



### **Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb**

*Directed by:* Stanley Kubrick

*©/Production Company:* Hawk Films

*Production Company:*

Columbia Pictures Corporation

*Produced by:* Stanley Kubrick

*Associate Producer:* Victor Lyndon

*Production Manager:* Clifton Brandon

*Unit Manager:* Leon Minoff \*

*Assistant Director:* Eric Rattray

*Continuity:* Pamela Carlton

*Screenplay by:* Stanley Kubrick, Peter George, Terry Southern

*Based on the book Red Alert by:* Peter George

*Director of Photography:* Gilbert Taylor

*Camera Operator:* Kelvin Pike

*Camera Assistant:* Bernard Ford

*Travelling Matte:* Vic Margutti

*Special Effects:* Wally Veevers

*Editor:* Anthony Harvey

*Assembly Editor:* Geoffrey Fry

*Assistant Editor:* Ray Lovejoy

*Production Designer:* Ken Adam

*Art Director:* Peter Murton

*Wardrobe:* Bridget Sellers

*Make-up:* Stewart Freeborn

*Hairdresser:* Barbara Ritchie

*Main Title by:* Pablo Ferro

*Music:* Laurie Johnson

*Sound Supervisor:* John Cox

*Recordist:* Richard Bird

*Dubbing Mixer:* John Aldred

*Sound Editor:* Leslie Hodgson

*Aerial Adviser:* Captain John Crewdson

*Filmed at:* Shepperton Studios

*Cast:*

Peter Sellers (*Group Captain Lionel*

*Mandrake/President Merkin Muffley/*

*Dr Strangelove*)

George C. Scott (*General 'Buck' Turgidson*)

Sterling Hayden (*General Jack D. Ripper*)

Keenan Wynn (*Colonel 'Bat' Guano*)

Slim Pickens (*Major T.J. 'King' Kong*)

Peter Bull (*Ambassador de Sadesky*)

James Earl Jones (*Lt Lothar Zogg, bombardier*)

Tracy Reed (*Miss Scott*)

Jack Creley (*Staines*)

Frank Berry (*Lt H.R. Dietrich, D.S.O.*)

Robert O'Neil (*Admiral Randolph*)

Glen Beck (*Lt W. D. Kivel, navigator*)

Roy Stephens (*Frank*)

Shane Rimmer (*Captain G.A. 'Ace' Owens, co-pilot*)

Hal Galili (*Burpelson base defender*)

Paul Tamarin (*Lt B. Goldberg, radio operator*)

Laurence Herder (*Burpelson base defender*)

Gordon Tanner (*General Faceman*)

John McCarthy (*Burpelson base defender*)

UK-USA 1963©

94 mins

Digital 4K

\* Uncredited

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### **In Character: The Films of Peter Sellers**

## **Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb**

Kubrick's brilliant satire has lost none of its power to provoke, amuse and disturb. Sellers is hilarious as President Merkin Muffley, especially in his long phone conversation with his Soviet counterpart; suitably staunch as British Group Captain Lionel Mandrake, and delightfully – if scarily – unhinged as Strangelove himself, the scientist who has invented the Doomsday Machine and finds the notion of mutual assured destruction sexually exciting. Sadly, the film also feels timelier than ever.

### **A contemporary review**

*Dr. Strangelove*, or (one must get its enchanting subtitle in somehow) *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, is a very tough film indeed, which makes no last-minute concession, and which bids fair to achieve the unlikely distinction of being the most hilariously funny and the most nightmarish film of the year. Stanley Kubrick, on ample evidence, is not only a clever but a cunning director, and *Dr. Strangelove* is his most Machiavellian film yet. Although it develops, ultimately, into wild farce (one can easily see how the custard-pie finale, not actually used in the film, could have been conceived), it has laid its serious basis so firmly that its grip cannot be loosened. Everybody, one realises by the end, is mad.

And Kubrick's frightening vision here is the enormity of madness which can lie behind an exterior sane enough to walk, talk and work with calm competence, or behind a perfectly reasonable remark. General Turgidson, for instance, challenged by his President with the fact that the attack is an unauthorised error, responds with offended dignity, 'I don't think it's fair to condemn a whole programme because of a single slip-up.'

Character after eminently reasonable character reveals some mild quirk which swells uncontrollably into blinkered obsession: General Ripper's health fad about distilled water, we realise, becomes diseased terror of a Communist plot to debilitate the liquids of the human body by tampering with the world's drinking-water; Colonel Guano mutters agitatedly about 'deviated preverts' (sic); General Turgidson screams about 'moronic peons' and hugs secret files to his breast like an anxious schoolboy as the war room is thrown open to the Russian ambassador; the Russian ambassador busily photographs secret equipment as the world literally disappears. Even the British *sang-froid* of the R.A.F. officer, the most sympathetic character in the film, takes on the dimensions of *rigor mortis*.

By the time Dr. Strangelove himself appears, about halfway through, the familiar world we know from Defence Plans, White Papers and Summit Conferences has undergone a perfectly logical metamorphosis into a nightmare version of Carroll's Wonderland. In a world studded with throw-switches invitingly lettered 'AutoDestruct' and files labelled 'World Targets in Megadeaths', Dr. Strangelove – American nuclear expert of dubious Germanic origins – is a natural inhabitant: a latter-day Dr. Mabuse, whose metal arm springs automatically to the 'Sieg Heil!' or twitches frantically to key words like 'slaughtered' and 'sexual', and who chuckles in manic glee as he calculates that survivors will be able to emerge from subterranean hideouts after only 100 years.

## In Character: The Films of Peter Sellers

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Tue 19 Aug 20:45

### The Smallest Show on Earth

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### The Naked Truth

Sun 3 Aug 15:00; Wed 13 Aug 20:30

### Being There

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Sat 30 Aug 20:25

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### Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop

### Worrying and Love the Bomb

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Kubrick manages this bewildering slither from real to unreal and back again with total mastery. Unlike *Paths of Glory* with its lazy sweep of tracking shots, or *Lolita* with its arrogantly sensual arabesques, *Dr. Strangelove* is choppy, abrupt, at times as urgently graceless as a newsreel, at others breathtakingly well-lit and shot. The battle between the two American units looks like a documentary; the flight of the aircraft (travelling matte and dummy plane) looks, exactly as it is meant to look, contrived; the President is seen at one moment half-observed by intervening shoulders, as though photographed by an intruding newspaperman, at another in studio close-up exchanging telephonic civilities with his Russian counterpart ('No, Dimitri, no... you couldn't be more sorry than I am...'). The result is that we are faced with a reality that becomes fantasy and, by extension, a fantasy that could so easily become reality.

The same tightrope balance is, miraculously, sustained by the acting. Central, obviously, is Peter Sellers in another multiple role as President, R.A.F. Officer, and Strangelove. What might so easily have been a trick is, in fact, completely successful, partly because only Strangelove is played for full Goon extravagance, with the R.A.F. officer an affectionately gentle caricature, and the mild, balding, affable President played almost straight. The real saving factor, however, is that Sellers is only a brilliant key in a brilliantly cast film, where each actor (with the exception of Peter Bull's self-indulgent Russian ambassador) finds an image which is both ludicrous and unnervingly exact: Sterling Hayden (Ripper), impassively stern and cigar-chewing through all his ravings, ominously shot from below; George C. Scott (Turgidson), all jumping-jack volatility, enthusiasm and little-boy hurt looks; Keenan Wynn (Guano), bovine devotion and indifferent incomprehension; Slim Pickens (the pilot), Texan drawl, gallantry, and wild incongruity.

A film which maintains the courage of its convictions to the bitter end is rare enough; even rarer is one which pursues its course with such relentless logic. Kubrick tells his story with such control that, although one knows the inevitable conclusion, one has no idea how it will happen, and each episode comes not only as another nail in the coffin, but as a frightening demonstration of how power politics have become a Frankenstein monster which one little error can send out of control.

A tough film, then, which makes one think, laugh and weep in equal proportions, and which ends on an image which makes every other film about The Bomb look like a pretty game: mushroom clouds billow over the vast, unpeopled surface of the earth, and Vera Lynn's voice croons consolingly from a mysterious limbo beyond the soundtrack, 'We'll meet again... some sunny day.' A sick film? I think, rather, one of bitter denunciation and hopeful warning. A lot of Americans, unfortunately, are likely to find it hard to take.

Tom Milne, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1963-64