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Stanley Kubrick And Me: Thirty Years At His Side

Emilio D'Alessandro, with Filippo Ulivieri

STANLEY KUBRICK and me

THIRTY YEARS AT HIS SIDE



Synopsis

This intimate portrait by his former personal assistant and confidante reveals the man behind the legendary filmmaker - for the first time. Stanley Kubrick, the director of a string of timeless movies from *Lolita* and *Dr. Strangelove* to *A Clockwork Orange*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Full Metal Jacket*, and others, has always been depicted by the media as the Howard Hughes of filmmakers, a weird artist obsessed with his work and privacy to the point of madness. But who was he really? Emilio D'Alessandro lets us see. A former Formula Ford driver who was a minicab chauffeur in London during the Swinging Sixties, he took a job driving a giant phallus through the city that became his introduction to the director. Honest, reliable, and ready to take on any task, Emilio found his way into Kubrick's neurotic, obsessive heart. He became his personal assistant, his right-hand man and confidant, working for him from *A Clockwork Orange* until Kubrick's death in 1999. Emilio was the silent guy in the room when the script for *The Shining* was discussed. He still has the coat Jack Nicholson used in the movie. He was an extra on the set of *Eyes Wide Shut*, Kubrick's last movie. He knew all the actors and producers Kubrick worked with; he observed firsthand Kubrick's working methods, down to the smallest detail. Making no claim of expertise in cinematography, but with plenty of anecdotes, he offers a completely fresh perspective on the artist and a warm, affecting portrait of a generous, kind, caring man who was a perfectionist in work and life.

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Customer Reviews

Easily the best book out there about Stanley Kubrick, the *man,* not the filmmaker. Just about every book available on Kubrick is about the films--the making of, or analyses of--but none of these has

really been about the personal life of the director. Even the good biographies, like Vincent LoBrutto's, were built on hearsay and interviews by other people. Emilio D'Allesandro was Kubrick's personal assistant for 30 years, he was a driver, cook, builder, repairer, amateur vet, organizer, and confidante--and more importantly, Emilio didn't much care about the films or why SK was famous or anything like that. To him, it was a job and he did it well. Emilio became "one of the family," for that is how SK operated... Kubrick's films were practically made "at home," as the director surrounded himself with family and close friends/collaborators. The press often had field days complaining how Kubrick was a "hermit" or a "recluse," or even that he was crazy--all of which is nonsense. He simply valued his privacy. This book explains all that and more. Throughout the book, Emilio talks about the various duties and behind-the-scenes tasks he performed while at the same time painting a portrait of his employer as a very human, somewhat vulnerable, sometimes obsessive, artist. This book is a beautifully drawn illustration of a genius.

I've always admired Kubrick as an artist. This is the first time I could (start to) understand him as Stanley, a human. This is a magnificent book for anyone interested in the personality of genius, cinema, Stanley's films, or a sincere and heartfelt memoir. My only complaint is the very best - I wish for more. Having read almost every book on the man, this is my favorite and the most essential.

This compelling, fascinating, beautifully written memoir paints a richly detailed portrait of Stanley Kubrick, a uniquely brilliant artist and a deeply complex human being. A mass of contradictions and, at times, jaw-dropping eccentricity, Kubrick comes to life as never before in this intimate account by Emilio D'allesandro, his trusted personal assistant and friend for 30 years. And though at times I wondered how Emilio could have dealt with all that was asked and expected of him by Kubrick without having a nervous breakdown or physical collapse (something which ultimately does nearly happen), I also found myself surprisingly moved to tears by the affection and respect these two men held for each other as so beautifully expressed in this one-of-a-kind, minutely observed book. If you're a fan of Kubrick's films and want to know more about the day to day life of the man behind them, then this is the book for you!

My headline isn't referring to Kubrick, it refers instead to Emilio D'Alessandro, the guy who was the only assistant Kubrick completely trusted for the last 20 years or so of his life. Kubrick couldn't handle the unpredictability and messiness of the world outside his door, so D'Alessandro took care

of that and a whole lot more for the legendary director. The author is careful to keep certain things about Kubrick confidential - and yet, you probably will learn more about the reclusive filmmaker here than anywhere else. Ultimately, a kind of love story that's absorbing, informative and very touching towards the end.

If you are interested in Stanley Kubrick, buy this book. It's that simple. As other reviewers have noted, this is not a book about film making. Emilio D'Alessandro was effectively Kubrick's personal assistant for thirty years. An Italian ex-racing driver (!), he freely admits he knows nothing about film, and, indeed, had never viewed even a single Kubrick film from beginning to end until after having worked with the man on a daily basis for decades. (Also, one very tiny quibble: the photos in book are mostly small and rather fuzzily reproduced.) What this is, really, is a joint biography of two families, the D'Alessandros and the Kubricks. Sensitively written (with the participation of Filippo Ulivieri) the book transports you into Kubrick's working household, and a portrait of the great director built up through a thousand details of daily life and casual interactions between the director and others. There are no boardroom power meetings here, and no premiers, There is just the man. Workaholic, driven, and hugely intelligent, yes. But also anxious, kind, decent, and someone who enjoyed being constantly with his family (including a herd of beloved pets). Stanley Kubrick pulled off the near miracle of turning epic film-making into a home business. Emilio D'Alessandro was with Stanley Kubrick right up to the director's death in 1999, and it is perhaps the highest tribute to this affecting account, that by the time you reach that event you will feel every bit of the emotional desolation it caused to those who had truly known him.

A rather Amarcord-ish glimpse of Stan the man; surprisingly and pleasantly well written Starts out less than interesting, but continues to gradually draw the dedicated SK-phile along, hoping for more morsels - and getting them. Warm and direct and genuine. Worth ten times all the current biographies out there (particularly that of the Bax-Terd)! Thankfully, very little fodder here for the parasitic cine-pundit propeller heads. Documents, in often amusing detail, SK's middle-aged (from his 40's on) typically annoying chess-nerd type neuroses and various other absent-minded professor OCD-esque eccentricities. Lovable, but exasperating? A good paisan Emilio, mostly treads lightly to avoid being indiscreet: shares what he ought to. Certainly not the final, definitive word on this fascinatingly contradictory and enigmatic man - obviously born to be a filmmaker; but a long, long overdue glimpse, a portrait sketched with simple, glancing but meaningful strokes. And, by the farewell I have to admit, it broke me down a couple of times: Particularly for a sublime last and

lingering image that would have been appropriate for the finale of a wonderful film by Fellini. Or the Bronx Maestro himself.

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