

Mongrel Media
Presents

Room 237



A film by Rodney Ascher
(102 min., USA, 2012)
Language: English

Distribution

mongrel

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SYNOPSIS:

50 words

Many movies have their own provocative interpretations, but none as rich and far-ranging as Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. In *Room 237*, we hear from people who believe they have decoded the hidden symbols and messages buried in the late director's film.

120 words

Many movies lend themselves to dramatic interpretations, but none as rich and far-ranging as Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. In *Room 237*, we hear from people who have developed far-reaching theories and believe they have decoded the hidden symbols and messages buried in the late director's film. Carefully examining *The Shining* inside out and forwards and backwards, *Room 237* is equal parts captivating, provocative and pure pleasure.

Born out of conversations with producer Tim Kirk, Rodney Ascher's film gives voice to the fans and scholars who espouse these theories, reworking the film to match their ideas and intercutting it with layers of dreamlike imagery to illustrate their streams of consciousness. Sometimes outrageous, sometimes mind-blowing, the words of the interviewees are given full-force by Ascher's compelling vision. Discover why many have been trapped in the Overlook for 30 years.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

When I was a kid I ran out of a theater playing Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* about 20 minutes after sneaking in.

I've been obsessed with it ever since.

Having now seen it numerous times, it's become one of my favorite movies, but one which managed to maintain a sense of ambiguity and mystery to me no matter how many times I re-watch it.

Almost two years ago my friend Tim Kirk (producer of *Room 237*) forwarded me an article that interpreted it in an incredibly dramatic way (involving outer space, the Zodiac, and the Cold war) and we were off on the journey that would culminate in *Room 237*. We spent months going on walks with our small children and parsing the intricacies of every theory about *The Shining* we could find, covering topics as disparate as Native Americans, Marshall McLuhan, Genocide, Numerology, Synchronicity, Fairy tales, and World War II.

Other films have been seen as allegories (from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* to *Godzilla* and beyond) but none had generated the type of passionate investigation of *The Shining*.

Looking to make a more-ambitious follow-up to *The S from Hell*, a short 'documentary in a horror movie clothing', I had found my subject.

From the outset, the plan was to talk to people who the movie had affected the most profoundly, people who had written the most provocative analyses and illustrate these ideas - both as an exercise to try and understand the mysteries of one of the greatest horror movies of all time, and to share these ideas with the rest of the world. As interesting as it might have been to talk about the genesis of the film with some of Kubrick's collaborators, our feeling from the beginning was to restrict ourselves to the reactions of the audience and the way they put the pieces together.

The interviews began in January of 2011 and put me into contact with a fascinating group of people (a journalist, a professor, a musician, an artist, and an "erudite conspiracy hunter") and combing through the hours and hours of footage, I was fascinated to find more connections than contradictions. One thing that struck me was how many notable new ideas were being conceived about *The Shining* even during the production of the film (many new blogs and YouTube videos were created and a theater hosted a particularly unusual screening of *The Shining* to investigate a theory about its symmetrical structure). Through my eyes, anyway, this 30 year old movie has a stronger claim on our imagination than ever.

Not a classically trained documentarian, I worked in a horror movie-influenced visual style (and soundtrack) that both suited my taste and also reflected the eerie sense of discovering hidden knowledge that I felt learning what the real source of the blood in the elevators was, why Jack quoted Kipling at the bar in the Gold Room, or who really opened the locked pantry door. When sound designer Ian Herzon ("*Hawaii 5-0*", *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans*) and composers Jonathan Snipers & Bill Hutson (of *Captain Ahab* and *Nilbog* fame) came aboard (with *The Caretaker*, a 'doombient' musician inspired by *The Shining*) the sonic portion of the film surpassed my wildest fantasies.

Now that *Room 237* film is wrapped, I'm not sure that we've definitely solved the mysteries of *The Shining*, (or if such a thing is possible in less than 12 hours) but hopefully we've shed a little light on the way people interact with powerful works of art, whether a film by of the few masters of the form, *The Last Supper*, or Madonna's "Like a Virgin".

FILMMAKERS' BIOS:

Director: Rodney Ascher

Rodney Ascher directed the 2010 short film *The S From Hell* which, like *Room 237*, premiered at Sundance and travelled the world (and the internet) soon after. *Room 237* expands upon *The S From Hell's* style and substance; audio interviews are illuminated with a kaleidoscope of imagery (much of it influenced by horror films of the last hundred years) that brings the audience deep into the inner worlds of people who have been profoundly affected by the movies or TV. Ascher is known for genre-blurring work includes countless short films, as well as commercial projects for clients including EA Games, Capitol Records, and VH1 and have appeared nationally in various institutions including the San Francisco Museum, The George Eastman House and under the Brooklyn Bridge. In his most recent music video he killed Matt & Kim, Soulja Boy, and Andrew W.K. He lives in Los Angeles with his family.

Official site: rodneyascher.com

Producer: Tim Kirk

As a producer and screenwriter, Tim Kirk has sold screenplays and pitches to Universal, Sony Pictures, MGM, New Line and 20th Century Fox. His short film *Bewitched?* was featured at the 2006 Los Angeles Film Festival. Tim is proud to have written the narration for the Hall of the Crucifixion at Forest Lawn in Glendale which shows upon the hour, six days a week. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and 3-year-old daughter.

Official site: tim2kirk.wordpress.com

Composers: Jonathan Snipes and William Hutson

Jonathan Snipes is a composer and sound designer. On screen, his music has been heard in "Mask of the Ninja" (Spike TV, 2008), *Reversion* (Sundance Festival, 2008), *Snakes on a Plane* (New Line Cinema, 2006), "The Office" (NBC, 2005-present), "The Sarah Connor Chronicles" (Fox, 2007-2009), "Battlestar Galactica" (SciFi, 2004-2009), and "Meteor: Path to Destruction" (NBC, 2009). On the stage, his work has been featured in *Meditations on Virginit*y (National Theater in Warsaw, Poland, 2004) *Nocturne* (Black Dahlia Theater, 2004), *Crumble* (Moving Arts, 2005), *Belfast Blues* (Off-Broadway, 2004), and *Sock & Shoe* (Actors Gang, 2009). As "Captain Ahab", Jonathan has written and recorded numerous

albums for the record labels Deathbomb Arc (Los Angeles), Dual Plover (Australia), and Cock Rock Disco (Berlin). He has performed at some of the premier venues and festivals for electronic and music in the world including The Smell and the Knitting Factory in Los Angeles, Dour and Dissonant Festivals in Belgium, Bangface in London, Club Transmedial in Berlin, and The Golden Pudel in Hamburg. He is a founding member and resident composer of Three Chairs Theater Company.

Official site: jonat8han.com

William Hutson is a composer, sound designer, and scholar. He is currently completing his PhD in Performance Studies at UCLA.

Featuring Music by: **The Caretaker**

The Caretaker is a long-running project by musician James Kirby. Initially the project was inspired by the haunted ballroom scene in the Stanley Kubrick film *The Shining*, but recently The Caretaker has shifted attention onto the processes of the brain's function in recalling memories.

Official site: <http://www.brainwashed.com/vvm/>

Animation and poster art: **Carlos Ramos**

Poster art and design are by Carlos Ramos who also created the animation in the film.

Carlos was born and raised in Burbank, California and graduated from the California Institute of the Arts. Ramos has created numerous shows for Cartoon Network, Walt Disney Studios, and Nickelodeon, including "The X's" and "Chalkzone", which garnered him an Annie Award for Individual Achievement in Art Direction. Ramos' work has been featured in numerous galleries including The Corey Helford Gallery, Copro Gallery, Gallery 1988, I Am 8-Bit, La Luz De Jesus Gallery, Rotofugi and he co-hosted the Burning Brush auctions with Tim Biskup. He currently lives in the hills of Silverlake with his fiance Timony and his Boston Terrier, Bucket.

Official site: www.theCarlosRamos.com

Sound Design: **Ian Herzon**

Ian Herzon is a sound designer currently working at Warner Brothers on Hawaii -5-0 and various feature film projects. Some of those recent films include *Dolphin Tale* and *One for*

the Money. He has also worked on various commercials, video games, and theatrical trailers. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance at the University of Miami.

Ian's Credits: www.imdb.com/name/nm1317588/

THE INTERVIEWEES:

Bill Blakemore

A veteran foreign and domestic correspondent, Bill Blakemore joined ABC News in 1970 in the Mideast and India. He has covered a dozen wars or major conflicts including the Black September, Bangladesh, Intifada, 1973 Arab-Israeli, Cyprus, Iranian and Beirut Civil Wars, and more recently the 1991 and 2003 Iraq wars (both from Baghdad) and the ongoing Afghan/Taliban war. On 9/11 he reached Ground Zero before the towers fell. He was ABC's Rome Bureau Chief 1978-1984, traveled extensively with John Paul II and wrote several documentaries and the Encyclopaedia Britannica article about him. Since 1984, he's been based in New York, where he also served as Education Correspondent and reported on the arts and science. He began focusing on extinction and global warming in 2004, and hosts ABC's Nature's Edge. He has won most major broadcast journalism awards, some a number of times. He also writes and lectures on the journalistic profession, the Many Psychologies of Global Warming, and the cinematic art of Stanley Kubrick.

Bill Blakemore tweets at @BBlakemoreABC.

Geoffrey Cocks

Geoffrey Cocks is Professor of History at Albion College in Michigan. He is the author of *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich: The Goering Institute* (Oxford, 1985; Transaction, 1997), *Treating Mind and Body* (Transaction, 1998), *The Wolf at the Door* (Lang, 2004), and *The State of Health: Illness in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2012); He is editor of *The Curve of Life* (Chicago, 1994) and co-editor of *Psycho/History* (Yale, 1987), *German Professions* (Oxford, 1990), *Medicine and Modernity* (Cambridge, 1998), and *Depth of Field* (Wisconsin, 2006).

Juli Kearns

As a playwright, Juli Kearns had multiple works staged before deciding to concentrate on novels. She is the author of "Unending Wonders of a Subatomic World or In Search of the Great Penguin" and "Thunderbird and the Ball of Twine (A Folk Tale)".

Official site: [Idyllopus Press](#)

John Fell Ryan

Writes and edits [KDK12](#), an ongoing visual analysis of Stanley Kubrick and *The Shining*. Staged screenings of *The Shining* forwards and backwards, simultaneously, superimposed. Performer, musician and recording artist with electronic rock group Excepter, and also of New York free-music ensemble The No-Neck Blues Band. DJ, palindromist, former video librarian, and current culture-jammer for WFMU, the longest-running free-form radio station in the USA. Lives off a secluded foot path near downtown Los Angeles with his wife and son.

More of John's work can be found here:

<http://blog.wfmu.org/freeform/john-fell-ryans-posts/>

<http://excepter.net/>

Jay Weidner

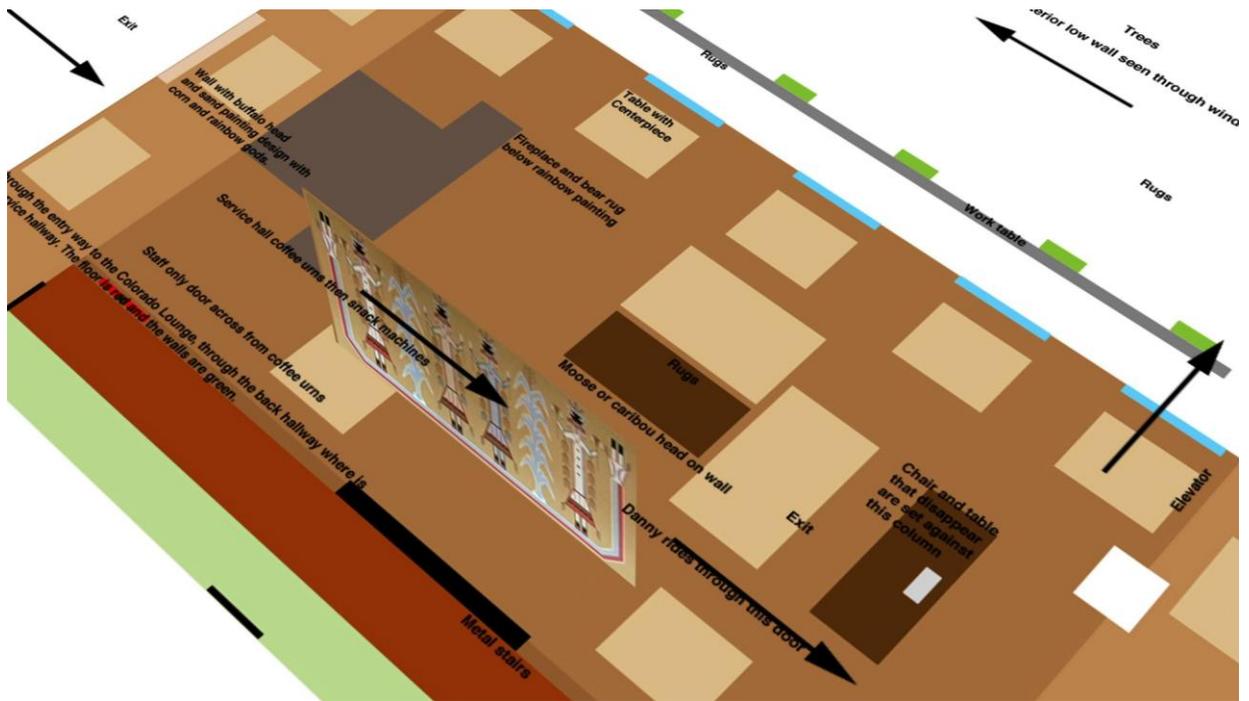
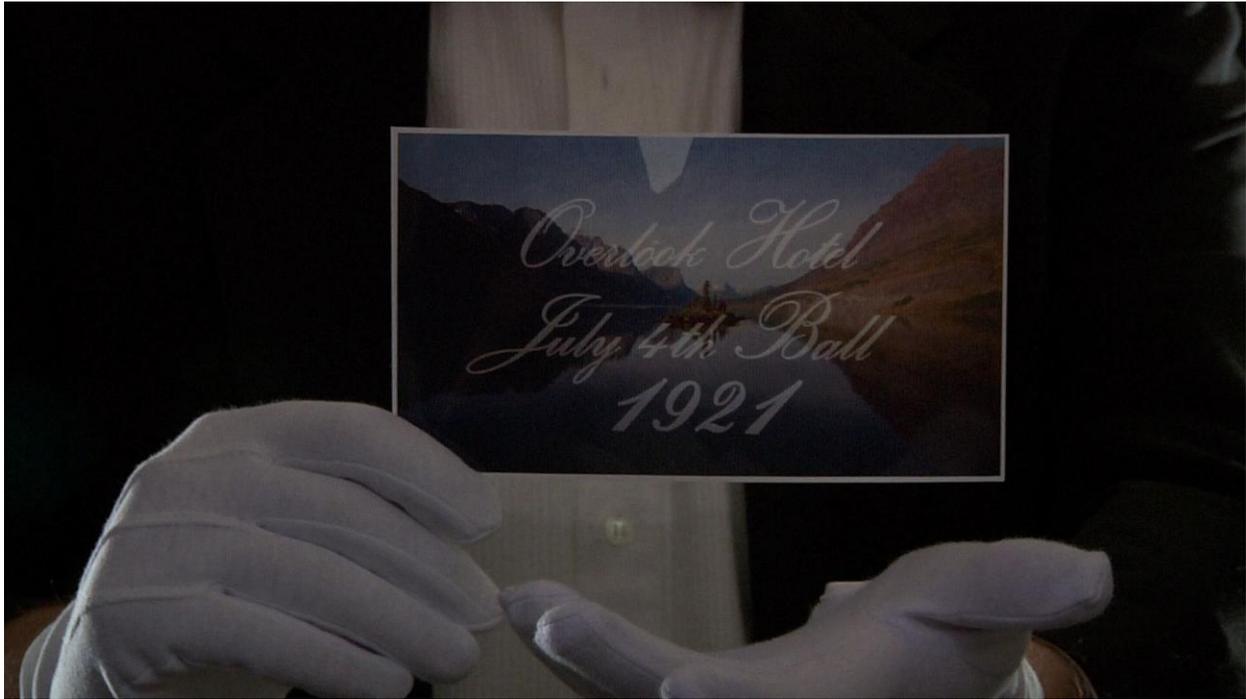
Called by Wired Magazine an "authority on the hermetic and alchemical traditions," and "erudite conspiracy hunter," Jay Weidner is a renowned author, filmmaker and hermetic scholar. Considered to be a 'modern-day Indiana Jones' for his ongoing worldwide quests to find clues to mankind's spiritual destiny via ancient societies and artifacts, his body of work offers great insight into the circumstances that have led to the current global crisis. He is the director of the powerful and insightful documentaries, Kubrick's Odyssey, Infinity; The Ultimate Trip, and the forthcoming feature film, Shasta. He is also the producer of the popular documentary films, 2012 The Odyssey and its sequel, Timewave 2013.

Jay was featured in the History Channel's documentary, The Lost Book of Nostradamus and was associate producer and featured in the History Channel's special, Nostradamus 2012, and also in Brad Meltzer's, Decoded. He also participated in Jesse Ventura's, Conspiracy Theory for TruTV.

In addition, he is the co-author of The Mysteries of the Great Cross of Hendaye; Alchemy and the End of Time, (Destiny Books) and A Monument to the End of Time(with Vincent Bridges), as well as a contributing writer for the book, The Mystery of 2012 (Sounds True).

Official site: <http://www.jayweidner.com>

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