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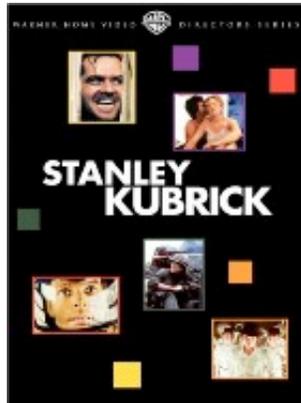
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## HTF DVD REVIEW: Stanley Kubrick : Warner Home Video Director's Series



# Stanley Kubrick : Warner Home Video Directors Series

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), A Clockwork Orange (1971), The Shining (1980), Full Metal Jacket (1987), Eyes Wide Shut (1999)

Studio: Warner Bros.
Year: 1968 - 1999
Rated: G, R, Unrated
Film Length: Various
Aspect Ratio: Various
Subtitles: Various
Release Date: October 23, 2007

Warner's previous releases of the films of Stanley Kubrick were the source of much

discussion and debate, particularly concerning the 4:3 full-frame aspect ratios in which *The Shining*, *Full Metal Jacket*, and *Eyes Wide Shut* were presented - reportedly due to Kubrick's expressed preference - and the lack of 16:9 enhancement for all titles except for *2001: A Space Odyssey*. All five Kubrick film's in this entry in the Warner Home Video Directors series are presented in 16:9 enhanced video at aspect ratios approximating their original theatrical presentations. In addition to retaining the excellent *Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures* documentary from the 2001 *Stanley Kubrick Collection* box set, this set also has extensive special features specific to each film.

## The Films

### **2001: A Space Odyssey (1968 - MGM - 149 minutes)**

**Directed By: Stanley Kubrick**

**Starring: Keir Dullea, Gary Lockwood, William Sylvester, Douglas Rain**

After a prologue where a group of prehistoric apes discover a strange monolith that seems to inspire them to fashion materials into rudimentary weapons, we flash forward through the entire history of human evolution to the year 2001. Dr. Heywood Floyd (Sylvester) travels first to an orbiting space station and then to the moon where he provides a briefing on the top secret recent discovery and excavation of a black monolith buried beneath the moon's surface. Months later, a deep space mission to Jupiter is launched with a crew of five astronauts, three of whom are in suspended animation. The two conscious astronauts, Dave Bowman (Dullea) and Frank Poole (Lockwood) must contend with some seemingly unusual behavior by the ship's computer Hal 9000 (voice of Douglas Rain), and their final destination turns out to be beyond the parameters of their mission and imaginations.

*2001: A Space Odyssey* remains a landmark film which regularly holds a spot on consensus "best film" lists. As such, it is unlikely that I will add anything substantial to the mountains of critical analysis that have been heaped upon it over the last four decades, so I will keep my comments brief.

It is difficult to compare *2001: A Space Odyssey* to other films because it is by design so unlike most other films. Largely experiential in nature, the film all but demands viewers contemplate the ideas behind it from their own perspective rather than through identification with charismatic characters in a thematically leading narrative. Dialog is kept to a bare minimum and, with a few key exceptions, is either purely functional or mundane. Methodically paced sequences set to carefully chosen music or sound effects display the bravura special effects and production design while giving the audience a chance to consider what they have seen, turn it over in their minds, and examine it from different angles. Most Kubrick films work on more than one level, but *2001*,, affords audience members the chance to contemplate this during the actual film as well as in the lobby afterwards.

While other filmmakers have similarly experimented with the narrative form of cinema and attempted to convey ideas and raise questions through unconventional cinematic methods, they have usually not done so via a big budget large-format special effects extravaganza with such a detailed devotion to scientific plausibility.

### **A Clockwork Orange (1971 - Warner - 136 minutes)**

**Directed By: Stanley Kubrick**

**Starring: Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee, Michael Bates, Warren Clarke, James**

## Marcus, Michael Tarn

*A Clockwork Orange* adapts Anthony Burgess' novel about Alex, the unrepentantly vicious leader of a violent youth gang in the near future who commits one act of "ultra-violence" too many and is incarcerated. Desperate to get out, he volunteers for an experimental government program which conditions him to have a negative physical reaction to even the thought of sex, violence ...or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. "Cured" of his violent impulses, Integration into a no less violent society proves more than a little challenging.

After having the plug pulled on his planned big budget epic about Napoleon, Kubrick decided to shift gears and make a relatively low-budget adaptation of Anthony Burgess' controversial novel. The future fashioned here is a long way from the high technology space faring of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The world of a *Clockwork Orange* is pure post-swinging London stylization. The stylization serves to create an ironic emotional distance from the terrible acts of violence that are depicted throughout, but at all times, the viewer is aware that the film is deconstructing modern society more so than speculating about what a future society will be like.

Throughout the 1960s, British cinema produced a series of new young stars, largely appearing in adaptations of novels from the "Angry Young Man" literary movement of the prior decade. Late in this cycle, in 1968, director Lindsay Anderson simultaneously subverted and built on this tradition with his film "If...", providing the first big break for actor Malcolm McDowell. Kubrick recognized McDowell as a perfect fit for the character of Alex, and made a juvenile delinquent film to end all juvenile delinquent films. McDowell brings exactly the right sensibility to the part, pulling audiences in with his unabashed *joie de vivre* while simultaneously performing unforgivable acts of violence. His first person narration sets a perfect conspiratorial tone, much of it pulled straight from the novel and making heavy use of Burgess' invented "Nadsat" slang which combines cockney expressions with Russian/Yiddish terms. By the end of the film, one feels almost guilty about how sympathetically they are rooting for Alex to get one over on the government bureaucrats who have "programmed" him.

On one level, the film can be seen as a funhouse mirror illustration of the violence inherent in youth and the futility of society's attempts to stamp it out. On another level, it can be looked at as a treatise on fascism versus free will. Laying those two concepts on top of each other raises some disturbing and thought-provoking questions. Rather than trying to provide facile answers, Kubrick allows viewers to make up their own rassoodocks.

## The Shining (1980 - WB - 142 minutes)

**Directed By: Stanley Kubrick**

**Starring: Jack Nicholson, Shelley Duvall, Danny Lloyd, Scatman Crothers, Barry Nelson**

"The Shining" adapts Stephen King's novel about the Torrance family consisting of parents Jack (Nicholson) and Wendy (Duvall) and their young child, Danny (Lloyd). Jack, a novelist, accepts a position as a winter caretaker at a mountain resort hotel that closes down for the season due to extreme weather, and brings along his family. He plans to use the free time to work on his novel. Jack has a history of alcoholism, but has been sober since he injured his son while intoxicated. Danny has an imaginary friend he calls "Tony", who we learn is connected to a psychic gift which the hotel's cook (Crothers) refers to as "shining". The hotel itself has a history of tragedy, including a former winter caretaker who murdered his family. As their stay in the remote hotel progresses, Jack

and Danny both have disturbing visions that seem connected to the hotel's dark past. This leads to increasingly erratic behavior from Jack to the point that Wendy and Danny begin fearing that history may repeat itself.

Kubrick's one and only attempt at the horror genre uses King's novel as a jumping-off point, but takes things in a completely different direction by the film's conclusion. Kubrick adds psychological elements reminiscent of *The Turn of the Screw* and *Don't Look Now* to the mix, purposely keeping the plot much more vague than in King's novel. To be honest, I'm not sure he is entirely successful as the end chosen by Kubrick proves to be more than a little contrived and unsatisfying. The ride is certainly an interesting take on the fear of what could happen if one's nuclear family "goes nuclear", but the destination is a disappointment.

That being said, the film benefits from excellent performances from its principal cast who modulate steadily from seemingly self-conscious low-key routine family exchanges to hysterical aggression and terror as the film progresses. The innovative use of the steadicam to create a sense of movement through space not only makes the sets seem impressively massive and real, but also adds to the sense of the hotel itself as a menacing and threatening presence. Kubrick, in collaboration with camera operator Garret Brown and lighting cinematographer John Alcott impressively manages to create tracking shots that begin and end on typically "Kubrickian" strong images with more than a few in the middle as well.

## **Full Metal Jacket (1987 - WB - 116 minutes)**

**Directed By: Stanley Kubrick**

**Starring: Matthew Modine, Vincent D'Onofrio, R. Lee Ermey, Arliss Howard, Adam Baldwin, Dorian Harewood, Kevyn Major Howard**

"Full Metal Jacket" follows the experiences of a sardonic Vietnam-era United States Marine recruit, identified throughout the film only as Private "Joker" (Modine), beginning with basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina. While enduring the rigors of training, he befriends Private "Cowboy" (A. Howard) and witnesses the tragic deconstruction of overweight recruit Private Leonard "Gomer Pyle" Pratt (D'Onofrio) by their fiercely profane Drill Instructor, Gunnery Sergeant Hartman (Ermey). Months later, we find that Joker has been working as a journalist for a military publication and has seen little actual combat. He receives an assignment, along with photographer "Rafterman" (K. Howard) that brings them to the city of Hue in the midst of the Tet Offensive. Joker is reunited with "Cowboy" and experiences harrowing urban combat with a company of Marines including "Eightball" (Harewood) and "Animal Mother" (Baldwin).

While Kubrick's *Paths of Glory* from 1957 was a clear indictment of the elite officer class with an unambiguous pacifist message, *Full Metal Jacket*, adapted from the Gustav Hasford novel "The Short Timers", attempts to do nothing more than to provide a grunt's eye view of war. The emphasis of the movie is on the mindset of the soldiers and how they rationalize, with varying levels of success, their seemingly irrational profession. By purposely avoiding serious examination or comment on the necessity of war, political or otherwise, the film enhances its boots on the ground perspective about the insanity of the experience.

Structurally, most reviewers have described the film as being divided into two parts, the first consisting of the Parris Island basic training and the second being the Vietnam experience. This lines up with the novel on which the film was based which had three sections, only two of which were adapted for the screenplay. Looking at the structure of the film independently, however, it seems to divide more neatly into thirds, with the

Vietnam segment starting off as a semi-satiric piece which at times is reminiscent of the absurdity of *Dr. Strangelove*, and then shifting radically in tone once Joker and his brothers in arms find themselves pinned down by a sniper in an actual combat situation.

The film's commercial prospects were no doubt hurt by its release only six months after Oliver Stone's Oscar-winning Vietnam film, *Platoon*, but viewed in retrospect, they actually complement each other nicely. Stone's film was rooted in his own personal experiences in Vietnam with a highly allegorical plot. Kubrick, being more removed from author Hasford's Vietnam experience, is slightly more detached from the material, less leading in how he wants audiences to interpret the events on screen, and thematically more concerned about soldiering in war in general than about Vietnam in particular. Both films were a long way removed from the hoo-rah jingoism of the previous summer's immensely popular *Top Gun*.

The cast is uniformly excellent, with Modine providing a suitable center as the sardonic everyman. The film features career-defining breakout performances from D'Onofrio and Erney. D'Onofrio reportedly gained 70 pounds to play Private Pyle, and completely disappears in the role. Erney, a retired Marine who had been a real life drill instructor at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California and was initially hired on the film as a technical adviser, made sure that he was seen in uniform drilling the actors he trained, and eventually won the part away from the actor originally cast in the role. His improvised vulgarities were incorporated into the script to great effect. The strength of these performances did lead to criticism upon the film's initial release that the Vietnam scenes, in which they did not appear, were a relative disappointment.

## **Eyes Wide Shut (1999 - WB - 159 minutes)**

**Directed By: Stanley Kubrick**

**Starring: Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, Sydney Pollack, Todd Field, Marie Richardson, Rade Serbedzija, Leelee Sobieski, Vinessa Shaw**

In *Eyes Wide Shut*, adapted by Kubrick and Frederick Raphael from Arthur Schnitzler's Freudian novella "Traumnovelle", Bill Harford (Cruise) is a successful physician who lives in Manhattan with his wife Alice (Kidman) and their young daughter. After an evening at a party hosted by their friend Arthur Ziegler (Pollack) where they both have flirtatious encounters, Bill and Alice have a heated argument in which Alice reveals just how close she has come to cheating on him in the past. This incenses Bill, who storms out of the house with a head full of sexual jealousy. During his evening travels Bill's frustration mounts as he receives a strangely indecent proposal from the married daughter (Richardson) of a patient who has just died, has an extended discussion with a prostitute (Shaw), learns from friend and musician Nick Nightingale (Field) about a mysterious ritualistic masked sex party, and encounters a strange costume shop owner (Serbedzija) and his daughter (Sobieski) when trying to obtain a mask for the party. Caught after sneaking into the party, he spends the next day revisiting most of these experiences and finding that they were even more dangerous and strange than he initially believed.

While not intended as Kubrick's final film, *Eyes Wide Shut* manages to provide an interesting last chapter in his professional life by harkening back to elements from his previous films without actually seeming like any of them in tone. Superficially, the structure resembles that of *A Clockwork Orange*, in the way the events and locations of the first day are revisited on the second day much like how Alex re-encounters his victims after taking "The Cure". The film is also something of a modified "rake's progress" a la *Barry Lyndon*, although the degree of sexual frustration encountered by Cruise's Bill Harford has an even more direct antecedent in the character of Humbert

Humbert from *Lolita*. The *Lolita* tie suggests that there is an element of dark comedy to Harford's constant frustration, and I believe there is, but the movie never betrays it with a wink, with the possible exception of a scene involving Alan Cumming as a hotel clerk, and the great final punch line delivered by Kidman.

Kubrick was a big James Cagney fan, and I think he enjoyed having tyro actors give "large" performances when it worked for his movies. Cruise is certainly in this mold, as was Jack Nicholson in *The Shining* and Malcolm McDowell in *A Clockwork Orange*. He is asked to play the part more or less like he plays all of his parts, but the sexually frustrated and increasingly paranoid character works against this established persona to an interesting effect. Kidman is absent for large sections of the movie, but has two great scenes, which is certainly the best any actress has fared in a Kubrick film since Marie Windsor in "The Killing".

The fact that the film can be approached as a serious meditation on sexual obsession and jealousy, a paranoid thriller, or a perversely humorous variation on a rake's progress narrative is one of the reasons it is worthy of repeat viewings. The fact that it is best viewed and appreciated from multiple angles may also be what prevented it from being unanimously embraced by audiences and critics who found it difficult to digest with a single viewing during its initial release. This is a trait fairly common for Kubrick films, which generally gain in meaning and audience appreciation the more they are discussed, considered, and otherwise revisited.

## **Stanley Kubrick - A Life in Pictures (2001 - WB - 142 minutes)**

**Directed By: Jan Harlan**

This is exactly the same disc which debuted and was exclusively available as part of the "Digitally restored and remastered" *Stanley Kubrick Collection* DVD box set from 2001. It has been re-packaged in a standard Amaray case, but is otherwise unchanged. This is not necessarily a bad thing as the documentary presents an excellent overview of Kubrick's life and career. Participation of Kubrick's family and close associates (director Harlan was Kubrick's brother-in-law and also worked in a production capacity for him for many years) likely results in a somewhat rosier picture than a more personally distanced filmmaker might have drawn, but it also results in an unprecedented amount of personal and archival material being made available to the filmmakers.

Furthermore, it nicely compliments the supplements appearing on the individual discs on this collection. While there is curiously little discussion of Douglas Trumbull's slit-scan technique used for the star gate sequence of *2001: A Space Odyssey* on that disc's many special features, he discusses it specifically in this documentary. While Shelley Duvall and Matthew Modine are completely absent from the special features for *The Shining* and *Full Metal Jacket*, both are present and accounted for here. The Jack Nicholson interview conducted for this documentary appears to be the source for his comments on the special features for *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut* DVD special features as well.

Narrated by Tom Cruise, on-camera interview participants consist of friends, family, collaborators, and admirers including Ken Adam, Margaret Adams, author Brian Aldiss, filmmaker Woody Allen, Steven Berkoff, Louis C. Blau, John Calley, Milena Canonero, Wendy Carlos, Arthur C. Clarke, Alex Cox, Allen Daviau, Ed Di Giulio, Keir Dullea, Shelley Duvall, Todd Field, Anthony Frewin, Harlan, James B. Harris, Michael Herr, Mike Herrtage, Philip Hobbs, Irene Kane, Nicole Kidman, Barbara Kroner, Anya Kubrick, Christiane Kubrick, Katharina Kubrick-Hobbs, Paul Lashmar, György Ligeti, Steven Marcus, Paul Mazursky, Malcolm McDowell, Douglas Milsome, Matthew Modine, Jack Nicholson, Tony Palmer, Alan Parker, Sydney Pollack, Richard Schickel, Martin

Scorsese, Terry Semel, Alex Singer, Steven Spielberg, Sybil Taylor, Doug Trumbull, Peter Ustinov, Leon Vitali, Marie Windsor, and Alan Yentob. Archival comments from Kubrick and his mother, Gert Kubrick, also appear.

## The Video

With the exception of *Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures*, All films are presented in 16:9 enhanced video. *2001: A Space Odyssey* shows the least dramatic improvement in its 2.2:1 widescreen transfer from its predecessor, but that's because there was very little wrong with that presentation in the first place. Halos around high contrast edges are still noticeable, particularly along the horizon lines in the "Dawn of Man" sequence and around the people and furniture against the bright white of the space station. Other than that, there is not a lot to complain about with excellent detail, contrast, and compression throughout.

The 1.66:1 presentation of *A Clockwork Orange* benefits from 16:9 enhancement, but is otherwise very similar in character to the previously "digitally restored and remastered" edition. Kubrick's fondness for using fast film stocks and pushing exposure without a lot of fill lighting results in an image that is usually a bit soft in appearance, although certain scenes, such as the exterior where Alex clubs his droogies into the water in slow motion look more detailed than others. Edge halos are minimal to non-existent and compression artifacts are not noticeable from a reasonable viewing distance.

The transfer for *The Shining* fills the entire 16:9 enhanced frame. Compared to the full frame DVD release from 2001, there is a little more room on the left and right sides of the frame in most shots. As with the previous release, detail is very good and contrast is very carefully rendered with no overloaded whites despite the bright diffuse light from the background windows in many shots. Edge halos rarely intrude and compressions is very good.

Both *Full Metal Jacket* and *Eyes Wide Shut* also appear in transfers that fill the entire 16:9 enhanced frame. Like *A Clockwork Orange*, the way they were filmed prevents them from appearing especially detailed. In the case of *Eyes Wide Shut* film grain is visible, but I suspect that it has been softened somewhat by filtering in the digital video domain. Aside from being cropped to approximate their theatrical aspect ratios, enhanced for 16:9 displays, and having subtly improved compression, they appear very similar in character to the previously available DVDs from 1999. Edge halos rarely intrude.

*A Life in Pictures* is identical to the previous release. Presented in 4:3 video, all of the newly shot interview footage and the scans across still photos are letterboxed to an approximately 16:9 aspect ratio. Clips from Kubrick's films are presented at the same aspect ratios as their video presentations circa 2001 which range from 2.2:1 for *Spartacus* and *2001...* to 4:3 full frame for many others. Home movie footage is presented in 4:3 full frame. The new footage is all shot on film and looks very good with natural grain.

## The Audio

All of the films are presented with English Dolby Digital 5.1 mixes that sounded very similar to the 2001 DVD releases, which is not a bad thing. The mono original theatrical mixes for *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, and *Full Metal Jacket* are not included, but the remixes are very faithful to the theatrical mixes with noticeably improved musical fidelity. The remix for *The Shining* must have been an especially difficult process, as the score consists of a lot of edit pieces from various sources. Surrounds and LFEs are used sparingly on the remixes of the mono films, primarily for very specific effects such as

explosions in *Full Metal Jacket*.

All titles in the collection except for *A Life in Pictures* include French dubs in Dolby Digital 5.1. *The Shining* and *Full Metal Jacket* also include Spanish dubs in Dolby Digital 5.1. All titles include subtitles in French and Spanish with English subtitles for the deaf and hearing impaired. *A Life in Pictures* also has subtitles in Portuguese.

## The Extras

While the previous "digitally restored and remastered" Kubrick collection was light on special features (basically just trailers, Vivian Kubrick's "The Making of The Shining", the "A Life in Pictures" documentary, and a few featurettes on the Columbia/Sony Dr. Strangelove disc), this *Director's Series* release finds each disc chock full of special features as detailed below:

*2001: A Space Odyssey*:

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Disc one features an audio Commentary from Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood. Recorded separately, both actors have interesting things to say about the film, and it is clear that they have been talking about it for several years. Lockwood's comments are more frequent than Dullea's, but he does lapse into telling the listener what is happening in the film from time to time. Their most interesting comments are when they are sticking to observations about working as actors on the film, with the most entertaining bit for my money being when they discuss the on-set voice of Hal having a cockney accent. Lockwood comes off a bit blustery at time, but slightly self-consciously owns up to that fact before doing so.

Also included on the first disc is a theatrical trailer running one minute and 51 seconds and presented in a format filling the entire 16:9-enhanced frame.

Disc two consists entirely of special features. All are presented with Dolby Digital 2.0 sound and without chapter stops unless otherwise indicated:

*2001: The Making of a Myth* – This Paul Joyce-directed BBC documentary produced in 2001 runs 43 minutes and five seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video. It provides a nice retrospective look at the film from the perspective of participants, admirers, and scientists. Discussion of the film's special effects, includes some demonstration and recreations as well. For the demo of the floating pen effect, they even include Heather Downham, the actress who played the flight attendant in the film. It is also amusing to hear the computer singing "Daisy" that inspired its use for Hal's swan song.

James Cameron provides the introduction and then narrates throughout. Interview participants include "2001..." Author Arthur C. Clarke, "2001" Special Photographic Effects Supervisor Con Pederson, "2001" Special Photographic Effects Supervisor Doug Trumbull, "2001" Special Effects Artist Brian Johnson, 2001 Scientific Consultant Fred Ordway, "2001" Actress Heather Downham, "2001" Actor Ed Bishop, Mime/Actor Dan Richter (he played the "Moonwatcher" ape), Mime/Actor Keith Denny, Writer/Critic Professor Camille Paglia, "2001" Film Editor Ray Lovejoy, Keir Dullea, AT&T Artificial Intelligence Expert Dr. Ron Brachman, Film Critic Elvis Mitchell, Washington DC Space Policy Unit Director John Logsdon, AT&T Videophone Technologist Roy Coutinho, and former Bell Labs Voice Recognition Expert Dr. Larry Rabiner.

*Standing on the Shoulders of Kubrick: The Legacy of 2001* runs 21 minutes and 24 seconds. Directed by Gary Leva, it focuses on the influence of *2001...* on other

filmmakers. Although presented without chapter stops, on-screen titles divide it up into sections named First Impressions (covers reactions to the film), Reinventing the Form (emphasizes groundbreaking accomplishments), Breaking New Ground (more emphasis on visual effects), A Feast for the Senses (focuses on effect of design and music), Commitment to Truth (covers research and commitment to realism), and A Filmmaker's Filmmaker (discusses subsequent films that were influenced by *2001...* and Kubrick's other films)

Interview participants include director Steven Spielberg, actor/director Sydney Pollack, screenwriter Jay Cocks, visual effects artist Phil Tippett, director George Lucas, cinematographer Caleb Deschanel, visual effects supervisor Dennis Muren, Sound Designer/Editor Ben Burtt, Film Critic Roger Ebert, Visual Effects Supervisor John Dykstra, Director Peter Hyams, Kubrick Assistant Anthony Frewin, Screenwriter Dan O'Bannon, Director/Cinematographer Ernest Dickerson, Author David Hughes, Director William Friedkin, Author Paul Duncan, Former WB Executive John Calley, Producer Jan Harlan, Cinematographer Janusz Kaminski, "2001..." Visual Effects Supervisor Douglas Trumbull, Author Paul Duncan, and Author John Baxter

*Vision of a Future Passed: The Prophecy of 2001* runs 21 minutes and 30 seconds. Directed by Gary Leva, it includes discussion of the scientific assumptions and predictions inherent to *2001* related to space travel, computers, and other subjects as well as an assessment of how accurate they were. Although there are no chapter stops, it is divided into sections by on-screen titles named: "A Credible Future?", "The Reality of Space Travel", "A Product of Its Era", and "The Altar of Technology".

On-camera interview participants include "2001..." author Arthur C. Clarke, Baxter, Frewin, Muren, Ebert, Hughes, Trumbull, O'Bannon, Visual Effects Animator Rob Coleman, Trumbull, Duncan, Author Bettyann Holtzmann Kevles, Dykstra, Producer Jan Harlan, Friedkin, Calley, Edlund, and Pollack.

*2001: A Space Odyssey: A Look Behind the Future* runs 23 minutes and ten seconds and is presented in 4:3 video. It is a vintage documentary from 1966 that appears to have been shot on 16mm color film. It was produced by "Look" magazine, and consists of a behind the scenes documentary on the production of "2001..." framed by an introduction and epilogue from magazine publisher Vernon Myers giving a pitch to advertisers to support "Look Magazine's" 1st 1967 issue special section on space exploration. This is a wonderful supplement to include, and is the source for just about all of the behind the scenes footage I have ever seen on the film's production, including all of the vintage clips included in the documentaries on this DVD.

*What is Out There?* runs 20 minutes and 41 seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video. Keir Dullea presents an essay on the scientific and philosophical issues raised by *2001:ASO* intercut with film clips, stills, a vintage Clarke interview, and a little behind the scenes footage.

*2001: FX and Early Conceptual Artwork* runs nine minutes and 32 seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video. It is more or less exactly what its title suggests. The first few minutes include discussion by Trumbull on how some of the stargate images were created. He refers to a variation of the slit scan technique used for the light streaking effects, but does not describe it. You will have to check out the "Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures" documentary to see him do that. After that we have an introduction from Christiane Kubrick followed by a montage of mostly unused pre-visualization paintings intercut with a couple images from the film.

*Look: Stanley Kubrick* runs three minutes and fifteen seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video. After a brief title card introduction, it presents a montage of photographs taken by a young Kubrick for Look magazine set to music from a five piece

jazz combo.

*11/27/1966 Interview with Stanley Kubrick* is an audio-only supplement that runs one hour, sixteen minutes, and 26 seconds. It is a recorded interview between Kubrick and journalist Jeremy Bernstein. Kubrick covers biographical background and discussion of all of his films through the then in production *2001*.... There is a pretty funny moment when the interviewer confuses "The Killing" with "The Asphalt Jungle" and Kubrick realizes it right away.

*A Clockwork Orange*:

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The first disc of *A Clockwork Orange* includes an audio commentary from Malcolm McDowell and Nick Redman. They sit together for the duration, and it proves to be a fun listen. McDowell is a gifted raconteur and tells just about every story I have ever heard him tell about the making of the film in as good or better form as I have heard. Redman does a good job of filling in details not covered or remembered by McDowell and keeping things on tracks. It is a lively commentary with only a few extended gaps.

The film's theatrical trailer is also included on the first disc. It runs exactly one minute and is set to the sped up synthesized "William Tell Overture" used in the film. It is very creative, but it is cut at a pace that could cause an epileptic seizure.

Disc two consists entirely of three documentaries. All are presented with Dolby Digital 2.0 sound and without chapter stops unless otherwise indicated:

*Still Tickin': The Return of Clockwork Orange* runs 43 minutes and 37 seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video. Produced in 2000, this is another BBC documentary directed by Paul Joyce. Topics covered include the circumstances of Kubrick's banning of the film in the UK after 15 months, background information about the novel, the British Board of Film Classification's liberal attitude towards censorship of films like *The Devils*, *Straw Dogs*, and *A Clockwork Orange* in the early 1970s, the social and political environment in UK at that time, The technique of the voiceover in the film, Malcolm McDowell, the strange appeal of disturbing characters, the handling of violence in the film, the controversy concerning the book's final chapter, and the relationship between art and violence.

Interview participants include Director Sam Mendes, Director Mary Harron, Writer Mark Kermode, Author William Sutcliffe, Writer/Critic Alexander Walker, Author/Filmmaker William Boyd, Writer/Poet Blake Morrison, Author Anthony Burgess (via archival clips), Artist Damien Hirst, 1971 BBFC Viewing Committee Member Ken Penry, Ex-Director, BBFC Robin Duval, Malcolm McDowell, Director Tony Kaye, and Author/Critic Camille Paglia.

*Great Bolshy Yarblockos!: Making A Clockwork Orange* runs 28 minutes and fifteen seconds and is presented in 4:3 video. Directed by Gary Leva, it provides a general overview of the film's production and the controversy surrounding its release. Although presented without chapter stops, on-screen titles divide it up into sections named *It's All About Me*, *My Droogies* (focuses on McDowell), *These paltry Gollies Won't Buy Us Peanuts* (discusses low budget nature of the production), *A Real Pain in the Gulliver He Was...* (concerns Kubrick's methodical production approach and physical demands, especially on McDowell), *A Bit of the Old Ultra-Violence*, and *This is the Real Weepy and Tragic Part of Our Story, Oh My Brothers...* (the varied Responses to film and its eventual withdrawal from the UK).

Interview participants include Pollack, Friedkin, Spielberg, ACO Associate Producer Bernard Williams, Duncan, Baxter, Author J. David Slocum, Hughes, Author Neil

Fulwood, Author Stuart McDougal, Director Hugh Hudson, Calley, ACO Costume Designer Milena Canonero, ACOMakeup Artist Barbara Daly, Cocks, Deschanel, Editor Bill Butler, Dickerson, and Lucas.

*O Lucky Malcolm* runs one hour, 26 minutes, and six seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video including chapter stops accessible via an on-screen menu. It is a feature length documentary on the life and career of Malcolm McDowell directed by Jan Harlan. Breakthrough roles from his early career are covered in great detail including his collaborations with director Lindsay Anderson and his performance in *A Clockwork Orange*. After discussion of 1979's *Caligula* and *Time After Time*. however, the discussion completely skips the 1980s and 1990s and focuses on films McDowell has made since 2000. What's there is covered with decent depth, but the documentary does feel unbalanced by its significant omissions.

On-screen interview participants include McDowell, Christiane Kubrick, Daughter Lilly McDowell, Son Charlie McDowell, Producer and close friend Mike Kaplan, Actress and ex-wife Mary Steenburgen, Wife Kelley McDowell, Director Edoardo Ponti, Actress Deborah Kara Unger, Writer and Friend Peter Bellwood, Director Mike Hodges, Director Robert Altman, Actress Neve Campbell, Director Tamar Simon Hoffs, Actor Max Beesley, and Director David Grieco.

*The Shining:*

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The first disc of *The Shining* includes a commentary by steadicam inventor/operator Garrett Brown and film historian/author John Baxter. They were recorded separately, but their edited comments compliment each other nicely. Baxter sometimes seems to be stretching things a bit thin in his thematic interpretations, but that is not unusual in scholarly commentaries. Brown's first-hand observations of the production are priceless and presented with both technical acumen and a dry sense of humor. By far my favorite moment of the commentary came a few minutes shy of the two hour mark when Brown tells an anecdote about convincing Kubrick that the RF transmitter allowing him to operate wirelessly would not be broadcasting into nearby homes. Brown even affects a Monty Python-esque ladies voice of a housewife receiving the broadcast and commenting on how hard Stanley is being on the actors and what lens he is using.

The eerie theatrical teaser trailer running one minute and 34 seconds is also included on the first disc.

*View from the Overlook: Crafting The Shining* runs 30 minutes and 20 seconds and is presented in 4:3 video. Directed by Gary Leva, it presents a "big umbrella" making of featurette covering several aspects of the production. Although presented without chapter stops, on-screen titles divide it up into sections named *Into the darkness*, *Stanley's Toy Box*, *Lost in the Maze*, *Beneath the Surface*, *Reality is Overrated*, and *The Nature of Evil*.

Interview participants include Pollack, Friedkin, Author/Screenwriter Diane Johnson, Calley, Author Charles Champlin, Baxter, Duncan, Harlan, Production Designer Roy Walker, Jack Nicholson, Hughes, Brown, Dickerson, Deschanel, Canonero, Daly, Spielberg, Hudson

*The Visions of Stanley Kubrick* runs seventeen minutes and sixteen seconds and is presented in 4:3 video. Directed by Gary Leva, it starts out covering six more minutes of "The Shining" discussions before moving on to more general "Kubrickian" topics, including his penchant for strong images, his beginnings in still photography, Camera movements and zooms in his films, and Kubrick's artistic achievements.

On camera interview participants include Spielberg, Pollack, Nicholson, Kaminski, Deschanel, Baxter, Walker, Brown, Duncan, Friedkin, McDougal, Calley, Dickerson, Daly, Canonero, and Lucas.

"The making of the Shining" runs 34 minutes and 59 seconds and is presented in 4:3 video with DD 5.1 sound. Directed by Vivian Kubrick, this behind the scenes documentary has a tremendous amount of on-set footage and, much like the Look magazine documentary on *2001*... it is the source for all such footage I have scene of the film's production. One sequence of Kubrick and Shelley Duvall having a prickly exchange on set has become somewhat infamous, looming large in the legend of both participants. Vivian Kunrick's commentary is informative if occasionally a bit too apologetic, and provides additional insight into the making of the documentary as well as the subject film itself.

*Wendy Carlos, Composer* runs seven minutes and 30 seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video. Carlos discusses her work on both *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Shining*, plays some unused music passages, and shows some of the electronic devices used to create the sounds and score.

#### *Full Metal Jacket:*

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*Full Metal Jacket* fits the film and all of its special features on a single dual-layered disc. The first special feature is an audio commentary from Adam Baldwin, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lee Ermey, and Jay Cocks. All participants were recorded separately. The majority of the comments are from D'Onofrio and Cocks. Baldwin and Ermey only comment during the portions of the movie where they appear. D'Onofrio's comments continue throughout with surprising amounts of background information even concerning the scenes in which he did not appear. D'Onofrio covers a wide range of topics from specifics about how he got the part and the on-set working methods to more analytic and reflective comments about how *Full Metal Jacket* compares to other Vietnam films and how he owes his career to this particular role. Cocks takes a pretty straightforward critical/scholarly approach to his comments and as such, I found myself occasionally disagreeing with his analysis when he strayed to far into the subjective. Subjective opinions aside, there's no denying is mispronunciation of Lee Ermey's last name throughout his comments.

*Full Metal Jacket: Between Good and Evil* runs 30 minutes and 47 seconds and is presented in 4:3 video with Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo sound. Directed by Gary Leva, it covers the entire production from adaptation/script stage through its release and reception. Although presented without chapter stops, on-screen titles divide it up into sections named *Battle Plan* (Adaptation/Script and casting), *Field of Battle* (East London gas works location and production design, *Into the Breach* (Kubrick's working with actors, the original decapitation ending, and Kubrick as perfectionist), *Commander in Chief* (Additional Personal reminiscences about Kubrick, *Killing Machines* (Thematic concerns), and *Legacy of War* (the film's conclusion and responses to the film of various people including Marines)

On-camera interview participants include Harlan, Calley, Hughes, R. Lee Ermey, Baxter, Adam Baldwin, Kevyn Major Howard, Vincent D'Onofrio, Steadicam Operator John Ward, Assistant Art Director Nigel Phelps, actor Dorian Harewood, Dickerson, Cocks, and Hyams.

#### *Eyes Wide Shut:*

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All of the special features for *Eyes Wide Shut* appear on the second disc of the set.

Note: The rear of the *Eyes Wide Shut* cover indicates that it includes both the unrated cut of the film as well as the R-rated North American release. The unrated cut is the only version actually appearing on the disc. Subsequent pressings are reportedly being updated with a label indicating this fact. Also, studio press material in advance of this release indicated that a commentary from Sydney Pollack and historian Peter Loewenberg would be included, but this never came to fruition. To be fair, the press materials also indicated that all enhanced content listed was subject to change.

*The Last Movie: Stanley Kubrick and Eyes Wide Shut* runs 43 minutes and three seconds if "Play All" is selected. It is presented in 16:9 enhanced video with Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo audio. Directed by Paul Joyce, this BBC documentary from 1999 looks not just at *Eyes Wide Shut* as its title suggests, but at a substantial span of Kubrick's career during which he developed both *A.I.* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. On disc, it is encoded as three separate chapters which can be watched separately or together via a "Play All" option, the film itself is actually divided by on-screen titles into six sections named: *The Haven/Mission Control* (Living and working in England with relative anonymity), *Visions of the Future* (how Kubrick's interest in sci-fi grew after meeting Clarke - *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange* and its withdrawal from exhibition in the UK), *Artificial Intelligence of The Writer as Robot* (The development of AI and Kubrick's sometimes prickly relationship with collaborators), *Style & Method* (Observations on Kubrick's working methods), *Eyes Wide Shut, A Film by Stanley Kubrick* (The film's development and production), *Beyond the Finite* (Personal Reminiscences of his life and passing from his family, Cruise, and Kidman).

On-Camera interview participants include Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, Spielberg, Pollack, Christiane Kubrick, Katharina Kubrick-Hobbs, Anya Kubrick, Novelist & EWS collaborator Candia McWilliam, Warner Bros Chairman & CEO Terry Semel, Novelist/AI collaborator Brian Aldiss, Director John Boorman, Novelist/AI Collaborator Sara Maitland, Novelist/AI Collaborator Ian Watson, and Harlan.

*Lost Kubrick: The Unfinished Films of Stanley Kubrick* runs 20 minutes and eighteen seconds and is presented in 16:9 enhanced video with Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo sound. Directed by Gary Leva and narrated by Malcolm McDowell, this featurette covers films for which Kubrick conducted substantial pre-production work, but never produced. After an initial mention of *A.I.* which was eventually produced under the direction of Steven Spielberg, the focus shifts to the *Napoleon* biopic developed by Kubrick after *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The plug on this project was pulled by MGM after the lack of box-office success of the 1970 Rod Steiger film, *Waterloo*. Next, the focus shifts to Kubrick's work on *The Aryan Papers* a holocaust drama based on the novel *Wartime Lies* by Louis Begley. This project was postponed largely due to the release of the similarly themed *Schindler's List*.

On-camera interview participants include Nicholson, Pollack, Harlan, Calley, Baxter, Frewin, Duncan, Author Stewart McDougal, Richter, *Wartime Lies* Author Louis Begley, Actor Joseph Mazzello, Makeup Artist Barbara Daly, and Walker.

*DGA D.W. Griffith Award Appearance Speech* runs four minutes and three seconds and is presented in Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo sound. After brief introductory comments by Jack Nicholson, it presents the filmed comments of Kubrick from 1998 in recognition of receiving the award.

*Interview Gallery* runs 35 minutes and eighteen seconds if "play all" is selected and is presented in 4:3 video with Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo sound. It consists of one-on-one interviews with Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, and Steven Spielberg conducted by Paul Joyce in 1999. Cruise & Kidman were recorded in New York just prior to the US premiere of *Eyes Wide Shut*. Spielberg was recorded in Hollywood about a week later. The interview footage was eventually edited into the *The Last Movie... BBC*

documentary. The interview footage with Spielberg is also the source for every appearance of Spielberg on the featurettes for *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and *The Shining* listed above.

*Theatrical Trailer* runs one minute and eleven seconds and is presented in artifact-riddled 4:3 video with Dolby digital 2.0 stereo sound.

*TV Spots* runs one minute and eight seconds if "Play All" is selected and are presented in 4:3 Video. They are labeled as "Jealousy" and "Combo". "Jealousy" is essentially an abbreviated version of the theatrical trailer set to the music of Chris Isaak's "Baby Did a Bad Bad Thing". "Combo" is set to the Lygeti "Musica Ricercata II: Mesto, Rigido e Cerimonale" piano piece used in the film.

## Packaging

The DVDs are packaged inside a thin cardboard box with the individual titles enclosed in standard Amaray-style cases. *2001...*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, and *Eyes Wide Shut* include a hinged tray that allows for a second disc with special features. Having released all of the films multiple times with replications of original poster art (on snapper cases), Warner took a novel approach to the disc covers in this package, focusing on a single iconic image from each film. You get Hal 9000's "eye" from *2001...*, Alex's mascara'd eye from *A Clockwork Orange*, the "Born to Kill/ Peace Sign helmet from *Full Metal Jacket* (which actually was the theatrical poster), and the mask from *Eyes Wide Shut*. I thought this was a graphically interesting approach except that for some reason, they abandoned it for *The Shining*. Based on the graphics on the back of the box, it looks like they were going to use the infamous "Redrum" door, but instead, we get the same glowering "Here's Johnny" Jack Nicholson face from previous releases. Even the typesetting on the spine of *The Shining* does not match with the rest of the films in the box. "A Life in Pictures" uses essentially the same cover graphics as before, upgraded from a snapper case to an Amaray.

## Summary

The five theatrical films included in the *Stanley Kubrick: Warner Home Video Directors Series* box set all feature transfers as good or better than their preceding releases from the 2001 *Stanley Kubrick Collection*. They offer 16:9 enhancement and theatrical widescreen aspect ratios on the titles where it was not previously available. All five films also include a substantial upgrade in the area of special features. The *Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures Documentary* is the same disc that was available in the previous collection, but it is a worthy addition as its contents dovetail nicely with the special features on the discs for each film with less redundancy than one might reasonably expect. This is a worthy purchase for anyone interested in the behind the scenes extras, the theatrical aspect ratio presentations for three of the titles, and the 16:9 enhancement for *A Clockwork Orange*.

Regards,

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Ken McAlinden  
Livonia, MI USA



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