



Moviedrome: Bringing the Cult TV Series to the Big Screen

White of the Eye

White of the Eye

Directed by: Donald Cammell

©: Mrs Whites Production Inc.

Presented by: Elliott Kastner

a Cannon release

Produced by: Cassian Elwes, Brad Wyman

Associate Producers: Sue Baden-Powell, Vicki Taft

Production Manager: Sue Baden-Powell

Production Co-ordinator: Aron Warner

Production Controller: Marsha Koff

Location Manager: Harold Francis Enright III

Location Consultant: Bob Zache

Production Assistants: Mathew Gaston,
John Peate, Douglas Miller, David Goodman

1st Assistant Director: Andrew Z. Davis

2nd Assistant Director: David Householter

3rd Assistant Director: Perry Husman

Script Supervisor: Jan D. Evans

Casting by: Pamela Rack

Extras Casting: Janet Cunningham

Written by: China Cammell, Donald Cammell

Based on the book 'Mrs White' by: Margaret Tracy

Photographed by: Larry McConkey

Lighting Cameraman: Alan Jones

Camera Operator: Douglas Ryan

Steadicam Photography: Larry McConkey

1st Assistant Camera: Adam Kimmel

2nd Assistant Camera: Mark Davidson,

Edward A. Gutentag

Gaffer: Kevin Williams

Key Grip: Gary L. Dagg

Video Playback: Alexander T. Pappas

Still Photographer: Suzanne Tenner

Special Effects: Thomas Ford

Edited by: Terry Rawlings

1st Assistant Editor: Steve Cox

2nd Assistant Editor: Tim Grover

Production Designer: Philip Thomas

Set Decorator: Richard Rutowski

Set Dresser: Christina Volz

Property Master: Charles Stewart

Construction Co-ordinator: Douglas Dick

Costume Designer: Merril Greene

Costumer: Donna Barrish

Key Make-up & Hair: Jeanne van Phue

Make-up and Hair: Sharon Ilson Reed

Titles and Opticals by: Peter Govey Opticals

Processing by: Consolidated Film Industries

Negative Cutting Supervisor: Les Collins

Prints by: Technicolor Ltd

Music by: Nick Mason, Rick Fenn

Music Supervisor: George Fenton

Music Editor: Brian Lintern

Sound Mixer: Bruce Litecky

Boom Operator: Marshall Evans

Re-recording Mixer: John M. Hayward

Sound Editor: Jim Shields

Dialogue Director: China Cammell

Stunt Co-ordinator: Dan Bradley

Stereo Design & Special Consultation:

Christopher Hansen

Camera and Lenses by: Panavision

Cast:

David Keith (*Paul White*)

Cathy Moriarty (*Joan White*)

Art Evans (*Charles Mendoza*)

Alan Rosenberg (*Mike Desantos*)

Mark Hayashi (*Stu*)

William Schilling (*Harold Gideon*)

David Chow (*Fred Hoy*)

Michael Greene (*Phil Ross*)

Alberta Watson (*Ann Mason*)

Danielle Smith (*Danielle White*)

'What is a cult film? A cult film is one which has a passionate following but does not appeal to everybody. Just because a movie is a cult movie does not automatically guarantee quality. Some cult films are very bad. Others are very, very good. Some make an awful lot of money at the box office. Others make no money at all. Some are considered quality films. Others are exploitation.' From 1988 to 2000 *Moviedrome* was presented by Alex Cox and then Mark Cousins. Across that time, more than 200 features were shown, and generations of movie fans and filmmakers would be informed and inspired by the selection, alongside the wit and wisdom of the introductions that preceded each screening. *Moviedrome* was a portal into the world of weird and wonderful cinema. This two-month season features some of the most notable titles screened and wherever possible they are preceded by the original televised introduction.

Nick Freand Jones, season curator and producer of *Moviedrome*

Mark Cousins: Tonight, one of the best films about a serial killer, from one of the most maverick directors. Donald Cammell's *White of the Eye*.

White of the Eye is a film about a very disturbed character called Paul White, former hunter and now a hi-fi engineer who may or may not be a serial killer. It was directed by Donald Cammell, one of the strangest figures in modern American and British cinema, I think. He was born in Edinburgh, he was one of the key figures in London in the sixties, friends with Mick Jagger etc. He co-directed *Performance* with Nicolas Roeg, and then went to America and worked with Marlon Brando through the '70s. In 1977 he made a film, *Demon Seed*, which we showed on a previous *Moviedrome* and 10 years later he made this film, *White of the Eye*. Throughout his life Donald Cammell was very interested in themes of suicide and therefore it wasn't a surprise that at the age of 62, in his house in LA, with his wife China there, he shot himself in the head. He survived for between 10 and 30 minutes thereafter and apparently spoke lucidly and wasn't in pain. This is of course a very dramatic thing to happen at the end of someone's life, but in some way any other filmmaker it would have been a surprise, not him.

Donald Cammell used to say of himself that there was the professional Donald Cammell, the filmmaker, and then what he called 'the uncensored Don' and it's a bit like Jekyll and Hyde, and of course *Jekyll and Hyde* was partly to do with the city where he was born, in Edinburgh; and what I think is so good about this picture is that it seems very much to come from the Mr Hyde side of his personality, the dark, the disturbed, the depressive side, the 'life is a pile of shit' side of him. And he's not afraid to give a very unvarnished view of men and of America and things like that. And I think that's what's unusual and that's what makes it a *Moviedrome* film. The book, *White of the Eye*, was brought to Cammell and at first, because it was about a serial killer, he wasn't interested in it, but then he realised that he could make a movie which addressed some of the themes that he was really interested in.

One of the things about *Performance*, the film that he made with Nic Roeg, was the way that it tried to argue that all people are both masculine and feminine and men are damaged if they are too masculine, and therefore he made this film to be about such a character: a man who was scared of women, scared of his feminine side and goes out and shoots them because of it. You could say that there's a touch of Oliver Stone about Donald Cammell, who's very interested in Native American myths and the sense of foreboding that those myths could provide for his story. But at the same time, as well as being interested in things such as desert and the effect the desert has on

Mimi Lieber (*Liza Manchester*)
Pamela Seamon (*Caryanne*)
Bob Zache (*Lucas Herman*)
Danko Gurovich (*Arnold White*)
China Cammell (*Ruby Hoy*)
Jim Wirries (*Grunveldt*)
Kate Waring (*Joyce Patell*)
Fred Allison (*TV newsman*)
Clyde Pittfarkin (*hairstresser*)
John Diehl (*Mr Dupree*) *
Donna Barrish (*Betty*) *
Brad Wyman (*killer's Eye*) *
UK 1987
118 mins
Digital

* Uncredited

Moviedrome transmission date: 2 July 2000

Moviedrome: Bringing the Cult TV Series to the Big Screen

Johnny Guitar

Fri 1 Aug 20:30; Sun 10 Aug 14:45;
Tue 19 Aug 18:10

The Harder They Come

Sat 2 Aug 15:00; Fri 8 Aug 20:45; Sat 23 Aug 18:10
Yojimbo

Sat 2 Aug 20:45; Mon 11 Aug 18:15;
Sun 24 Aug 12:30

What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?

Sun 3 Aug 14:45; Sat 16 Aug 12:00;
Thu 21 Aug 20:25

Mommie Dearest

Sun 3 Aug 18:20; Thu 14 Aug 20:30

Carnival of Souls

Wed 6 Aug 18:40; Fri 15 Aug 20:50

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Thu 7 Aug 19:00; Sun 10 Aug 17:30;
Sun 24 Aug 17:30

The Girl on a Motorcycle

Fri 8 Aug 18:30; Sun 17 Aug 15:40

Badlands

Sat 9 Aug 12:30; Sat 16 Aug 18:10;
Tue 26 Aug 20:50

Performance

Sat 9 Aug 18:20; Mon 18 Aug 20:50

Diva

Sat 9 Aug 20:30; Tue 19 Aug 20:40;
Fri 29 Aug 18:15

Escape From New York

Mon 11 Aug 20:45; Sat 23 Aug 20:50;
Thu 28 Aug 18:20

To Sleep with Anger

Tue 12 Aug 20:35; Sat 16 Aug 15:10

Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters

Wed 13 Aug 18:20; Mon 25 Aug 14:50;
Sat 30 Aug 20:40

White of the Eye

Wed 20 Aug 20:40; Sun 31 Aug 15:10

Electra Glide in Blue

Thu 21 Aug 18:15; Fri 22 Aug 20:45

With thanks to

Sue Deeks, Simon Chilcott, Carl Davies,
Josephine Haining and Andrew Abbott

somebody, he's also interested in schizophrenia and the relationship between masculinity and femininity in people. This combination of themes – some very sixties themes but others rather timeless – crush into this film and make it a very visually rich tapestry.

The husband in the film is played by David Keith, a kind of Patrick Swayze lookalike, who was very surprised that the director allowed him to go as far as possible, while he wasn't allowed to change any of the dialogue at all, he was allowed to act very extremely and he, I think, liked that a lot. The wife is played by Cathy Moriarty, who was in *Raging Bull* also.

Movies these days mostly suck up to their audience, I think, they try to be dead glossy and they try to make you have a very nice time, laugh and cry and all these things. This film is much tougher. It doesn't really want you to like it, in a way. But it takes you into the mind of a character, takes you into an incredible landscape. It's wholly cinematic, I think. It tells the story with the camera and that's the best recommendation you can give.

Mark Cousins' original introduction for *Moviedrome*. With thanks to moviedromer.tumblr.com

White of the Eye is Cammell's most achieved solo work – though, even here, he relied on his wife China Cammell as co-writer. Based on *Mrs White*, a novel by brothers Andrew and Laurence Klavan (writing under the joint pseudonym Margaret Tracy), it's by default Cammell's '1980s' movie. Just being a Cannon film locates it in the Reagan decade but it also dwells lovingly on its array of hideous mullets and fluffy perms – it's even a plot point that all the women in the film except the straight-haired blonde heroine model their look on local rich slut Ann Mason (Alberta Watson). A burbling yet steely electro-acoustic score from Rick Fenn and Pink Floyd's Nick Mason makes the film's soundscape comparable to Michael Rubini's work on *Manhunter* or Wang Chung's on *To Live and Die in LA*. Even the 1970s flashbacks have a bleached-out look that screams 1987.

The plot of *White of the Eye* is squarely in the 80s tradition of Brian De Palma's MTV Hitchcockery, talking-point slasher movies such as *Fatal Attraction* or *Jagged Edge* and 'mad dad' horrors like *The Shining* and *The Stepfather*. It skews away from crackpot male self-exploration and the objectification of murdered women, as exemplified by serial killer Paul White (David Keith), a sound expert who installs stereo systems in the homes of wealthy clients, towards a critique of the attitudes embodied in most commercial thrillers of the period, thanks to the livewire performance of Cathy Moriarty as Joan, Paul's loving yet angry wife.

As the work of a European artist stranded in a hallucinated America, *White of the Eye* bears comparison with John Boorman's *Point Blank* (1967), Ken Russell's *Altered States* (1980), Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas* (1984) or Louis Malle's *Atlantic City* (1980). Cammell shifted the location from the Connecticut suburb of the novel to the environs of Tucson, Arizona. This enables him, like every other British filmmaker given the chance to put on a cowboy hat, to evoke the Wild West of the movies and also the myth's latterday hippie incarnation as the playground of hallucinogenic Native American wisdom. It incarnates the New West in a cowboy-talking, Indian-sympathising protagonist who uses weird Apache humming techniques to map out the soundscape of a room before installing stereo speakers. However, he's also a woman-hating murderer. Cammell's work is shot through with mysticism of various forms but he was self-aware enough to have his heroine take a cold, clear view of her husband's Carlos Castañeda rationale for disembowelling women and call bullshit on it.

Kim Newman, *Sight and Sound*, June 2014