

Dr. Strangelove



Or How I learned to Love the Bomb

Main Facts

Year Made: 1964

Production Company: Columbia Pictures

Directed by: Stanley Kubrick

Written by: Stanley Kubrick and Terry Southern

Genre: Satire/Comedy

Main Actors

1. Peter Sellers as Capt. Lionel Mandrak/President Merkin Muffley/Dr. Strangelove
2. George C Scott as Gen Buck Turgidson
3. Sterling Hayden as Brig. Gen. Jack D Ripper
4. James Earl Jones as Lt. Lothar Zogg

Major Plot Summary

U.S. Air Force General Jack Ripper goes completely and utterly mad, and sends his bomber wing to destroy the U.S.S.R. He suspects that the communists are conspiring to pollute the "precious bodily fluids" of the American people. The U.S. president meets with his advisors, where the Soviet ambassador tells him that if the U.S.S.R. is hit by nuclear weapons, it will trigger a "Doomsday Machine" which will destroy all plant and animal life on Earth. Peter Sellers portrays the three men who might avert this tragedy: British Group Captain Lionel Mandrake, the only person with access to the demented Gen. Ripper; U.S. President Merkin Muffley, whose best attempts to divert disaster depend on placating a drunken Soviet Premier and the former Nazi genius Dr. Strangelove, who concludes that "such a device would not be a practical deterrent for reasons which at this moment must be all too obvious". Will the bombers be stopped in time, or will General Jack Ripper succeed in destroying the world ?

Financial Information

Budget: 1.8 Million

Money Made: Estimated 9.4 million in theaters and 5 million in rentals

Special Costs: 3 full sound stages and filming had to be done in London because Peter Sellers was going through a divorce and could not leave the country.

Major Quotes

President Merkin Muffley: Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room.

General "Buck" Turgidson: Sir, you can't let him in here. He'll see everything. He'll see the big board!

General Jack D. Ripper: Mandrake, do you recall what Clemenceau once said about war?

Group Capt. Lionel Mandrake: No, I don't think I do, sir, no.

General Jack D. Ripper: He said war was too important to be left to the generals. When he said that, 50 years ago, he might have been right. But today, war is too important to be left to politicians. They have neither the time, the training, nor the inclination for strategic thought. I can no longer sit back and allow Communist infiltration, Communist indoctrination, Communist subversion and the international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids.

Major T. J. "King" Kong: Survival kit contents check. In them you'll find: one forty-five caliber automatic; two boxes of ammunition; four days' concentrated emergency rations; one drug issue containing antibiotics, morphine, vitamin pills, pep pills, sleeping pills, tranquilizer pills; one miniature combination Russian phrase book and Bible; one hundred dollars in rubles; one hundred dollars in gold; nine packs of chewing gum; one issue of prophylactics; three lipsticks; three pair of nylon stockings. Shoot, a fella' could have a pretty good weekend in Vegas with all that stuff.

Historical Significance

Changes were made after the Kennedy assassination, the ending pie fight was taken out of the movie and the original line was a man could have a good time in Dallas, changed because of the assassination.

In the first group of films to be put into the National Film Registry

Filming Information

Filming Location: London, England

Special advance made in film: No special advances

Source Material: Red Alert by Peter George

Composition/Music

Try a Little Tenderness

(1932) (uncredited)

Music by [Harry M. Woods](#), [Reginald Connelly](#), and [Jimmy Campbell](#)

Arranged by [Laurie Johnson](#)

Performed by Studio Orchestra during the opening credits

When Johnny Comes Marching Home

(1863) (uncredited)

Music by the Union Army bandmaster, [Louis Lambert](#)

In the score often during the flight of Major 'King' Kong's aircraft

We'll Meet Again

(1939) (uncredited)

Music and Lyrics by [Ross Parker](#) and [Hugh Charles](#)

Performed by [Vera Lynn](#) and chorus at the end

Inane Trivia

The film led to actual changes in policy to ensure that the events depicted could never really occur in real life.

[Peter Sellers](#) was paid \$1 million, 55% of the film's budget. [Stanley Kubrick](#) famously quipped "I got three for the price of six".

[Stanley Kubrick](#) wanted the tablecloth on the War Room table to be green, so the actors would feel like they were playing a game of poker over the world's fate.

[Peter Sellers](#) was the first actor to be nominated for a single Academy award (best actor) for a film in which he portrayed three different characters in the same film.

Film debut of [James Earl Jones](#). NOTE: [Stanley Kubrick](#) cast him after seeing him in a production of [William Shakespeare](#)'s "The Merchant of Venice", in which [George C. Scott](#) also appeared.

[Peter Sellers](#) was also cast as Maj. T.J. "King" Kong, but he had trouble developing a Texas accent. When Sellers broke his ankle, [Stanley Kubrick](#) decided to cast another actor who naturally fit the role. [John Wayne](#) never responded. [Bonanza](#) (1959) star [Dan Blocker](#), declined the role because of the script's progressive political content. Kubrick cast [Slim Pickens](#) because of his work on [One-Eyed Jacks](#) (1961). Pickens was not told that the movie was a comedy and was only shown the script for scenes he was in. As a result, Pickens played the role "straight".

Accolades/Recognition

Nominated for four academy awards.

- [Best Actor in a Leading Role: Peter Sellers](#)
- [Best Adapted Screenplay: Stanley Kubrick](#), Peter George, Terry Southern
- [Best Director: Stanley Kubrick](#)
- [Best Picture](#)