



For Immediate Release

June 19, 2026

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SAG HARBOR CINEMA CELEBRATES JERRY SCHATZBERG'S 99TH BIRTHDAY June 26, 2026

A new exhibit of Schatzberg's work and a screening of Schatzberg's directorial debut *Puzzle of a Downfall Child* (1970)

Sag Harbor, NY — In celebration of his 99th birthday, Sag Harbor Cinema showcases photographer and filmmaker Jerry Schatzberg's nearly century-long artistic legacy. In the decade prior to his directorial debut in 1970, Schatzberg captured the icons of twentieth-century film in his photography studio.

Intimate portraits of Sharon Tate, Roman Polanski and Claudia Cardinale are complemented by striking studio shots of Faye Dunaway for *Esquire* and Jane Fonda as Cat Ballou. The performances which Schatzberg commands of his subjects in his photographs are no less powerful and alive than those he would later procure from his actors. Sag Harbor Cinema will be screening *Puzzle of a Downfall Child* (1970) – Schatzberg's first film, starring Faye Dunaway as fashion model Lou Andreas Sand – on June 26th to coincide with the opening of the photography exhibition *Frames: Jerry Schatzberg*, which will be on display through the end of the summer. Fresh from a successful run at New York City's Film Forum, the new 4K restoration of *Reunion*, Schatzberg's 1989 film starring Jason Robards and written by Harold Pinter, will open at Sag Harbor Cinema in the early fall.

"With his background in fashion photography contrasted by an instinctive affinity for gritty realism, Jerry Schatzberg occupies a unique place in Seventies American Cinema. His dark, often humorous films reflect a stubbornly independent sensibility which was embraced more readily early on in Europe than in the US. Today things have changed and Schatzberg's seminal influence is acknowledged with enthusiasm by rule-breaking contemporary filmmakers like Josh Safdie and Harmony Korine. We are thrilled to celebrate his birthday at the Cinema with the show and these two newly restored films," says Sag Harbor Cinema's Founding Artistic Director Giulia D'Agnolo Vallan.

ABOUT JERRY SCHATZBERG

Jerry Schatzberg was born in the Bronx, New York. He attended the University of Miami, worked as assistant to Bill Helburn (1954-1956); then started his career as a freelance photographer. His Fashion photography has been published in magazines such as Vogue, McCalls, Esquire, Glamour, Town & Country, and LIFE. After directing some TV commercials, he made his debut as a film director in 1970 with "Puzzle of a Downfall Child", the story of a fashion model. Schatzberg scored with his second directorial effort, the gripping, finely acted "The Panic in Needle Park"(1971), a bleak study of heroin addiction starring Al Pacino. Pacino co-starred with Gene Hackman in his next film, "Scarecrow" (1973), a moody tale of two drifters which in many ways is an apotheosis of 70's alienation and confusion. Perhaps significantly, Schatzberg's critical following in the United States rose and fell with the 70s; after 1979's "Seduction of Joe Tynan", the trend in Hollywood shifted from small introspective films to the Spielberg/Lucas blockbuster mentality. But Jerry Schatzberg never lost his European devotees, as witness the international success of 1989's "Reunion". Schatzberg won the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival with "Scarecrow."

It was his portrait photography that taught him how to deal with actors. He realized that most people feared the photographer's lens. To relax them he would spend as much time with them as possible. Not only to know them better but to see beyond the surface and discover their true self, the one they hid from the outside world. Most of his great portraits of the sixties - Bob Dylan, Francis Coppola, Andy Warhol, Arlo Guthrie, Roman Polanski, Fidel Castro, Milos Forman, Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, The Rolling Stones and many more - reveal these moments of truth.

In more than forty years of photography and cinema, Schatzberg has achieved a delicate balance between refined form of mise-en-scene and the rendering of true moments. He has a particular gift to restrain the emotions only to make their release more powerful and to avoid the obvious by suggesting rather than by underlining. He makes us feel something that is too often missing in contemporary American cinema: an adult and mature artist, dealing with adult and mature themes and characters.

- Michel Ciment

ABOUT THE FILM

PUZZLE OF A DOWNFALL CHILD

Directed by Jerry Schatzberg
USA | 1970 | 104 mins | English



Before *The Panic in Needle Park* and *Scarecrow*, Jerry Schatzberg announced himself with this mesmerizing debut feature. Faye Dunaway delivers a remarkable performance as Lou Andreas Sand, a reclusive former model whose grip on reality appears increasingly fragile.

Inspired in part by the life of model Anne St. Marie, the film follows a photographer-filmmaker (Barry Primus) as he records the recollections of a former fashion icon whose memories reveal a life marked by beauty, success, and profound instability. Visually striking and psychologically complex, Schatzberg's first feature reveals the eye of a master photographer and the sensibility of a major American filmmaker in the making.

Screenplay by Carole Eastman (as Adrien Joyce), based on conversations with model Anne Saint-Marie. With Faye Dunaway, Barry Primus, Viveca Lindfors, Barry Morse, Roy Scheider. Digital restoration by Universal Pictures in collaboration with the Cinémathèque Française under the supervision of Jerry Schatzberg.

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About the Sag Harbor Cinema

As a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) community-based organization, Sag Harbor Cinema is dedicated to presenting the past, present and future of the movies and to preserving and educating about films, filmmaking, and the film-going experience in its three state-of-the-art theaters. The Cinema engages its audiences and the community year-round through dialogue, discovery, and appreciation of the moving image – from blockbusters to student shorts and everything in between. Revitalized and reimaged through unprecedented community efforts to rebuild the iconic Main Street structure after a fire nearly destroyed it in 2016, SHC continues a long historic tradition of entertainment in the heart of Sag Harbor Village.