen, the time has come to start knocking them off, as far as I'm concerned.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean by "knocking them off"?

WAYNE: I'd throw 'em in the can if I could. But if they try to kill you, I'd sure as hell shoot back. I think we should break up those organizations or make 'em illegal. The American public is getting sick and tired of what these young people are doing. But it's really partly the public's own fault for allowing the permissiveness that's been going on for the past 15 or 20 years. By permissiveness, I mean simply following Dr. Spock's system of raising children. But that kind of permissiveness isn't unique to young people. Our entire society has promoted an "anything goes" attitude in every area of life and in every American institution. Look at the completely irresponsible editorship of our country's newspapers. By looking for provocative things to put on their front pages, they're encouraging these kids to act the way they're acting. I wonder even more about the responsibility of the press when I read about events like the so-called My Lai massacre in Vietnam. The press and the communications system jumped way ahead of the trials. At the time, they made accusations that I doubted they could back up; frankly, I hoped they couldn't. Well, it turns out there may have been something to it. But I could show you pictures of what the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong are doing to our people over there. I was at a place called Dak Song, where the children were all burned to death by the V.C., and that's not an unusual thing. But for some reason, our newspapers have never printed pictures or stories about it. With all the terrible things that are being done throughout the world, it has to be one little incident in the United States Army—and the use of the word massacre—that causes the uproar.

PLAYBOY: Don't you deplore what happened at My Lai?

WAYNE: Not only do I deplore it, but so does the Army—which conducted an extensive investigation and charged everyone connected with the alleged crime.

PLAYBOY: Does the fact that the Viet Cong have systematically engaged in atrocities excuse our forces for resorting to the same thing?

WAYNE: No, absolutely not. But if your men go to a supposedly peaceful village and the occupants start shooting at them, they're going to have to shoot back to defend their own lives.

PLAYBOY: The reports say our GIs slaughtered unarmed civilians and babies at My Lai; no one was shooting at them.

WAYNE: If, after going into the town, they brutally killed these people, that's one thing. If they were getting shot at from that town and then they fired back, that's a completely different situation. But you're bringing up the stuff that's being debated in the trials. What I resent is that even before the trials, this stuff was even less of a proven fact, yet the newspapers printed it anyway.

PLAYBOY: Do you think there's a credibility gap between the way the war has been reported and the way it's actually being fought—on both sides?

WAYNE: It's obvious to me, because I've been there. And you'll find that the young veterans who come back from Vietnam have a lot to say that the media haven't told us—even about our allies. These young men know what they're talking about, because they own a piece of that war, and you should ask the man who owns one.

PLAYBOY: Many of those young men who "own a piece of that war" never wanted to go to Vietnam in the first place. Do you think our government is justified in sending them off to fight in an undeclared war?

WAYNE: Well, I sure don't know why we send them over to fight and then stop the bombing so they can get shot that much more. We could easily stop the enemy from getting guns and ammunition that we know are being sent by Chinese and Soviet Communists. But we won't do anything to stop it because we're afraid of world opinion. Why in hell should we worry about world opinion when we're trying to help out a country that's asked for our aid? Of course, Senator Fulbright says the South Vietnamese government doesn't represent the people—even though it's been duly elected by those people. How can a man be so swayed to the opposite side? If he were finding fault with the administration of our help over there, that I could understand. What I can't understand is this "pull out, pull out, pull out" attitude he's taken. And what makes it worse is that a lot of people accept anything he says without thinking, simply because the Fulbright scholarships have established an intellectual aura around him.

PLAYBOY: The majority of the American people, according to every poll, agree with Fulbright that we ought to pull out, and many think we never should have intervened in the first place. Many Southeast Asian experts, including Fulbright, believe that if Ho Chi Minh had been allowed to run Vietnam as he saw fit after the Geneva Accords of 1954, he would have established an accommodation with Peking that would have given us perhaps a nominally Communist nation, but essentially a nationalist, independent government.

WAYNE: How? By what example in history can people like Fulbright come to such wishful thinking?

PLAYBOY: The example of Tito's Yugoslavia comes immediately to mind. In any case, what gives us the right to decide for the Vietnamese what kind of government they should have?

WAYNE: I don't want the U.S. to decide what kind of government they have. But I don't want the Communists to decide, either. And if we didn't help the South Vietnamese government, that's just what they'd do.

PLAYBOY: Why couldn't a general election, supervised by some neutral power, be held in both the North and the South to determine what kind of government the people of Vietnam desire?

WAYNE: That would be no more practical than if France, after coming to help us in the Revolution, suggested having an election to decide what we wanted to do. It would be an exact parallel. The majority of those living in the Colonies didn't want war at that time. If there had been a general election then, we probably wouldn't be here today. As far as Vietnam is concerned, we've made mistakes. I know of no country that's perfect. But I honestly believe that there's as much need for us to help the Vietnamese as there was to help the Jews in Germany. The only difference is that we haven't had any leadership in this war. All the liberal senators have stuck their noses in this, and it's out of their bailiwick. They've already put far too many barriers in the way of the military. Our lack of leadership has gone so far that now no one man can come in, face the issue and tell people that we ought to be in an all-out war.

PLAYBOY: Why do you favor an all-out war?

WAYNE: I figure if we're going to send even one man to die, we ought to be in an all-out conflict. If you fight, you fight to win. And the domino theory is something to be reckoned with, too, both in Europe and in Asia. Look at what happened in Czechoslovakia and what's happened all through the Balkans. At some point we have to stop communism. So we might as well stop it right now in Vietnam.

PLAYBOY: You're aware, of course, that most military experts, including two recent Secretaries of State, concede that it would be an unwinnable war except at a cost too incalculable to contemplate.

WAYNE: I think you're making a mistatement. Their fear is that Russia would go to war with us if we stopped the Vietnamese. Well, I don't think Russia wants war any more than we do.

PLAYBOY: Three Presidents seem to have agreed that it would be unwise to gamble millions of lives on that assumption. Since you find their leadership lacking, who would you have preferred in the highest office?

WAYNE: Barry Goldwater would at least have been decisive. I know for a fact that he's a truthful man. Before the '64 election, he told me that he said to the Texan, "I don't think we ought to make an issue out of Vietnam because we both know that we're going to probably end up having to send a half a million men over there." Johnson said, "Yeah,

that's probably true, Barry, but I've got an election to win." So Barry told the truth and Johnson got elected on a "peace" platform—and then began to ease them in, a few thousand at a time. I wish our friend Fulbright would bring out those points.

If Douglas MacArthur were alive, he also would have handled the Vietnam situation with dispatch. He was a proven administrator, certainly a proven leader. And MacArthur understood what Americans were and what Americans stood for. Had he been elected President, something significant would have happened during his administration. He would have taken a stand for the United States in world affairs, and he would have stood by it, and we would have been respected for it. I also admired the tie salesman. President Truman. He was a wonderful, feisty guy who'll go down in history as quite an individual. It's a cinch he had great guts when he decided to straighten things out in Korea; it's just too bad that the State Department was able to frighten him out of doing a complete job. Seems to me, politics have entered too much into the decisions of our leadership. I can't understand politicians. They're either yellowing out from taking a stand or using outside pressure to improve their position.

PLAYBOY: Is that why you've refused to run for public office yourself?

WAYNE: Exactly.

PLAYBOY: Is that what you told George Wallace when you were asked to be his running mate on the 1968 American Independent ticket?

WAYNE: No, I explained that I was working for the other Wallis—Hal Wallis—the producer of True Grit, and that I'd been a Nixon man.

PLAYBOY: What do you think of Nixon's performance since then?

WAYNE: I think Mr. Nixon is proving himself his own man. I knew he would. I knew him and stuck with him when he was a loser, and I'm sticking with him now that he's a winner. A lot of extreme rightists are saying that he isn't doing enough, but I think he's gradually wading in and getting control of the reins of government.

PLAYBOY: What impressed you about him when you first met him?

WAYNE: His reasonableness. When he came into office, there was such a hue and cry over Vietnam, for instance, that it didn't seem possible for a man to take a stand that would quiet down the extreme leftists. He came on the air and explained the situation as it was from the beginning, and then he told the American people—in a logical, reasoning way—what he was going to do. And then he began to do it.

PLAYBOY: What he began to do, of course, was "Vietnamize" the war and withdraw American troops. How can you approve of these policies and also advocate all-out war?

WAYNE: Well, I don't advocate an all-out war if it isn't necessary. All I know is that we as a country should be backing up whatever the proposition is that we sent one man to die for.

PLAYBOY: If that view is shared by as many Americans as you seem to think, then why was *The Green Berets*—which has been labeled as your personal statement on the Vietnam war—so universally panned?

WAYNE: Because the critics don't like my politics, and they were condemning the war, not the picture. I don't mean the critics as a group. I mean the irrationally liberal ones. Renata Adler of *The New York Times* almost foamed at the mouth because I showed a few massacres on the screen. She went into convulsions. She and other critics wouldn't believe that the Viet Cong are treacherous—that the dirty sons of bitches are raping, torturing gorillas. In the picture, I repeated the story General Stilwell told me about this South Vietnamese mayor. The V.C. tied him up and brought his wife out and about 40 men raped her; and then they brought out his two teenage daughters, hung them upside down and gutted them in front of him. And then they took an iron rod and beat on his wife until every bone in her goddamn body was broken. That's torture, I'd say. So I mentioned this in the picture, and the critics were up in arms about that.

PLAYBOY: Did their comments jeopardize the financial success of the film?

WAYNE: Oh, God, no—they ensured it. Luckily for me, they overkilled it. *The Green Berets* would have been successful regardless of what the critics did, but it might have taken the public longer to find out about the picture if they hadn't made so much noise about it.

PLAYBOY: Did you resent the critics who labeled it a shameless propaganda film?

WAYNE: I agreed with them. It was an American film about American boys who were heroes over there. In that sense, it was propaganda.

PLAYBOY: Did you have any difficulties getting *The Green Berets* produced by a major studio?

WAYNE: A lot of them. Universal said they wanted to make the picture and we made a deal. Then the boys went to work on the head of Universal.

PLAYBOY: What boys?

WAYNE: The liberals. I don't know their names. But all of a sudden Universal changed its mind. They said, "This is an unpopular war." And I said, "What war was ever popular? You've already made the deal." Then they started saying, "Well, we don't want you to direct"—trying to use that as an excuse. So I said, "Well, screw this." So I let them renege and I just walked out. In an hour, I'd made another deal with Warner Bros., which was in the process of being sold to Seven Arts. Meanwhile, the guy at Universal couldn't keep his mouth shut. I let him off the hook, but he started blasting in the *Hollywood Reporter* that the picture couldn't make any money. I didn't go to the press and say these bastards backed out of a deal, but later—after Warner Bros.-Seven Arts released it—I was very happy to inform Universal of the picture's success.

PLAYBOY: *The Alamo* was another of your patriotic films. What statement did this picture make?

WAYNE: I thought it would be a tremendous epic picture that would say "America."

PLAYBOY: Borden Chase, the screenwriter, has been quoted as saying: "When *The Alamo* was coming out, the word of mouth on it was that it was a dog. This was created by the Communists to get at Wayne. Then there were some bad reviews inspired by the Communists.... It's a typical Communist technique and they were using it against Duke for what he did in the early Fifties at the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals." Is that true?

WAYNE: Well, there's always a little truth in everything you hear. The Alliance thing was used pretty strongly against me in those days.

PLAYBOY: Was the Motion Picture Alliance formed to blacklist Communists and Communist sympathizers?

WAYNE: Our organization was just a group of motion-picture people on the right side, not leftists and not Commies. I was the president for a couple of years. There was no blacklist at that time, as some people said. That was a lot of horseshit. Later on, when Congress passed some laws making it possible to take a stand against these people, we were asked about Communists in the industry. So we gave them the facts as we knew them. That's all. The only thing our side did that was anywhere near blacklisting was just running a lot of people out of the business.

PLAYBOY: That sounds a good deal worse than blacklisting. Why couldn't you permit all points of view to be expressed freely on the screen?

WAYNE: Because it's been proven that communism is foreign to the American way of life. If you'd read the official Communist doctrine and then listened to the arguments of these people we were opposing, you'd find they were reciting propaganda by rote. Besides, these Communist sympathizers ran a lot of our people out of the business. One of them was a Pulitzer Prize winner who's now a columnist—Morrie Ryskind. They just never used him again at MGM after Dore Schary took charge of the studio, even though he was under contract.

PLAYBOY: What was the mood in Hollywood that made it so fashionable to take such a vigorous stand against communism?

WAYNE: Many of us were being invited to supposed social functions or house parties—usually at well-known Hollywood writers' homes—that turned out to be Communist recruitment meetings. Suddenly, everybody from makeup men to stagehands found themselves in seminars on Marxism. Take this colonel I knew, the last man to leave the Philippines on a submarine in 1942. He came back here and went to work sending food and gifts to U.S. prisoners on Bataan. He'd already gotten a Dutch ship that was going to take all this stuff over. The State Department pulled him off of it and sent the poor bastard out to be the technical director on my picture *Back to Bataan*, which was being made by Eddie Dmytryk. I knew that he and a whole group of actors in the picture were pro-Reds, and when I wasn't there, these pro-Reds went to work on the colonel. He was a Catholic, so they kidded him about his religion: They even sang the Internationale at lunchtime. He finally came to me and said, "Mr. Wayne, I haven't anybody to turn to. These people are doing everything in their power to belittle me." So I went to Dmytryk and said, "Hey, are you a Commie?" He said, "No, I'm not a Commie. My father was a Russian. I was born in Canada. But if the masses of the American people want

communism, I think it'd be good for our country." When he used the word "masses," he exposed himself. That word is not a part of Western terminology. So I knew he was a Commie. Well, it later came out that he was.

I also knew two other fellas who really did things that were detrimental to our way of life. One of them was Carl Foreman, the guy who wrote the screenplay for High Noon, and the other was Robert Rossen, the one who made the picture about Huey Long, All the King's Men. In Rossen's version of All the King's Men, which he sent me to read for a part, every character who had any responsibility at all was guilty of some offense against society. To make Huey Long a wonderful, rough pirate was great; but, according to this picture, everybody was a shit except for this weakling intern doctor who was trying to find a place in the world. I sent the script back to Charlie Feldman, my agent, and said, "If you ever send me a script like this again, I'll fire you." Ironically, it won the Academy Award.

High Noon was even worse. Everybody says High Noon is a great picture because Tiomkin wrote some great music for it and because Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly were in it. So it's got everything going for it. In that picture, four guys come in to gun down the sheriff. He goes to the church and asks for help and the guys go, "Oh well, oh gee." And the women stand up and say, "You're rats. You're rats. You're rats." So Cooper goes out alone. It's the most un-American thing I've ever seen in my whole life. The last thing in the picture is ole Coop putting the United States marshal's badge under his foot and stepping on it. I'll never regret having helped run Foreman out of this country.

PLAYBOY: What gave you the right?

WAYNE: Running him out of the country is just a figure of speech. But I did tell him that I thought he'd hurt Gary Cooper's reputation a great deal. Foreman said, "Well, what if I went to England?" I said, "Well, that's your business." He said, "Well, that's where I'm going." And he did.

PLAYBOY: You seem to have a very blunt way of dealing with people. Why?

WAYNE: I've always followed my father's advice: He told me, first, to always keep my word and, second, to never insult anybody unintentionally. If I insult you, you can be goddamn sure I intend to. And, third, he told me not to go around looking for trouble.

PLAYBOY: Don't you sometimes stray from these three tenets—particularly from the third one?

WAYNE: Well, I guess I have had some problems sticking to that third rule, but I'd say I've done pretty damn well with the first and second. I try to have good enough taste to insult only those I wish to insult. I've worked in a business where it's almost a requirement to break your word if you want to survive, but whenever I signed a contract for five years or for a certain amount of money, I've always lived up to it. I figured that if I was silly enough to sign it, or if I thought it was worth while at the time, that's the way she goes. I'm not saying that I won't drive as hard a bargain as I can. In fact, I think more about that end of the business than I did before, ever since 1959, when I found that my business manager was playing more than he was working. I didn't know how bad my

financial condition was until my lawyer and everybody else said, "Let's all have a meeting and figure out exactly where you stand." At the conclusion of that meeting, it was quite obvious that I wasn't in anywhere near the shape that I thought I was or ought to be after 25 years of hard work. If they'd given me the time to sell everything without taking a quick loss, I would have come out about even.

PLAYBOY: Were you involved in money-losing deals?

WAYNE: Yeah. Oil and everything else. Not enough constructive thinking had been done. Then there was the shrimp fiasco. One of my dearest friends was Robert Arias, who was married to the ballerina Dame Margot Fonteyn. While his brother Tony was alive, we had control of about 70 percent of the shrimp in Panama. We were also buying some island property near the Panama Canal. We were going to put in a ship-repair place. There were tugs standing down there at \$150 a day to drag ships back up to the United States, because repair prices in the Canal Zone were so high. But our plans fell through when Tony was killed in an airplane accident. Around a half a million dollars was lost.

PLAYBOY: Has your financial condition improved since then?

WAYNE: If anything happened to me now, I have the right amount of insurance. I hope and pray, for my estate. I'm about as big a rancher as there is in Arizona, so I have outside interests other than my motion-picture work. The turning point was the moment I decided to watch what was being done with my money.

PLAYBOY: Another—and certainly more dramatic—turning point for you was your cancer operation in 1964. At the time, were you optimistic about the outcome of the surgery?

WAYNE: Well, I had two operations six days apart—one for a cancer that was as big as a baby's fist, and then one for edema. I wasn't so uptight when I was told about the cancer. My biggest fear came when they twisted my windpipe and had to sew me back together a second time. When my family came in to see me and I saw the looks on their faces, I figured, "Well, Jeez, I must be just about all through."

PLAYBOY: How did you keep your spirits up?

WAYNE: By thinking about God and my family and my friends and telling myself, "Everything will be all right." And it was. I licked the big C. I know the man upstairs will pull the plug when he wants to, but I don't want to end up my life being sick. I want to go out on two feet—in action.

PLAYBOY: Does the loss of one lung restrict you from doing those rough house movie stunts?

WAYNE: The operation hasn't impeded anything except that I get short of breath quickly. Particularly in the higher altitudes, that slows me down. I still do my own fights and all that stuff. I'd probably do a little bit more if I had more wind, but I still do more than my share. Nobody else does anything any more than I do, whether they're young or old.

PLAYBOY: Is it a matter of machismo for you to continue fighting your own fights?

WAYNE: I don't have to assert my virility. I think my career has shown that I'm not exactly a pantywaist. But I do take pride in my work, even to the point of being the first one on the set in the morning. I'm a professional.

PLAYBOY: In recent years, you've fallen off horses rather unprofessionally on a couple of occasions—once dislocating a shoulder during the production of *The Undeclared*. Wasn't that embarrassing?

WAYNE: What the hell, in my racket I've fallen off a lot of horses. I even fell off on purpose in *True Grit*. But that fall in *The Undeclared* was irritating because I tore some ligaments in my shoulder. I don't have good use of one arm anymore, and it makes me look like an idiot when I'm getting on a horse.

PLAYBOY: Is that an unfamiliar experience?

WAYNE: Getting on a horse?

PLAYBOY: Looking like an idiot.

WAYNE: Not hardly. One of the times I really felt like a fool was when I was working on my first important film, *The Big Trail*, in Yuma, Arizona. I was three weeks flat on my back with turistas—or Montezuma's revenge, or the Aztec two-step, whatever you want to call it. You know, you get a little grease and soap on the inside of a fork and you've got it. Anyway, that was the worst case I ever had in my life. I'd been sick for so long that they finally said, "Jeez, Duke, if you can't get up now, we've got to get somebody else to take your place." So, with a loss of 18 pounds, I returned to work. My first scene was carrying in an actor named Tully Marshall, who was known to booze it up quite a bit. He had a big jug in his hand in this scene, and I set him down and we have a drink with another guy. They passed the jug to me first, and I dug back into it; it was straight rotgut bootleg whiskey. I'd been puking and crapping blood for a week and now I just poured that raw stuff right down my throat. After the scene, you can bet I called him every kind of an old bastard.

PLAYBOY: You've long been known for your robust drinking habits, whether it's rotgut bootleg or imported Scotch. How great is your capacity?

WAYNE: Well, I'm full grown, you know. I'm pretty big and got enough fat on me, so I guess I can drink a fair amount.

PLAYBOY: What kind of liquor has provided your most memorable hangovers?

WAYNE: Commemorative tequila. That's as fine a liquor as there is in the world. Christ, I tell you it's better than any whiskey; it's better than any schnapps; it's better than any drink I ever had in my life. You hear about tequila and think about a cheap cactus drink, but this is something extraordinary.

PLAYBOY: Many people argue that alcohol may be a more dangerous health hazard than marijuana. Would you agree?

WAYNE: There's been no top authority saying what marijuana does to you. I really don't know that much about it. I tried it once, but it didn't do anything to me. The kids say it

makes them think they're going 30 miles an hour when they're going 80. If that's true, marijuana use should definitely be stopped.

PLAYBOY: Have you had any other experience with illegal drugs?

WAYNE: When I went to Hong Kong, I tried opium once, as a clinical thing. I heard it didn't make you sick the first time, and Jesus, it just didn't affect me one way or the other, either. So I'm not a very good judge of how debasing it is.

PLAYBOY: Do you think such drugs are debasing?

WAYNE: It's like water against a cliff. Each wave deteriorates it a little more. I'm quite sure that's the same thing that happens to human beings when they get hooked on drugs. What bothers me more is society's attitude toward drugs. We allowed all the hippies to stay together in Haight-Ashbury and turn it into a dirty, filthy, unattractive place. We allow the glorifying of drugs in our business—like in *Easy Rider*, where the guy says, "Jesus, don't you smoke pot?"—as if smoking pot is the same as chewing Bull Durham.

PLAYBOY: You chew tobacco, don't you?

WAYNE: I learned to do that in college. During football season, when we couldn't smoke, we always used to chew. When I was a kid, if you wore a new pair of shoes, everybody would spit on them. I haven't practiced spitting lately, so don't wear your new shoes and expect me to hit them with any accuracy. I'm not the marksman I used to be.

PLAYBOY: You chew, but you don't use drugs. Do you still have as much drink, food and sex as you used to?

WAYNE: I drink as much as I ever did. I eat more than I should. And my sex life is none of your goddamn business.

PLAYBOY: Sexuality, however, seems a large part of your magnetism. According to one Hollywood writer, "Wayne has a sexual authority so strong that even a child could perceive it." Do you feel you still convey that onscreen?

WAYNE: Well, at one time in my career, I guess sexuality was part of my appeal. But God, I'm 63 years old now. How the hell do I know whether I still convey that? Jeez. It's pretty hard to answer a question like, "Are you attractive to broads?" All that crap comes from the way I walk, I guess. There's evidently a virility in it. Otherwise, why do they keep mentioning it? But I'm certainly not conscious of any particular walk. I guess I must walk different than other people, but I haven't gone to any school to learn how.

PLAYBOY: Another integral ingredient of your image is a rugged manliness, a readiness to mix it up with anyone who gets in your way. Have you ever run into situations in a restaurant or a bar in which someone tried to pick a fight with you?

WAYNE: It never happens to me anymore. Whatever my image is, it's friendly. But there was one time, a number of years ago, that I did get a little irritated. I was wearing long hair—the exception then, not the rule—and I was, if I say so myself, a fairly handsome kid. Anyway, I'm dancing with my wife-to-be and I'm saying to her, quietly, "You're beautiful enough to marry." Some punk alongside pipes up. "Forget about him, lady; not

with that hair." So I sat her down and went over and explained very gently to him that if he would step outside, I'd kick his fuckin' teeth down his throat. That ended that.

PLAYBOY: Having once worn long hair yourself, how do you feel about long-haired young people?

WAYNE: They don't bother me. If a guy wants to wear his hair down to his ass, I'm not revolted by it. But I don't look at him and say, "Now there's a fella I'd like to spend next winter with."

PLAYBOY: Who would you like to spend time with?

WAYNE: That's easy. Winston Churchill. He's the most terrific fella of our century. If I had to make a speech on the subject of communism, I could think of nobody that had a better insight or that said things concerning the future that have proven out so well. Let me read to you from a book of his quotes. While Roosevelt was giving the world communism, Churchill said, "I tell you—it's no use arguing with a Communist. It's no good trying to convert a Communist, or persuade him. You can only deal with them on the following basis...you can only do it by having superior force on your side on the matter in question—and they must also be convinced that you will use—you will not hesitate to use—these forces if necessary, in the most ruthless manner.

"You have not only to convince the Soviet government that you have superior force—but that you are not restrained by any moral consideration if the case arose from using that force with complete material ruthlessness. And that is the greatest chance of peace, the surest road to peace." Churchill was unparalleled. Above all, he took a nearly beaten nation and kept their dignity for them.

PLAYBOY: Many pessimists insist that our nation has lost its dignity and is headed toward self-destruction. Some, in fact, compare the condition of our society to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the last days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Are you that gloomy about the future of America?

WAYNE: Absolutely not. I think that the loud roar of irresponsible liberalism, which in the old days we called radicalism, is being quieted down by a reasoning public. I think the pendulum's swinging back. We're remembering that the past can't be so bad. We built a nation on it. We must also look always to the future. Tomorrow—the time that gives a man or a country just one more chance—is just one of many things that I feel are wonderful in life. So's a good horse under you. Or the only campfire for miles around. Or a quiet night and a nice soft hunk of ground to sleep on. Or church bells sending out their invitations. A mother meeting her first-born. The sound of a kid calling you Dad for the first time. There's a lot of things great about life. But I think tomorrow is the most important thing. Comes in to us at midnight very clean, ya know. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday. As a country, our yesterdays tell us that we have to win not only at war but at peace. So far we haven't done that. Sadly, it looks like we'll have to win another war to win a peace. All I can hope is that in our anxiety to have peace, we remember our clear and present dangers and beware the futility of compromise; only if we keep sight of both will we

have a chance of stumbling forward into a day when there won't be guns fired anymore in anger.

PLAYBOY: Contrasting the America you grew up in and the America of today, is it the same kind of country, or has it changed?

WAYNE: The only difference I can see is that we now have an enemy within our borders fighting with propaganda and coloring events in a manner that belittles our great country. But all in all, it's practically the same.

PLAYBOY: In retrospect, would you have wanted your life to have been any different?

WAYNE: If I had it to do over again, I'd probably do everything I did. But that's not necessarily the right thing to do.

PLAYBOY: What legacy do you hope to leave behind?

WAYNE: Well, you're going to think I'm being corny, but this is how I really feel: I hope my family and my friends will be able to say that I was an honest, kind and fairly decent man.