



American Legends: The Life of Stanley Kubrick

Charles River Editors

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"When I made my first film, I think the thing that probably helped me the most was that it was such an unusual thing to do in the early 50s for someone who actually goes and makes a film. People thought it was impossible. It really is terribly easy. All anybody needs is a camera, a tape recorder, and some imagination."
– Stanley Kubrick

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

There may be no director in American film history who was better able to combine commercial appeal with art house style like Stanley Kubrick. As his career progressed, his films grew increasingly challenging, with slow, methodical plots that made for running times that spanned upwards of three hours, but no matter how much Kubrick may have broken away from the standard 90-minute Hollywood fare and threatened to alienate his audience, there is no denying the special place his films hold in pop culture. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1969), *A Clockwork Orange* (1972), and *The Shining* (1982) remain among the more widely-loved films of the latter half of the 20th century among both critics and casual moviegoers alike.

As much as Kubrick was able to satisfy the American viewer, his virtuoso camera technique and use of sound place him on par with major international directors of the art house circuit, like Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini, and Michelangelo Antonioni. If Kubrick's films regularly surface on college film curricula, it is not only because they remain culturally relevant but also because they had a formal sophistication that is perhaps unmatched in Hollywood over the past several decades.

At first glance, Kubrick's career is almost intimidating; not only did he produce a bevy of films that have been designated as masterpieces, but his career spanned almost 50 years. Despite spanning nearly a half-century, however, Kubrick was not an especially prolific director, and his career is actually quite navigable, because Kubrick only completed 13 feature-length films, in addition to a small collection of short films prior to arriving in Hollywood. Even after reaching the prime of his career, it was not unusual for him to go several years between films, a duration that was integral in order for him to complete the voluminous research and attention to detail that he devoted to each picture. As a result, Kubrick did not have the sort of frenetic, one-film-per-year pace that others like Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, or other such Hollywood giants did, but at the same time, it means each Kubrick film occupies almost its own chapter in his career.

American Legends: The Life of Stanley Kubrick examines Kubrick's life and career, taking a close look at the ways in which his family background both informed his later career and stand in contrast with it. Kubrick was a complex figure who retained a mysterious public persona, and given the paucity of his public appearances, one got the sense that Kubrick wished to avoid the public eye altogether. Nevertheless, he remains one of America's foremost master technicians, storytellers, and reclusive geniuses. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Stanley Kubrick like never before, in

no time at all.

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