

Great Directors: Kubrick

The Killing 1956

Friday, November 14 - Thursday, November 20, 2008



Film Information

Directed by
Stanley Kubrick

Language
English

Running Time
85 minutes

Film Notes

Stanley Kubrick was born in New York City in 1928, and, 13 years later, received his first camera as a gift from his father. Just three years later, at age 16, he sold his first image to *Look* magazine, which eventually led to a staff photographer position and photo spreads on such topics as the New York jazz scene, boxer Rocky Graziano, and actor Montgomery Clift. (A book of Kubrick's work for the magazine, *Stanley Kubrick: Drama & Shadows*, was published in 2005 by Phaidon Press).

In 1951, Kubrick made his first film, a documentary short about middleweight boxer Walter Cartier called *DAY OF THE FIGHT*, which he followed with a few more short docs before turning his attention to the narrative form. First came the war movie *FEAR AND DESIRE* (1953), and then *KILLER'S KISS* (1954), the story of a fading boxer caught up in a feud with a violent gangster. Neither film was especially successful, commercially or artistically, but the latter earned Kubrick some Hollywood clout and allowed him to make *THE KILLING* in 1956. Today, Kubrick's noir classic about a racetrack heist gone wrong, is generally considered the first major work

of his filmmaking career.

THE KILLING unfolds in an unconventional, nonlinear fashion, the same storytelling device employed much later by such filmmakers as Bryan Singer (*THE USUAL SUSPECTS*), Christopher Nolan (*MEMENTO*), and, most famously, Quentin Tarantino, whose standout debut *RESERVOIR DOGS*, about a bank heist gone wrong, has something else in common with Kubrick's early film. In the credits, Tarantino gives a special dedication to crime novelist Lionel White (1905-1985), whose book *Clean Break* served as the inspiration for *THE KILLING*.

—Casey



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“The gangster and the artist are the same in the eyes of the masses. They are admired and hero worshipped, but there is always present underlying wish to see them destroyed at the peak of their glory.”

More Information

Screenplay by
Stanley Kubrick
Jim Thompson

Based on the novel
‘Clean Break’ by
Lionel White

Featuring
Sterling Hayden
Coleen Gray
Vince Edwards
Jay C. Flippen
Elisha Cook Jr.
Marie Windsor
Ted de Corsia
Joe Sawyer
James Edwards

Cinematography by
Lucien Ballard

Original Music by
Gerald Fried

Film Editing by
Betty Steinberg

Country of Origin
USA

“A director is a kind of idea and taste machine; a movie is a series of creative and technical decisions, and it’s the director’s job to make the right decisions as frequently as possible. Shooting a movie is the worst milieu for creative work ever devised by man. It is a noisy, physical apparatus; it is difficult to concentrate—and you have to do it from eight-thirty to six-thirty, five days a week. It’s not an environment an artist would ever choose to work in. The only advantage is has is that you must do it, and you can’t procrastinate.”

—Stanley Kubrick

Also Recommended

- The Third Man 1959 (Dir. Carol Reed)
- The Asphalt Jungle 1950 (Dir. John Huston)
- The Grifters 1990 (Dir. Stephen Frears)
- Reservoir Dogs 1992 (Dir. Quentin Tarantino)
- The Usual Suspects 1995 (Dir. Bryan Singer)
- Memento 2000 (Dir. Christopher Nolan)
- The Man Who Wasn’t There 2001 (Dir. Joel Coen)