



TUBE/IMPORTS

## BRIT HIT

A star BBC television producer/director is poised to make a splash on this side of the Atlantic

**L**IFE IS JUST ONE BIG "IF" FOR THE *bête noire* of British television, and that's just the way he likes it. If Nigel Ashecroft-Worcestershire's star keeps rising like a bad matzo, if the BBC lets him out of his 5-year or 50,000 kilometre contract, if no one finds out about that nasty incident with the 14-year-old Cockney showgirl and Shemp, her irascible Welsh Corgi, and if his guardian angel/agent finally gets off Quaaludes, he's likely to be the Next Big Thing in American television. So Ashecroft-Worcestershire, called the Kenneth Branagh of the Boob

### A Producer/director Nigel Ashecroft-Worcestershire goes Euro-style

Tube, is sitting in the catbird seat—and looks every bit of it.

After making a name for himself in Britain with such irreverent and darkly comic television programs as "Are You My Chamberpot?," "Faulty Biscuit," and, most recently, "Adolf Hitler, Fuck You!" (a period piece *The Economist* gushingly called a "tour de farce"), Ashecroft-Worcestershire is well-positioned to cross over into the more fickle (and lucrative) U.S. scene. He's ready for the challenge, he says. "The beautiful thing about America is that you can say 'fuck off' to practically anything and they'll toss a few guineas your way."

Which is not to say that it hasn't been a tough row to hoe for this bright young up-and-comer in the T.V. world. The 26-year-old love-child of a Irish washwoman and an alcoholic Anglo-Scottish viscount once worked two apprenticeships to make ends meet: one to a coffee grower in Corn-

wall, the other to an Oslo-based porn king. "It was a ball-breaking commute, but Ollie paid the bills and Sven taught me everything I know." The young scrapper toughed it out and nursed a dream of becoming a television producer. "My mum said that I had a knack for catering to the lowest common denominator."

Ashecroft-Worcestershire grew up on "Monty Python" and "Are You Being Served?" but he claims to be more influenced by the American programs exported to Europe. "I grew to love David Hasselhoff, Alf and the entire cast of 'Falcon Crest,'" he says. "In fact, in 1989 I produced a shoe-string-budget tribute to 'Small Wonder' in celebration of American television programming. You just can't buy production value like that." The two-hour special attracted a relatively small audience but scores of advertisers, which is odd because the BBC doesn't accept advertising. Ashecroft-Worcestershire knew he was on to something big, and the offers came pouring in from the American networks.

Ashecroft-Worcestershire makes his American directorial debut on CBS Tuesday night with "Children of a Lesser Sod," a four-hour epic miniseries that chronicles the saga of an Irish-American family's struggle to establish a potato moonshine empire in the Kentucky hills of 1923. Part autobiography, almost entirely pure fiction, "Sod" represents Ashecroft-Worcestershire's chance to break into the American market from what he calls British television's "fucking waste-land."

Not at all concerned by the more active role played by network censors on this side of the Atlantic, Ashecroft-Worcestershire plans a number of "Adolf"-like ventures in the near future. "I'm working on an irreverent farce about a Serbian hairdresser called 'Ethnic Cleansing—Plus Conditioner!'," a wacky sitcom about David Koresh called 'Let's See Who Gets Crucified This Time, Mutherfucker' and a cutting-edge spoof of the the Salman Rushdie death sentence, 'Hello Mullah, Hello Fatwa'."

■ DRUSCILLA WOLFE