



RETURN OF THE OUTSIDER: THE FILMS OF MIKE HODGES

Black Rainbow

'*Black Rainbow* is a crossroads of many different ideas,' says writer/director Mike Hodges. 'I'm concerned about what we're doing to our planet and I'm interested in the revival of numerous kinds of religion, evangelism and the new age of spiritualism. We have this wonderful place we call God's Kingdom – a place of beauty and serenity. But we are destroying it and not looking after what is now rapidly vanishing. I wanted to make a thriller encompassing all these subjects. The idea of a medium gave me the vehicle to carry the various strands I was trying to work into the piece.'

No newcomer to the arenas of fantasies, thrillers or controversial movies, as *Flash Gordon*, *Get Carter* and *A Prayer for the Dying* prove, Hodges was inspired to write the screenplay for *Black Rainbow* after filming in North Carolina in 1985. He made the TV movie *Florida Straits* there and was struck by how the devoutly religious area seemed caught between the atmosphere of the Forties and the Eighties.

'*Florida Straits* was the worst experience of my professional life until *A Prayer for the Dying*,' says Hodges, who began his directing career on the *World in Action* series for Granada Television in 1963. 'But it worked out in retrospect because I knew the town of Charlotte and that it would be the perfect location for a film and I was determined to set a story there one day.'

Black Rainbow turned out as a result to be the most personal screenplay Hodges ever wrote. Hodges was a full-time drama writer before opting for directing and he explains, 'My feelings are very deep about the issues the film addresses. I feel we've got ourselves, and our world, into a serious predicament. You read about it daily. Maybe it's because we've turned our backs on all things mysterious. What we can't understand or scientifically explain, we reject out of hand. We live in such materialistic times, we reject anything to do with the unconscious.'

He continues, 'After all, our ancestors looked after the earth with care. Its preservation was built into their philosophy. We not only reject their wisdom, we even tried to destroy them with it. Surely there is a direct link between the way we treat our environment and the fact that we have no time to dwell on anything anymore. It's an age of distractions and we literally end up ignoring the very place we are living in, which could be the important key to understanding ourselves.'

Hodges believes in the power of telepathy, the basis from which he started writing the *Black Rainbow* script in 1986. He remarks, 'All I've done is put a feeler out for discussion saying there may be things we don't understand but at least we should be trying. Most of the information that seems to come up at these mass public psychic displays put on by mediums is usually personal trivia. Mediums seem to pick up on people's thoughts which they then embellish with all their own dreams of what it's supposed to be like on The Other Side. They act like human radio receivers collecting subconscious wavelengths. But nobody has proved there is an "over there" yet. And that's as far as I wanted to go with the subject in the script.'

Hodges continued, 'There are all sorts of phenomena we don't understand: why under hypnosis someone has three or four different personalities; why birds migrate; what causes mass hysteria? We seem scared witless to study extraordinary phenomena because, if we did, it would possibly reveal that it's our egos that are being threatened. The idea of individuality brings with it the necessity of some sort of God. A deity is necessary to promote the idea of living in the hereafter. Yet all the signs show we're just particles of matter – and that's all that probably does matter. Why don't we want to probe these phenomena? Our ancestors did. The Shamans did. Why are we so afraid to explore them?'

These questions and many more are raised in *Black Rainbow* to emotional, chilling and thought-provoking effect. The title was chosen by Hodges for one main reason: 'The view of the Martha Travis medium and all those people concerned with the hereafter is that life after death is represented by a colourful rainbow. What I'm saying is that it's about to turn irretrievably black.'

But Hodges has a far more uncanny anecdote about the title as he reveals. 'Shortly after I had thought of the title I found myself in New York's Museum of Modern Art. On the top floor there was an exhibition called "Big Graphics". It was the end of a tiring afternoon and I was leaving when a family passed me and one of the children said, "Look Dad, 'BLACK RAINBOW'!" I turned around and there behind me was a Jim Dime drawing I had missed. It was titled 'The Making of BLACK RAINBOW. I knew I had the right title after that coincidence.'

With a budget of \$7 million, filming began on *Black Rainbow* in October 1988 in Charlotte, North Carolina, for a six week period. Hodges says the experience was the best he's ever had directing a picture. 'I wouldn't have missed working with Gerry Fisher (director of photography). He's such an intelligent man and he gave the movie an incredibly realistic base. Voytek Roman (production designer) is a theatre design genius and his décor was non-intrusive. He gave it the Edward Hopper feel I was after, brought out simply. The day I arrived in Charlotte I saw 250 actors and cast the whole picture, apart from the three leads, in a day and a half. I even recorded the opening and closing music in the six weeks I was there.'

Hodges concludes, 'The whole film was like a bizarre dream. It was as if it had to be made, like I was on some pre-ordained quest. It sounds daft but it's the truth. It felt right and the cast and crew loved being involved. I set out to create a world of my own imagination. Ideally one takes an audience by the hand and leads them somewhere they've never been before.'

Production notes

BLACK RAINBOW

Directed by: Mike Hodges
©: Goldcrest Films and Television Ltd
Presented by: Goldcrest
Executive Producer: George A. Walker
Produced by: John Quedsted, Geoffrey Helman
Associate Producer: Donald S. Anderson
Production Manager: Robert Warner
Production Auditor: Barbara Miller
Assistant Auditors: Mark Bakunas, Abigail Ireland
Location Manager: David Hartley
Production Office Supervisor: Eileen Eichenstein
Production Secretary: Sandra M. Stott
Production Assistants: John Sanders, Jim Wiggins, Cyndie Williams, Ellen Gannon, George Howell, Jennifer K. Richardson, Paul Bosanko
1st Assistant Director: Jay Tobias
2nd Assistant Director: Paula Brody
Script Supervisor: Cornelia Rogan
Casting by: Fincannon and Associates
[Casting] With: Judy Courtney
Casting Assistant: Pam Plummer
[Casting] With: D.L. Newton
Written by: Mike Hodges
Director of Photography: Gerry Fisher
Camera Operator: Gordon Hayman
2nd Camera Operators: Cary Fisher, Constantine Makris
Camera Focus: Maurizio Dotto, George Binnersley
2nd Camera Focus: Herb Harton
Camera Assistants: Penny Sprague, Bill Finger
Gaffer: John Sprague
Best Boy - Electrics: Lynn Dodson
Key Grip: Gene Poole
Best Boy - Grips: Logan Berkshire
Grips: Rufus Granger, Eric Bartsch
Dolly Grip: Tim Bess
Still Photographer: Phillip Caruso
Special Effects: Bob Shelley's Special Effects International Inc.
Special Effects: Bob Shelley, Robert Shelley Jr, Willard Stephens
Edited by: Malcolm Cooke
1st Assistant Editor: Kerry Kohler
Location Assistant Editor: Darcy Bowman
2nd Assistant Editor: Dominic Cooke
Production Designer: Voytek
Art Director: Patricia Klawonn
Set Director: Jennifer Williams
Lead Person: Barbara Kahn
Set Dressers: Matt Sullivan, Doug White, Fermon Judd, Peter Reeves, Ron Servicky
Standby Scenic: Mark S. Turner
Chargeman Scenic: Robert Testerman
Property Master: Suzy Lapick
Property Assistant: Joseph Fiacco
Construction Co-ordinators: Tommy Moye, Jeffrey Schlatter
Construction Foreman: Carl Copeland
Lead Painter: Carolyn Brand
Assistant to Costume Designer: Gloria Laughridge
Costume Supervisor: Deborah Latham
Costumes by: Clifford Capone
Costumer: Alonzo Wilson
Set Costumers: Amy Lilley, Alonzo Wilson
Make-up Chief: Allen Weisinger
Mr Hulce's Make-up: Sheri Short
Hairstylist: Victor De Nicola
Hair: Lauri Fisher
Titles: Rotocolor
Music Composed & Conducted by: John Scott
Lyrics: Barry Mason
Music Performed by: The Graunke Symphony Orchestra, Lucy Williams, Choir of Canon's Cathedral Charlotte N.
Music Producer: John Fiddy
Music Editor: Kerry Kohler
Music Recording: Alan Snelling
Location Sound Mixer: Blake Wilcox

Boom Operator: Troy Wilcox
Mixers: Paul Carr, Brian Paxton
Sound Editor: Colin Miller
Assistant Sound Editor: Bill Barringer
Dialogue Editor: Derek Holding
Assistant Dialogue Editor: Catherine Hodgson
Vocal Effects by: David Sharpe's Totally Looped Group
ADR Recorded at: Mayflower Studio London
ADR Mixer (UK): Lionel Strutt
ADR Recorded at: New York Studio One
ADR (USA): David Boulton
Sound Recorded at: London Roger Cherrill Ltd
Stunts: Tom Harper, F. Ellis Edwards
Train Co-ordinator: John Griffin
Production Publicist: Joy Helman
Transportation Captain: Bubba Forester
Transportation Co-ordinator: Lee Siler
Craft Services: Randy Pickett, Linda Pickett

Cast

Rosanna Arquette (*Martha Travis*)
Jason Robards (*Walter Travis*)
Tom Hulce (*Gary Wallace*)
Mark Joy (*Lloyd Harley*)
Ron Rosenthal (*Lt Irving Weinberg*)
John Bennes (*Ted Silas*)
Linda Pierce (*Mary Kuron*)
Olek Krupa (*Tom Kuron*)
Marty Terry (*Mrs Adams*)
Ed L. Grady (*editor, Geoff McBain*)
Rick Warner (*editor, Jay Chatwin*)
Jon Thompson (*Jack Callow*)
Helen Baldwin (*Eva Callow*)
Ed Lillard (*pastor on train*)
Darla N. Warner (*Shirley Harley*)
Christopher L. Gray (*choirmaster*)
Peter Townes (*President Hotel, clerk*)
Lucy Williams (*choirlady*)
Dan Cox (*Terminal Hotel, clerk*)
William Brown (*Hal Faber*)
Dandy Stevenson (*Mrs Koestler*)
Rebecca Hogan (*Mrs Anderson*)
Georgia Allen (*Mrs Jamais*)
Brenda Mitchell (*Mrs Dupont*)
Princess Wilson (*Mrs Kimbler*)
Mert Hatfield (*Mike Braddon*)
Wallace Merck (*Officer Monroe*)
Mary Ratliff (*Eunice Dole*)
Judy Simpson Cook (*Rachel Sachs*)
Willie Stratford (*railroad steward*)
Kay Joiner (*Mrs Prior*)
Jerry Rushing (*Bud Orwell*)
Muse Watson (*police officer*)
Herbert Eley (*caretaker*)
Janelle Cochrane (*airline clerk*)
Joe Inscoe (*2nd airline clerk*)
Joyce Bowden (*Nurse Shelly*)
George Hart (*plainclothed detective*)
Ivan Green (*preacher*)
James G. Martin Jr (*hotel night clerk*)
Tate Gardiner (*Larry Harley*)
Christina Taylor (*Lilly Harley*)
Jeffrey Taylor (*Mike Harley*)
Corbin Gurkin (*Cindy Harley*)
Kathleen Williams, Joe Maggard, Mary Moore, Anna Morris, Dale Wright (*audience*)
Choir of Canon's Cathedral Charlotte N. (*themselves*)

UK 1989
103 mins

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