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Kubrick,  
Tony Curtis,  
Sydney  
Pollack,  
Paul Mazursky,  
James  
Earl Jones,  
Shelley  
Winters,  
John Milius.

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# What They Say About Stanley Kubrick

Jerry Lewis,  
Keir Dullea,  
Matthew  
Modine and  
others  
remember.

**By Peter  
Bogdanovich**

After Stanley Kubrick died in his sleep of a heart attack on March 7, even the New York tabloids reported the news with an auteur slant, headlining the director's generally bleak view of life. Words like "secretive," "reclusive," "strange," "mysterious" and "cold" were repeatedly used to describe him. It's true that the 13 feature-length films he made over 40 years present a disenchanted, sardonic and generally pessimistic view of humanity, but the lifelong friends, intimate associates and family members I spoke to conjure a far more complicated picture of a man who could be deeply reserved but also outgoing, meticulous and laid back, loving and self-absorbed.

The precocious son of a Bronx doctor, Kubrick became a staff photographer for Look magazine at 17, but from the start he was captivated by the movies. He began as a kind of one-man band, financing, directing, producing, writing, shooting and editing three short documentaries — "Day of the Fight" (1950), "Flying Padre" (1951) and "The Seafarers" (1953) — and then doing virtually the same thing for his first two extremely low-budget features, "Fear and Desire" (1953), backed entirely by an uncle, and "Killer's Kiss" (1955).

In 1954, having already run through two marriages, Kubrick moved to Los Angeles and formed a production company with his friend James B. Harris, through which he made his first two professional pictures, the film noir "The Killing" (1956), with Sterling Hayden, and the powerful antiwar drama "Paths of Glory" (1957), starring Kirk Douglas. While shooting "Paths of Glory" Kubrick fell in love with and wed the German painter and actress Christiane Harlan, with whom he would rear two daughters along with Christiane's young daughter from an earlier marriage. "The Killing" and "Paths of Glory" did not make money, but they did make Kubrick's reputation as a budding genius among critics and studio executives. In 1960, Kirk Douglas hired Kubrick to replace another director on "Spartacus," the only all-Hollywood production Kubrick would ever make, and his first box-office success. He hated the experience. Disenchanted with the industry and having developed a phobia about flying, the director soon afterward moved with his family to England, never again to travel far from home.

Over the next 38 years, he made only eight more films. Between his controversial adaptation of Vladimir Nabokov's notorious "Lolita" (1962) and his grim but popular Vietnam war film, "Full Metal Jacket" (1987), Kubrick achieved a kind of mythic status in world cinema with three huge-

Photograph by Matthew Modine



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## Talking About Kubrick

ly successful pictures: his black comedy of the cold war, “Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb” (1964), the mystical science-fiction saga “2001: A Space Odyssey” (1968) and his ultraviolent investigation of violence, “A Clockwork Orange” (1971), based on Anthony Burgess’s novel. (While “Clockwork” won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for best picture, it was wildly criticized in England for inspiring copycat crimes. Kubrick, wounded by the attacks, withdrew it from circulation in the U.K.; to date, it is not available there even on video.)

The gigantic and enduring box-office appeal and critical enshrinement of these three films, coupled with the slimness of his output and his distance — physical and emotional — from the Hollywood mainstream, fueled a kind of legendary aura of integrity and perfectionism that gave Kubrick enormous power in the industry he avoided. Still, he was troubled by the fact that “Barry Lyndon” (1975), his costume drama adapted from Thackeray, though much admired in certain quarters, did not have a box-office response commensurate with its cost. His next work was his most openly commercial: “The Shining” (1980), based on a Stephen King horror novel and headlining a major star, Jack Nicholson.

When he died, at 70, he had just completed “Eyes Wide Shut,” based on Arthur Schnitzler’s “Dream Story,” a project he had been thinking about for more than 30 years. The film, which deals candidly with sexual relations between a contemporary New York married couple, played by the husband-and-wife team of Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, opens in the United States July 16. On Tuesday, the Museum of Modern Art — whose film showings Kubrick visited regularly as a youngster — begins a retrospective of the five early films Kubrick donated to its archives.

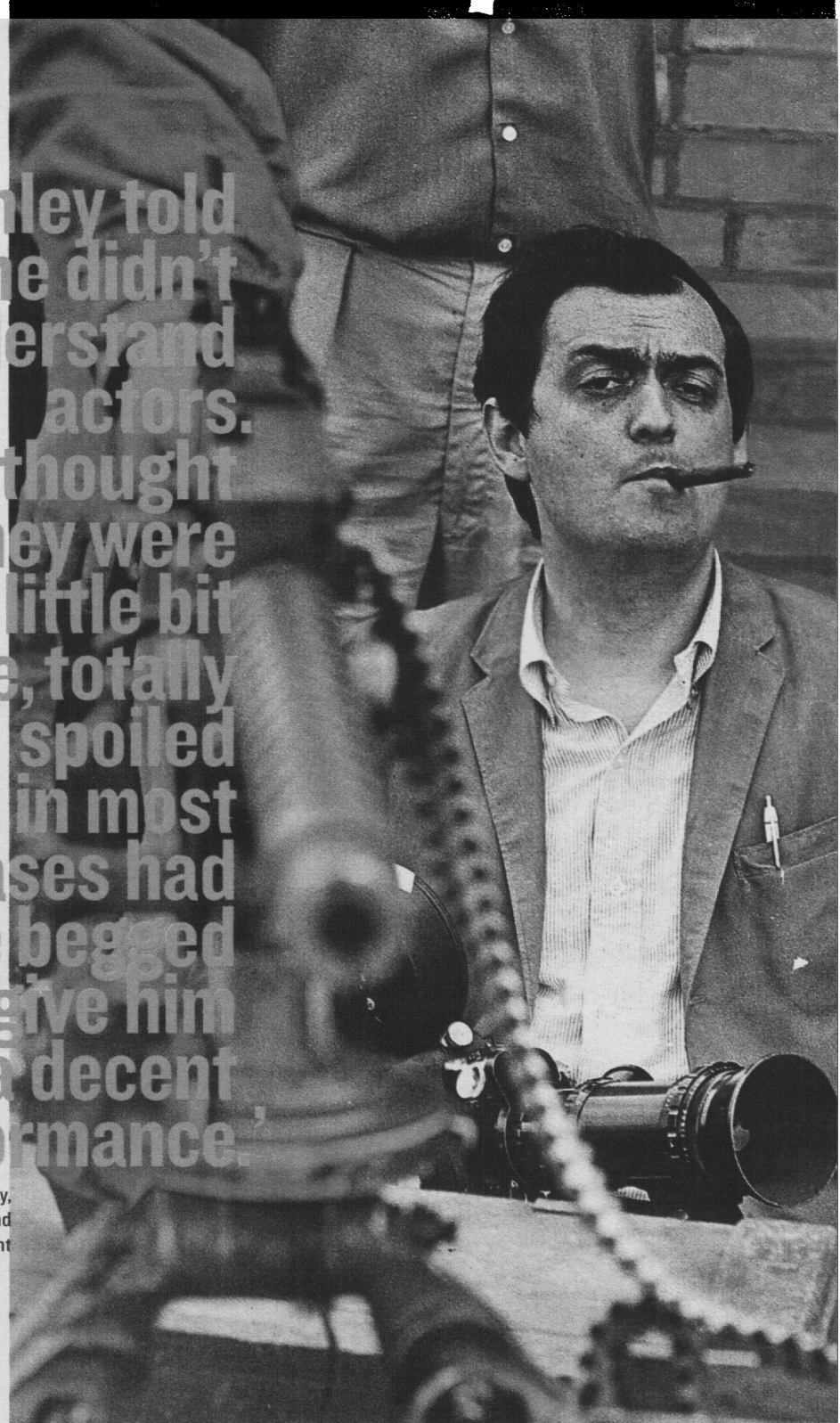
I cannot say I knew Kubrick, though we spoke briefly on the phone two or three times in the early 70’s. He was preparing to shoot “Barry Lyndon” and he called me out of the blue. His voice sounded extremely youthful, with a subdued but definite Bronx accent and a kind of reticence and self-effacement that was disarming. He asked what I thought about Ryan O’Neal, whom I had directed in “What’s Up, Doc?” Kubrick’s young daughters were fans of the movie and now were lobbying their father to cast O’Neal in “Barry Lyndon.” Even in that brief exchange, Kubrick’s obsessions — film and family — were twinned. They would remain that way until the end.

**MATTHEW MODINE** (actor; lead role in “Full Metal Jacket”): One day I said: “I got a joke for you. . . . You’re dead.” He said, “It’s not funny.” I

*Peter Bogdanovich, the director, is a columnist for The New York Observer. He will soon begin two films, “Wait for Me” and “Squirrels to the Nuts.”*

“Stanley told me he didn’t understand actors. . . . He thought they were a little bit strange, totally spoiled and in most cases had to be begged to give him a decent performance.”

— Lee Ermey,  
Marine Corps veteran and  
script consultant



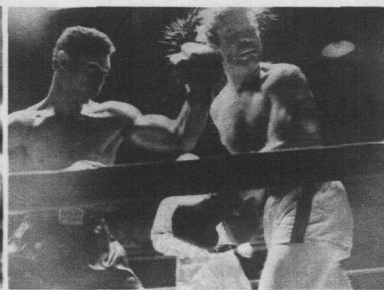
*On the set of “Dr. Strangelove,” or how he sent up the cold war.*

said: “Let me tell the joke. Steven Spielberg’s dead, too.” He said, “Steven’s dead, oh, that’s funny.” And I said: “You’re dead and you’re up in heaven and Steven Spielberg has just died and he’s being greeted at the gate by Gabriel and Gabriel says: ‘God’s really dug a lot of your movies and he wants to make sure that you’re comfortable. If there’s anything you need, you come to me, I’m your man.’ And Steven says, ‘Well, you know, I always wanted to meet Stanley Kubrick, do you think you could arrange that?’ And Gabriel looks at him and says: ‘You know, Steven, of all the things that you could

ask for, why would you ask for that? You know that Stanley doesn’t take meetings.’ He says, ‘Well, you said that if there was anything I wanted.’ Gabriel says: ‘I’m really sorry. I can’t do that.’ So now he’s showing him around heaven and Steven sees this guy wearing an army jacket with a beard riding a bicycle. And Steven says to Gabriel: ‘Oh, my God, look, over there, that’s Stanley Kubrick. Couldn’t we just stop him and say hello?’ And Gabriel pulls Steven to the side and says, ‘That’s not Stanley Kubrick; that’s God — he just *thinks* he’s Stanley Kubrick.’” Stanley liked that joke.



*Fear and Desire, 1953*



*Killer's Kiss, 1955*



*The Killing, 1956*

**GERALD FRIED** (teen-age friend; composer of scores for “Day of the Fight,” “Fear and Desire,” “Killer’s Kiss,” “The Killing” and “Paths of Glory”): When we were teen-agers hanging around the Bronx, he was just another bright, neurotic, talented guy — just another guy trying to get into a game with my softball club and mess around with girls like the rest of us. In those days there were no film schools. We had to learn by going to movies. Our discussions after seeing them were primarily listening to Stanley kind of smirking at the tasteless sentimentality of most pictures.

**PAUL MAZURSKY** (director; actor in “Fear and Desire”): He just had so much determination, and so much of a desire to get what he wanted — I’d never seen anything like it. The money his uncle had invested [in “Fear and Desire”] ran out, so Kubrick drove down from where we were shooting in the San Gabriel Mountains to see his Uncle Martin, with Frank Silvera and me in the back. He needed another \$5,000 to finish the film, and he says, “I’m gonna get the money from him no matter what — I can tell you that right now.” And he spat at the windshield from inside the car. I’ll never forget that. He got the money.

He had to do everything, all the lighting, the camera work, the editing. He didn’t know how to talk to actors — not really. He just had a thing in his head.

A few years ago, at a film festival, John Boorman was going to introduce “Fear and Desire,” and Stanley got a hold of Boorman and said, “Please don’t, I don’t like that movie, I hate it.”

**GERALD FRIED:** I knew Toba [Metz], his first wife. They were still in their teens — it almost didn’t count. It was a legal marriage, but they were, like, dating. There was no exchange of any deep affection. Now with Ruth [Sobotka, Kubrick’s second wife], she was a match. She was a dancer — bright and good-looking and accomplished, and there was a lot of sparring, but I thought they were quite perfect for each other. He wrote

that dance sequence [in “Killer’s Kiss”] for her. And she also was the costume designer or something. So I was surprised and kind of uncomfortable about their breaking up.

**JAMES B. HARRIS** (director; producer; Kubrick’s producing partner on “The Killing,” “Paths of Glory” and “Lolita”): Ruth was an over-the-hill ballet dancer who wanted to be an art director. So Stanley indulged her in that stuff. She couldn’t understand why her name wasn’t on the door of our office because Stanley’s and my name were on there. They split up and he left. We left our wives together. He was rehearsing me on how to break the news. We were leaving for L.A. and we wanted to go out there on our own.

We were not only partners, but we became best friends. We’d do all the usual stuff, like touch football, Thanksgiving dinner with our girlfriends or family. Stanley would start reading up on something that interested us and he’d become an expert on it. He’d get books on how to play poker and study them and then sit in a killer game, and hold his own.

When we first got together, he said: “We should never have a falling out and we should never have any kind of dispute that reaches an impasse because we’re both intelligent, we’re both articulate and one should be able to convince the other. If both people are intelligent they should be able to buy the other’s argument if it’s on the right track.” So I must be the most intelligent person in the world because he convinced me every time.

**GERALD FRIED:** He was kind of an awkward kid, and the fact that he was bright and talented made it even worse. He just wanted to be a regular guy, as we all do, and he wasn’t and it was very painful for him. So when he found out that he was smart and successful and all that, then it went the other way — everything had to be grand.

**COLEEN GRAY** (actress; co-star of “The Killing”): He was this small man wearing army fatigues and clodhopper shoes, and had bushy hair and was very quiet. I kept waiting for him to direct and nothing happened. “When’s he going to tell me what to do?” He never did, which made me insecure. He seemed extremely preoccupied. Maybe the fact that I felt insecure was fine for the part — that girl *was* insecure.

**MARIE WINDSOR** (actress; co-star of “The Killing”): Stanley was an introverted person. He was very

quiet and while on the set I never heard him yell at the crew or anybody. When he had some idea for me to do or change, he would wiggle his finger and we would go away from the action and he would tell me what he wanted or didn’t want. One time when I was sitting on the bed reading a magazine, he came up and said, “I want you to move your eyes when you’re reading.” He was only in his 20’s but you just had a sense of his having pure confidence in himself.

When the picture opened, he came over to our house for a party. He always wore those tan work pants that laborers wear, and he wore them to the party. In fact, I never saw him out of them.

**RICHARD ANDERSON** (actor; producer; dialogue coach and actor on “Paths of Glory”): He had dark circles under his eyes, his hair all over the place. Stanley was a pro at chess — he’d sit down and play chess on the set. He was very interested in people’s motives, people’s psyches.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** When he was a very young man I think he was a chess hustler. He played it very well — not that I could judge.

**RICHARD ANDERSON:** Stanley was really smitten with Christiane. He said he had never experienced anything like this before.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** He saw me on television in Munich. He called my agent and hired me. I met him at a studio, and then he went to an enormous masked ball where I was performing. He was the only one without a costume. He was quite baffled. He found a cousin of mine to help find me.

**JAMES B. HARRIS:** They fell for each other, and that was it! She was kind of inhibited because she felt she didn’t speak English well enough. She was a very beautiful actress. They’ve been together ever since. It was kind of a nice love story.

**FREDERIC MORTON** (author; journalist; visited set of “Paths of Glory”): It was a real turning point. Before this, he seemed rather gloomy. And those huge eyes of his always seemed to be lugubrious. He was extremely sensitive to everything around him. He would put his instructions to actors in the subjunctive — not “Do this,” but “Would you do this? Would you go over there?”

**RICHARD ANDERSON:** One time when Kirk Douglas blew up at him on the set, Stanley said, “Jeez,



*Paths of Glory, 1957*



*Spartacus, 1960*



*Lolita, 1962*



*Dr. Strangelove, 1964*

Kirk, you don't have to do this in front of everybody, do you?" But he admired Kirk. He said, "My God, this guy always knows his lines." Stanley is very psychological to get what he wants. One time he had done about 40 takes and Jimmy Harris comes and says, "Stanley, it's now 1 o'clock and we're in terrible trouble and we gotta break this up." That was the only time I saw Stanley go nuts. He shouted, "It isn't right — and I'm going to keep doing it until it is right!" He shot 84 takes. I think he wanted everybody to hear that — he wanted it to get around.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** We moved in together in Munich — I was still doing plays there and he was finishing his film. I was in the throes of a divorce, and so was he.

His clothes were still bought by his mother and they were very smart. So he was sort of disheveled smart. It soon became clear that he didn't care what he wore. Later, the children tried to dress him up a bit better but it was hopeless.

**GERALD FRIED:** By the time we got to "Paths of Glory," he was already "Stanley Kubrick" and then it was a struggle — I had to rationalize every note. It was fun and stimulating, but he was already sure that he knew it all. He was also a drummer, and the score for "Paths of Glory" was the first all-percussion score. As I remember, he also heard every single machine-gun sound effect before it went into the picture.

We had a date once to play tennis in Central Park, and it was around 10 to 2 and our court was reserved for 2, and he said, "Hey, we better run because if you're not there one minute before, they could give the court away." I said, "Stanley, for God's sake, keep your paranoia to yourself, man." And, of course, somebody showed up one minute before and took the court from us. So if you worry about enough things, sooner or later your paranoia is going to be fulfilled. And he worried about enough things. It was as if his success gave him permission to let his fears predominate.

**TONY CURTIS** (actor; co-star of "Spartacus"): Stanley would never capitulate. I remember he asked for 15 or 20 extras for a little scene and the assistant director came over and said they had talked it over [with the studio] and decided to cut down the amount of extras. And Stanley said, "No, we'll double the amount." He refused to allow anybody to tell him how to do the picture.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** ["Spartacus"] was difficult. They were all famous actors in it and they treated him, because he was so young, with a certain arrogance. So he was arrogant right back. He loved Tony Curtis because they had lots in common — they both liked magic tricks.

**TONY CURTIS:** One scene with Kirk and me, Stanley looked around and said to Russ Metty [the director of photography], "I can't see the actors' faces." Russ was sitting in his high chair, and there was one of those lights on the floor and he pushed it with his foot and the light skewered right into the shot. He said, "Now, is that enough light?" Stanley looked and said, "Now it's too much light." Cool through the whole experience — nothing made him nervous.

**ARLISS HOWARD** (actor; featured in "Full Metal Jacket"): I remember him saying: "The hardest thing in making a movie is to keep in the front of your consciousness your original response to the material. Because that's going to be the thing that will make the movie. And the loss of that will break the movie." He said when he did "Spartacus," he was astonished at how many people were allowed to have opinions about the content of the movie — not just the execution of it. They'd actually have conversations with secretaries about the content. But he was very much about finding, in each little piece that he was putting together, the essence of what had excited him about that moment the first time.

**SHELLEY WINTERS** (actress; co-star of "Lolita"): He was very cognizant that actors are delicate. He would discuss the scene with you and you never thought you were being directed until you saw the rushes the next day. You almost said, "Gee, wasn't I clever to think of that?" But it was Stanley who had sort of planted it very subtly in your head. Like the dance I did with James Mason — a sexy sort of South American dance — he didn't really tell me to make a sexy dance. I decided to flirt with him while I was dancing in a sexy way and he said, "That's it." He was very elusive. Sometimes you might rehearse and you didn't even know he was watching. He'd be off somewhere, sort of hidden, watching.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** He liked working with women and worked with them very successfully. He was surrounded by women at home, nothing but daughters, and he employed quite a lot of women.

He had an absolute angel of a mother — extraordinarily nice woman — very smart and very sweet. Stanley loved his parents — he was close to them, his mother more perhaps than his father because she was more up on films and the latest news. So, in the end, he knew a great deal about women in general — ranging from the sophisticated to girl talk.

**MARY DAY LANIER** (potter; a production assistant on "Lolita"): You mentioned a book, he immediately got a pencil and wrote down the name. He called one time and said, "Come out for a drink right away." I had just come back from art school — I was covered in clay: "I need to shower." He said, "No, no, you haven't been digging ditches," so I went. I never thought of contradicting him.

If anybody had any problems they couldn't face, he would gently coax them through it. James Mason got the most terrible eczema on his hands when something came too close to home for him. He had to hide his hands because they were totally swelled up, but Stanley knew exactly how to be very gentle. He shut down the set — he talked to him for a long time. He was fascinated by other people — that's why he had this power. He and Jim Harris were very close. They used to talk about stuff a lot.

**JAMES B. HARRIS:** I assume he must have been very confident because he always wanted me around next to him. The whole [fear of flying] thing came about when he was a kid and he had a pilot's license. He used to go out to Teterboro and fly those one-engine jobs where he had an experience: He started to take off and he was running out of runway and almost crashed into the fence. He had forgotten to turn on one of the magnetos. That developed in his mind. He thought that if he — who is so meticulous about everything — forgot to do something like that, then the pilots could make these errors. If he could do that, then anybody could do it.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** I suppose he wasn't really happy to be in Hollywood, but he didn't say, "I'm never going back to California again," or anything. But we enjoyed living in England. I fit in a bit better, and it's beautiful.





**'I felt, you know, one film would be enough. Being exposed to Stanley 16 hours a day, you lost your resistance, and the danger was you would lose your confidence.'**

— Ken Adam, production designer

*On the set of "Eyes Wide Shut," with Kidman and Madison Eginton. A hand rub was high praise.*

**KEN ADAM** (production designer; designed "Dr. Strangelove" and "Barry Lyndon"): I don't think I ever had such a close relationship with a director. There was a certain naïveté and charm about him, but you very quickly found out that there was an enormous brain functioning. I think the most difficult part was his questioning, almost computerlike, mind. He knew most of the technicians' work better than the technicians themselves. The only thing he really didn't know was design. So, obviously, he was fascinated by it, but I also found myself having to justify practically every line I drew, which wasn't always easy.

It was particularly so with the war room on "Dr. Strangelove" because I started doodling while we were talking about it, and he seemed to be very impressed by it, and I thought, "Well, this is an easy battle." After about three weeks, he decided to change his mind. Because the initial design was like an amphitheater with two levels, he suddenly said: "Well, what am I going to do with that second level? It's going to be full of extras, and I wouldn't know how to use them, so you'd better start thinking again." I started redesigning it, and he was practically standing behind me all the time. When I came up with the sort of triangular solution, he said he felt the triangle was the strongest geometric form. And so combat developed at this circular table, playing for the fate of the world like a poker game.

He very often changed his mind. After two days of shooting, for example, he wasn't happy with Peter Sellers playing the B-52 bomber-captain [in addition to his other roles] and he cast Slim Pickens instead and then decided to have him ride the atomic bomb bronco-fashion into the Russian missile complex. It was a very exciting experience, but at the same time, I felt, you know, one film would be enough. Being exposed to Stanley 16 hours a day, you lost your resistance, and the danger was you would lose your confidence.

**JAMES EARL JONES** (actor; small role in "Dr. Strangelove"): His manner was casual. Very, very laid back. Chewed gum. Cool. One day he got pissed off at me when I didn't know my lines. I had missed a section I was supposed to memorize. He said: "You don't know these words? Why don't you know these words?" It was a quiet pissed, but he was pissed.

**JOHN MILIUS** (director, screenwriter, producer; phone relationship with Kubrick from early-80's): When he did "Dr. Strangelove," the Air Force contacted him afterward and all the big shots of Strategic Air Command, and General Le May, wanted to talk to him. And he was afraid of going to see them. He was afraid they'd be angry with him — that they would do something to him. I said: "Stanley, how can you

have been that paranoid? They wanted to honor you. They loved 'Dr. Strangelove.'" He said: "I know it's crazy. I wish I'd gone to Washington and seen them."

He loved military history and just consumed it all the time and said, "I feel perfectly safe in my love of war and military history because I know that I'm a devout coward." He was endlessly fascinated by honor and valor, the regimental esprit de corps. "I'd never go to war," he said, "but I'd like to experience it if I knew I wasn't going to get hurt."

**LOUIS BLAU** (attorney; lawyer for Kubrick, 1958-1999): He did "2001: A Space Odyssey" because he didn't think that a truly scientific science-fiction picture had ever been made. Most of them, he thought, if not all, were fantasy fiction. He told me he was going to start reading and try to come up with something. He started from scratch and

before he was finished, he knew enough to speak on a level with the great astronomers of the world, many of whom he knew on a first-name basis.

**KEIR DULLEA** (actor; co-star of “2001”): I was always aware that he knew exactly what he wanted. He would invite Gary Lockwood and myself to have dinner at his beautiful home. And he would invite a lot of other people from all walks of life and different disciplines — art historians, authors and intellectuals. And he was as informed as anybody about their disciplines. He was like an onion — every layer you peeled off there were two new ones to be exposed.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** When we were young, we had parties every weekend, and I think it was a bit of an excuse to keep talking to the people he was working with, because then he could keep them interested and keep them on certain topics that he wanted them to think about. It wasn't planned — “Oh, I'm going to keep them working.” It came naturally — “Come for dinner,” instead of, “I want you to think about this.” We tried to make a very formal and elegant dinner party, and eventually found that they were more sort of casual and Bohemian — so I don't think the formal bit went too well.

Stanley had a secret fantasy of being a short-order cook. He was very good. The kitchen was a bit full of blue smoke and too many dirty pans, but he was very good at that. He did a sort of American food that Europeans find so astonishing — hamburgers, and then, later on, he was king of sandwiches. He would pile up high things. He was a good host and was trying desperately to tidy everything up so people didn't say we're sloppy.

**KEIR DULLEA:** We worked very long hours. But he was very generous — telling me he was feeling bad that he hadn't created a good enough environment, taking the blame for some scene not working for me. If Stanley had been an octopus, with that many arms, he would have held his own camera, done his own makeup, he would have built his own sets. But I had a feeling that he wouldn't have acted in his own films.

**JERRY LEWIS** (actor-director-writer; edited a film at same studio Kubrick was editing “2001”): He's in the cutting room and I'm watching this man investigate his work, and it was fascinating. He was intrigued with the fact that I did more than one thing. He was a very big fan of “hyphenates.” I think he would have loved to have written “2001” without Arthur Clarke. But he did have a high regard for people who directed their own material.

I was in my cutting room around 1 in the morning, and he strolls in smoking a cigarette and says, “Can I watch?” I said: “Yeah, you can watch. You wanna see a Jew go down? Stand there.” That was the night I coined the expression,

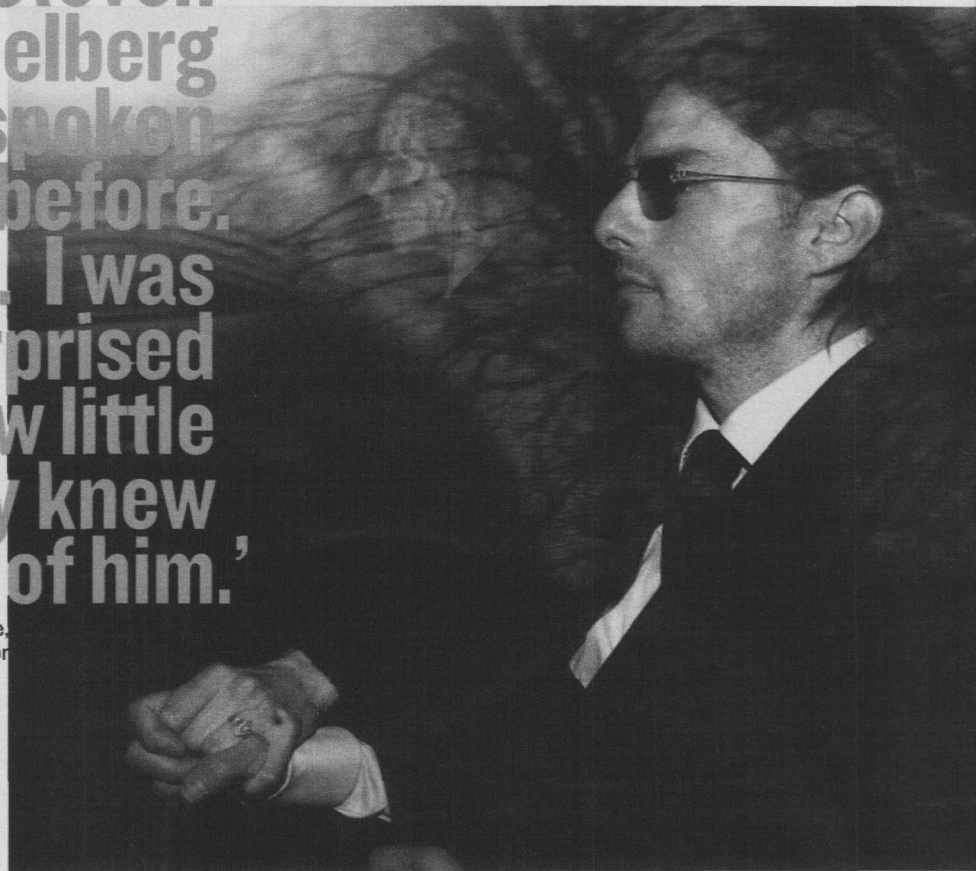
‘I was going to speak, but Tom Cruise and Nicole and Steven Spielberg had spoken before. ... I was surprised at how little they knew of him.’

— Matthew Modine, actor



2001: A Space Odyssey, 1968

A Clockwork



Final take: Cruise and Kidman on the way to the funeral in London.

“You cannot polish a turd.” And then Kubrick looked at me and said, “You can if you freeze it.”

**STEVE SOUTHGATE** (V.P. in charge of European technical operations for Warner Brothers; worked on all Kubrick pictures from “A Clockwork Orange” on): He was one person in the film industry who knew how the film industry worked — in every country in the world. He knew all of the dubbing people, the dubbing directors, the actors, he had relationships with foreign directors who would supervise his work because he couldn't be there to supervise himself. We had to go around to every cinema to make sure the projection lights were right, the sound was correct, the ratios were right, the screens were clean.

He seemed to work 24 hours a day. We used to get calls all hours of the night. He could be very difficult but not in a difficult way. If you ever got chewed out by Stanley on the phone you knew you'd been chewed out. He never screamed or yelled but he had this wonderful

manner and a sort of lovely New York drawl to his voice that you knew you were being carpeted. If he had any criticism of his film, he took it terribly personally. It was body and soul to him.

**KEN ADAM:** I think he had quite a shock from the violent reactions to “A Clockwork Orange”; even though it was at the time the most successful picture he had done.

**JAN HARLAN** (producer; Kubrick's brother-in-law; production assistant on “A Clockwork Orange”; executive producer on all Kubrick films since “Barry Lyndon”): He felt very misunderstood about “Clockwork Orange,” very insulted.

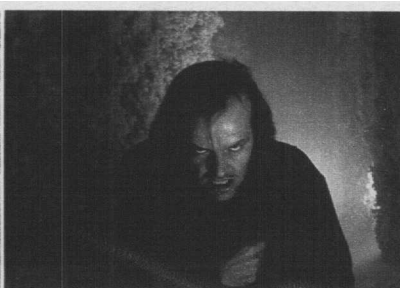
**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** On films, sometimes you're happy for a week and then you think, Oh, no, it stinks. If you have a bad day, you can punch holes into anything. He had those days. Ultimately, he could make every film 10 times — he could come up with something new. That's why



Orange, 1971



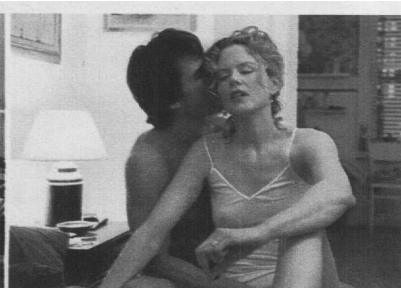
Barry Lyndon, 1975



The Shining, 1980



Full Metal Jacket, 1987



Eyes Wide Shut, 1999

it took him so long. And a lot of scripts he wrote he never made because he ultimately decided it was a waste of time. It made him very sad — he wanted to make more films. But he didn't want to launch into a film when he wasn't a hundred percent certain.

**LOUIS BLAU:** People think his secrecy indicated some terrible aberration. It was totally logical because he takes a long time to make a picture.

At one point, he made a handsome, well-earned deal for a picture and said, "You know, I'm glad they don't know I would do this thing for nothing if I had to."

**JAN HARLAN:** On our pictures, we spent in a week what big movies spend in a day. That's why we could afford to have almost a year of shooting. We had a very small crew.

**KEN ADAM:** Though he was a patriarch, he was really a kind patriarch and in many ways very insecure. Stanley said he's got this film for me ["Barry Lyndon"] and he can't afford my money. So I said, "Stanley, it's not a good way to start talking to me, you know." So we

had an argument. He said, "Well, I'll have to use the second-best production designer." And I was quite relieved at that time. Five weeks later, I got another phone call from him saying that the second-best production designer didn't seem to understand what he wanted, money is no problem and will I do the picture? Our relationship was almost like a marriage in a way, a love-hate relationship. I felt to go through another film, you know, life is too short. But I was stuck.

Eventually I became very ill. Utterly exhausted — because he used to run dailies with me late at night. Stanley could really get away with four hours' sleep. Obviously, I couldn't. So I went back to London, and he was unbelievably concerned. His letters to me at the time were really quite touching. Then he wrote that he'd decided to shoot in Potsdam with the second unit and that I should direct it! The idea of that certainly didn't improve my health!

**MARISA BERENSON** (actress; co-star of "Barry Lyndon"): We always had to be in full makeup and

costume and hair and everything. He didn't like stand-ins for lighting at all. Sometimes we'd sit a whole day just to be lit. It was very demanding because he's a perfectionist, so he wanted people to be perfect.

He wasn't a big one for complimenting or saying anything. He used to write me letters sometimes when he had something important to say to me — handwritten. He had a really dry, witty sense of humor. He was rather reserved. I always felt he was a very sensitive, shy person.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** He wasn't shy at all. He was shy only when it came to being official. I think he was probably a hopeless actor. His Griffith Award acceptance speech [in 1997] — he was miserable and he left it to the last minute. And he did it so badly and he got into a really bad mood. He'd written it very well but he couldn't say it. We finally got it on tape and he said, "I'd better not see it, otherwise I'll never send it off." So he sent it off, and then he saw it and nearly choked with laughter — rolling on the floor — he couldn't believe it. He said, "You see, I just can't do it." The minute it wasn't official, he was fine. The minute someone stuck a mike in front of his mouth, he said: "My mind is blank and I say nothing, or the most stupid stuff." That's why he didn't want to give interviews. He said, "Why should I work very hard in the film and then make a fool of myself?"

**JOHN MILIUS:** Stanley had no regard for time. He'd call you in the middle of the night, whenever he felt like calling. I'd say, "Stanley, it's the middle of the night." He'd say, "You're awake, aren't you?" He'd never talk for less than an hour. He just had all kinds of things to discuss — everything. He had theories. He felt most film was fraudulent — he felt most people who made films were frauds. He was fascinated by the idea of pure film as opposed to just narrative storytelling. He felt that film broke down to just getting the story across — like an episodic TV show. And then you have, on the other end, something that's like the end of "2001." Though I think he felt that sort of failed, that it wasn't exact enough.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** He did see an awful lot of films — always. For years, he screened them at the house — we have a beautiful theater — and then we became older and lazier and looked at them on tape, and he was very ashamed. He liked

Ingmar Bergman, Woody Allen, a lot of Spanish, Italian, Japanese films. He also loved to hate certain films. He would say, "This is the most awful thing I've ever seen," and keep watching.

**JOHN MILIUS:** He was very vulnerable to criticism or to whether a movie was a success or not. He wasn't completely comfortable with "Barry Lyndon." He just felt that people didn't understand it. People were bored by it. I think after that picture he felt no one was going to let him make a film again. Apparently the only thing that really bothered him a great deal was that "Barry Lyndon" failed commercially. He made "The Shining" after that. Nicholson, I remember, at the time said: "I'm glad to be off that one. That was rough duty."

**JAN HARLAN:** We very often came home at night and had a sandwich in the kitchen and then went to bed. There was nothing else left.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** Socially, he was very much an American in Europe and did astonishing things that were very endearing. I think he was quite unaware of certain social games that people play, especially in England, and wasn't interested either — and I think many people found that very nice. He was quite secure. If he wasn't, he would inform himself very carefully and very pedantically set out to not make a mistake.

**JOHN MILIUS:** [Before "Full Metal Jacket,"] he quizzed me a lot about Southeast Asia. I said, "You're never going to go anywhere near Southeast Asia." But he wanted to know every little detail: What the food was like, how the airport was, whether they lost your baggage. He was preparing himself as if he would go. We turned him onto a supplier of military equipment who was going to get him uniforms and the patches and all that kind of stuff — this guy in Oklahoma City, great character. He called me and said, "I'm so proud to be working on the Stanley Kubrick film." And I thought six months later the guy was ready for a medal. Stanley just drove him nuts: "Are you sure the color of these patches is the same as the last batch? I've been looking at them and I can see a difference."

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** People always think he was this idiotic dictator. He was always asking everyone's opinion on most things. What do you think of this? What do *Continued on page 40*



you think of that? Do you think I should have done this different? He spread his palette of ideas for everyone to have a pick at, and would dismiss you brutally if he thought that what you said was really irritating.

**LEE ERMEY** (Vietnam Marine Corps veteran; technical adviser, script consultant, actor on "Full Metal Jacket"): Stanley told me he didn't understand actors. He had no actor friends — they were basically working associates, and he thought they were a little bit strange, totally spoiled and in most cases had to be begged to give him a decent performance. Half the time the actor would argue with him. Vince D'Onofrio didn't like Stanley's "craziness look." He wanted to try it some other way. The problem with Vince was this was his first film, and he's telling Stanley Kubrick how he thinks this look should be. They stand there arguing. Stanley finally said, "Look, do it my way and we'll load back up and we'll shoot it your way." Well, when they shot it Vince's way they didn't have any film in the camera.

**LOUIS BLAU:** Stanley told Vincent D'Onofrio the night before a scene, "I want you to be big — Lon Chaney big." They shot the scene in three takes and as they sat playing back the tape, Vincent and Stanley were seated next to each other. And after the third take was seen, Stanley took his fist and gently rubbed it against Vincent D'Onofrio. Vincent has never forgotten that — it was the approval from Kubrick.

**ADAM BALDWIN** (actor; featured in "Full Metal Jacket"): We were a group of green actors mostly. He had his own private little war going on there. He didn't have a lot of respect for any of us. He would have us crawl in the asbestos and the coal dust and not care if we got hurt. I figured, get in there and get dirty. But a couple of guys got sick of it.

We'd do a series of five or six takes and we'd go look at it on video playback, and he'd say: "Don't stand here. Don't go that far into the frame. See, you're out of focus here." He was very much concerned with what the picture looked like. I found after a couple of months that it was a great luxury

to be able to work at that pace — you could do it as many times as he wanted. There was one scene where we were sitting on a wall and the tanks are firing off in the distance. We ended up doing that for three and a half weeks — one scene.

**ARLISS HOWARD:** My grandfather had bird dogs so intent on being bird dogs they would run headlong into trees. And Stanley was sort of like that without the penchant for running into things.

He would say: "I know how to do virtually every job on a movie. I can light, I can record sound, I know where mikes go." He could come into a room and say, "We're two stops off in this light." They'd say, "No, we just checked the camera." He'd say, "We're two stops off," and they'd be two stops off. But he would say: "I don't know how to act. But I'll tell you this, we will get the best shot."

What Stanley really didn't like is if you wasted his time. And what he considered to be time-wasting was if you didn't know your lines. One day we had to do this thing called the Rifleman's Creed where we laid on the bed and recited this speech, and we had to do it with a tiny speaker in your ear and do it to playback, which was very disorienting for me. We got to take 16 and he said to me, "You're not prepared." And I said, "No, I know the thing — I'm just having trouble with this thing in my ear." And he said, "You don't know it if you don't know how to be able to do it with that in your ear." We got into an argument about how well I knew it, but I finally realized that he was absolutely right.

Much later, he related a story to me about "Spartacus," that all the English actors were muttering, and he was sure they were talking about him and he was very paranoid. It was Olivier and Peter Ustinov and Charles Laughton — they were always muttering. And he discovered when he snuck up behind them one time that they were doing lines from their work. And he said: "This is something American actors don't do at all. They do not learn text." He blamed Lee Strasberg.

**MATTHEW MODINE:** I once asked him why he so often did a lot of takes. He said it was because actors didn't know their lines. And he talked about Jack Nicholson: "Jack would come in during the blocking and he

kind of fumbled through the lines. He'd be learning them while he was there. And then you'd start shooting and after take 3 or take 4 or take 5 you'd get the Jack Nicholson that everybody knows and most directors would be happy with. And then you'd go up to 10 or 15 and he'd be really awful and then he'd start to understand what the lines were, what the lines meant, and then he'd become unconscious about what he was saying. So by take 30 or take 40 the lines became something else." Stanley'd say: "I don't know how to do it. People don't do their homework, the only thing I can do is spend time doing multiple takes while the people are learning what their job is supposed to be."

**ADAM BALDWIN:** One of the things we did to kill time was play chess, play hearts, smoke cigarettes. We would lay out the board and he would kind of waddle over and wipe you out in 15 moves. One time I actually got him to blunder and I won the game — big deal, 1 out of 50. But I said: "Hah, I got ya, I got ya. You have to resign now." And he said to me: "The only reason you won, Adam, is because I have so little respect for your game that I made a blunder. Now get back to work." He had that little wry grin of his and walked away.

**LEE ERMEY:** He didn't seem to be too concerned if the people got hurt, but if an animal got hurt, that's serious stuff there. He wouldn't kill a mouse in his house. One afternoon on location, we needed to use an area where there was a big stack of rubbish — lumber and junk. And Stanley asked construction to move that pile of rubbish somewhere else and in the process they killed a wild rabbit, and it broke Stanley's heart. He actually wrapped for the rest of the day, shut it down.

**STEVE SOUTHGATE:** We have a lady in France who supervises all the dubbing for Stanley, and she was heavily pregnant at the time and she'd got everything virtually finished, the dubbing was all done, the mixing was all done, and she went into labor. And she was in labor for 10 or 12 hours and Kubrick called her in the middle of the labor. And she was screaming the answers back.

**JAN HARLAN:** He actually didn't leave his house ever unless he had to.

When he was working in his office and he could see [Christiane] outside painting somewhere in the distance — that's what he liked.

**MATTHEW MODINE:** There was a postponement, and my wife and I were invited to go to Málaga, Spain. He said, "Why do you want to go there?" I said, "This person invited me." He said: "Yeah, but you've come all this way — have you seen anything in England?" He couldn't understand why anybody wanted to go anyplace. Why his children would want to go to university. "You could take home university classes. You don't have to go away to find something. Everything can be brought to you." He was crazy about that.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** He thought it was boring away from home. He liked all his stuff around him, all his telephones and televisions and fax machines. Also, we have a zoo. We have a lot of animals and he liked those and he liked the children and later the grandchildren. He liked being at home. But not like a hermit — he had lots of friends — they just weren't in the film business. He talked to everyone — he just didn't talk to the press.

**KEN ADAM:** His daughter Vivian was doing music for "Full Metal Jacket," and did a documentary of Stanley on "The Shining." But Stanley became overpowering to her and so Vivian decided about five years ago to make her own life in Los Angeles. She really adored Stanley but he tried to control every move she made. I think in a way she had the guts to say, "I can't deal with that."

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** Yes, he was extremely sad when she decided to go there.

**KEN ADAM:** He was a family man and felt very secure in the family, and insecure even when Christiane came to a women's outing with my wife. Stanley used to ring up many times to find out how she was, when she was coming back.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** With each film, I wanted to see it less before it was finished. He wanted that also. Neither of us liked when you're in the middle of some work and the other says, "Can I say what I'm thinking?" But he would often sit with

*Continued on page 47*

**KUBRICK**

Continued from page 40

me when I was painting — because painters are sort of like sitting ducks — and he would say, “I won’t say anything.” “What?!” “Nothing, nothing — I said I won’t say anything. Can’t I say just one thing?” And he would say whatever it was that he liked or didn’t like or thought he liked better the day before. I reacted badly, especially if it was something I had a sneaking feeling wasn’t going well. You hate somebody to be right, don’t you? But now that he doesn’t stand there, it’s awful.

**SYDNEY POLLACK** (director, producer, actor; phone relationship with Kubrick since early 70’s; featured role in “Eyes Wide Shut”): My initial take on my part [in “Eyes Wide Shut”] was very different from what Stanley wanted. I came in with the idea of being tougher with the character of Tom [Cruise] because he had done something that I disapproved of strongly. And then Stanley had an idea of my wanting to manipulate him more and therefore be kinder, and he was very specific about how to communicate that. He knew I was another director — he didn’t have to beat around the bush. He wasn’t trying to work any psychological tricks with me. And he was crazy about both Tom and Nicole.

I always think of Stanley literally on the edge of a smile. His eyes always had mischief in them. He always had this sense of the devil in him while he was very calmly asking questions. He read everything, and knew absolutely all aspects of the business, including literally what the box-office receipts of every theater in the world were over the past few years.

**TERRY SEMEL** (co-chairman, Warner Brothers film division; worked closely with Kubrick since “Barry Lyndon”): He made the movie at a very

**ANSWERS TO PUZZLES**

OF JUNE 27, 1999

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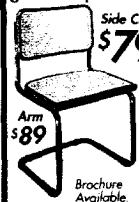
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**SYDNEY POLLACK:** Cruise woke me up on Thursday morning to tell me how great he thought the picture was. I called Stanley and we talked for an hour and a half or so and I told him how thrilled Tom was. Then I spoke with Terry and Bob [Daly, co-chairman of Warner Brothers] and they were absolutely ecstatic and four days later he died.

**STEVE SOUTHGATE:** Two days before he died, he sent me over to Las Vegas with the first trailer of "Eyes Wide Shut" for the Sho West convention. As it was the first time ever that anyone was going to see anything from the movie, he wanted to make sure that the projection was perfect. He gave me specific instructions: we had to clear the room at 3 o'clock in the morning, make sure everybody was gone and just the projectionist and I rehearsed it. The last conversation I had was: "I trust you to go and do this in Vegas. Let me know how everybody reacts. Ring me during the screening — take your mobile phone — I want to hear what the reaction is." And while I was on the plane, he died.

**TERRY SEMEL:** I had talked to him two different times the day that he died. He had called me for about an hour apiece, and he was in great spirits. And his second call, which would've been the early evening of the night he actually died, was really to kind of review millions of details on the marketing. He was more outspoken and more excited than I think I had ever heard him.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** I thought he was awfully tired, and he never slept much — ever — in his whole life. Then I thought he was really overdoing it with this last film. Sleeping less and less. He also was a doctor's son and he wouldn't see a doctor. He gave himself his own medicine if he wasn't feeling well or he would phone friends — it was the one thing he did that I thought was really stupid.

**JAN HARLAN:** Luckily we got permission from the local authorities to have his grave in his garden. In Hertfordshire it was only the second time — the first was Bernard Shaw.

**LOUIS BLAU:** The most unique burial ceremony was done with utmost taste and in typical Kubrick fashion. He's buried among his animals: dogs, cats, squirrels.

**MATTHEW MODINE:** At his funeral I was so happy to find that he was being buried in his garden, in the land that he loved so much. I was going to speak, but Tom Cruise and Nicole and Steven Spielberg had spoken before and there was sort of a program created for the funeral. I was surprised at how little they knew of him — in my opinion — from the things that were being said. The person I spent almost 18 months with was very different from the one being described. With the exception of Jan Harlan, who spoke really eloquently, and the one thing that his daughter Vivian said at the funeral. She'd read pieces of her father's diary and wanted to share something: That he had looked for a limit to caring — some kind of summit — and found that whenever he felt as if he'd reached that summit, there was always further you could go.

**JAMES B. HARRIS:** I didn't speak at the funeral. I don't think I could have stayed composed enough to do it. I sat there and I listened to all these other people that I felt didn't really know him. I felt that I was the only one there aside from his family that knew him. And I was listening to all that stuff and I'm thinking: It's great, heads of studios and major movie stars and all this. And I'm the guy that played Ping-Pong with him, and went through the marriages and the divorces and all of that stuff. Knowing how Stanley was such a perfectionist — he may have killed himself on this picture.

I forgot my raincoat in the tent, and I went back to get it, and the six guys who had walked in with the casket, peculiar-looking guys dressed in morning coats or whatever, finishing up the grave. And I'm thinking: "Jesus, this is what it's come to." Six strangers dumping the dirt on him."

**GERALD FRIED:** I hope his last hour was cool. I played on a ball club called the Barracudas in the Bronx, and I remember Stanley — he was about 18, 19 — he wanted to get into a game and he wasn't a good athlete and the guys didn't want him and I said, "Come on, give him a chance." We let him play, and his face lit up.

**CHRISTIANE KUBRICK:** Even the most ordinary things, he would give them such extra insight that they became interesting. He talked all the time, and so I now never have this rain of words. I'm very sad now but I was personally very lucky that I always felt very loved and many people can't say that.

**SYDNEY POLLACK:** People say he had these phobias, he wouldn't go here and wouldn't go there. The truth is he lived in a paradise — there wasn't any reason for him to go anywhere. It was a kind of a heaven. ■