

'Christine Jorgensen' Misses Its Drama, Significance

By PEGGY DOYLE

"The Christine Jorgensen Story" at the Gary might have been an enlightening and humane contribution to the layman's lack of knowledge regarding an old, little understood human condition.

Unfortunately, it is a well-meant, superficial and sometimes unintentionally cruel treatment of a problem 26-year-old George Jorgensen Jr. desperately brought to the attention of European scientists already involved in its study.

In 1950 Jorgenson, who was to be discovered to be a female trapped in a man's body, went to Denmark, the first country to scientifically concern itself with the riddle of the transsexual.

As the Gary Theater film shows, there was a series of three operations over a period of as many years during which time Jorgensen made his home with his Aunt Thora,

a successful dress designer in Denmark.

She was the only one, outside of the surgical and nursing staffs at the genetic clinic, who knew of the transformation by surgery and hormones that was to provide a sensational re-entry to the United States for Christine Jorgensen.

The story of the world's first sex-change surgery broke when the attractive

American, her blonde hair fashionably cut and waved and smartly garbed in one of Aunt Thora's creations, applied for a passport in the name of Christine Jorgensen.

In the film, Christine refuses to be interviewed by the press, finally relenting reluctantly to be interviewed by an American magazine writer. Aunt Thora, who had shared with her nephew the secret that she had borne an illegitimate daughter, now

dead, whose name she happily agrees her newly transformed niece may take, suggests she will chaperone them at her mountain cabin.

Here they have privacy as Christine recalls her tendency to play with little girls which exposed him to the ridicule of his football-dedicated classmates.

There is an embarrassingly hysterical sequence when Rod McCary's gay account executive, who has been sponsoring the young photographer, makes a pass that has George shouting "Good God, you think I'm one of those." Then fighting his way out, and he runs to a Southampton bridge to jump in.

Eighteen-year-old John Hansen makes a most inept screen debut both as George and Christine. In the one role he lacks the training and talent to suggest inability to react in a male world and in

the other his stolid stance, football shoulders and utter unfitness to suggest femininity or even at ridiculous odds with his curly platinum bob.

Jorgensen's enormous courage in submitting to an operation Denmark's brilliant Dr. Victor Dahlman warns him "we have never performed before. You are, you understand, a guinea pig" is entirely overlooked in this glib, insensitive motion picture that exploits an extraordinary advance in science and a magnificent example of courage.

Joan Tompkins' understanding, mettlesome aunt in Denmark turns in the best performance. John Himes and Ellen Clark, as the concerned parents who must endure the cheap humor, have dignity and credibility. And Quinn Redeker does the most with the not too well-written role of the magazine writer who falls in love with Christine.

Ingo Preminger Film Pact Set

NEW YORK (AP) — Negotiations have been concluded between Columbia Pictures and producer Ingo Preminger for the production of a film based on Frederick L. Keege's novel, "The Investigating Officer."

Oscar Millard will write the screenplay of the contemporary drama which will be

filmed near Salzburg, Austria in the spring of 1971.

Preminger, for more than two decades one of the film industry's top talent and literary agents, made his debut as a producer with "M*A*S*H," winner of the best film award at the Cannes Film Festival and one of the year's critical and box-office successes.