

THE PARALLAX VIEW

...a haunting existentialist nightmare of indefinable forces...

THE PARALLAX VIEW A Paramount Pictures Release. 6/74. In Technicolor. 102 minutes. Executive producer, Gabriel Katzka. Produced and directed by Alan J. Pakula. Screenplay by David Giler, Lorenzo Semple, Jr. based on the novel by Loren Singer. Director of photography, Gordon Willis. Edited by John W. Wheeler. Music by Michael Small. Production design, George Jenkins. Set decoration, Reg Allen.

Joseph Frady Warren Beatty
 Editor Rintels Hume Cronyn
 Austin Tucker William Daniels
 Lee Carter Paula Prentiss
 Sheriff Kelly Thordsen
 Deputy Earl Hindman
 Former FBI Agent Kenneth Mars
 Parallax Representative Walter McGinn
 Senator Hammond Jim Davis

The political assassination conspiracy theme seems more prevalent now than in the past, since the three tragedies that have occurred in the past decade. Lewis Allen (the director of *THE UNINVITED*) made a little sleeper in 1954 called *SUDDENLY*, with Frank Sinatra as a hired killer, that was something of a forerunner in the genre. The Presidential assassination theme was given greater impact eight years later in John Frankenheimer's masterpiece, *THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE*, also starring Sinatra. It was a breathlessly, powerfully captivating and suspenseful fantasy of a war hero, brainwashed to commit the ultimate murder. It remains one of the cornerstone films of *cinefantastique*. After a considerable lull came David Miller's cold and taut mixture of documentary and fiction, *EXECUTIVE ACTION*, and now Alan J. Pakula's *THE PARALLAX VIEW*.

Pakula's film portrays a bizarre Wellesian universe in which the protagonist, Joe Frady (Warren Beatty), is caught-up into playing out a game of destiny that is violent, unscrupulous, and relentlessly ironic. He joins an organization of hired killers in order to expose them in print, and winds up being victimized himself. Like the characters of Welles (Hank Quinlan in *TOUCH OF EVIL*, Macbeth, Othello, Mr. Arkadin), Frady is trapped in a web of fate that he must see through to its inevitable finish. He is powerless and irresponsible in his search for the truth and, somewhat like Sam Fuller's newspaperman in *SHOCK CORRIDOR*, it leads to tragedy.

In the Wellesian power of Pakula's limbo imagery, there is also a Hitchcock influence in his use of editing and long takes for cleverly calculated surprise and suspense touches. While Pakula's technique has assimilated the work of these artists, it is never to the point of obfuscating his own patiently and potently bleak point-of-view. Huge expanses of space and glass dwarf characters into cold impersonal objects, manipulated by some invisible force that they are unable to control let alone acknowledge.

THE PARALLAX VIEW is a superb fantastic-thriller and something of a minor masterpiece. From the naturalistic intensity of Beatty's performance (not to forget Paula Prentiss' superb, poignant, and brief portrait of a woman fearing death), to the haunting existentialist nightmare of indefinable forces, it is indelible fantasy. The brilliant indoctrination montage, which Frady must undergo to join the organization, deliberately crossing pictures of family, poverty, prosperity, war, happiness, country, love, and hate, is perhaps the film's ultimate example of fantasy as effective and affecting emotional manipulation. It is, like the trip in 2001, a direct participation experience that the protagonist goes through as well as the audience. It is a classic sequence in this, Pakula's only vindication as a filmmaker to date.

Dale Winogura



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PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS AN ALAN J. PAKULA PRODUCTION WARREN BEATTY "THE PARALLAX VIEW" HUME CRONYN WILLIAM DANIELS AND PAULA PRENTISS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GORDON WILLIS
 MUSIC SCORED BY MICHAEL SMALL EXECUTIVE PRODUCER GABRIEL KATZKA SCREENPLAY BY DAVID GILER AND LORENZO SEMPLE, JR. PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ALAN J. PAKULA PANAVISION™ TECHNICAL™
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9 people are dead. But how many fingers were on the trigger?

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