Produced and Directed by Stanley Kubrick
Script by Stanley Kubrick, Terry Southern and Peter George
based on Peter George’s novel Red Alert
Original music by Laurie Johnson
Cinematography by Gilbert Taylor
Film Editing by Anthony Harvey
Production Design by Ken Adam
Special effect advisor....Arthur 'Weegee' Fellig
Travelling matte....Vic Margutti

Peter Sellers....Group Capt. Lionel Mandrake/President Merkin Muffley/Dr. Strangelove
George C. Scott....General ‘Buck’ Turgidson
Sterling Hayden....Brigadier General Jack D. Ripper, Commanding Officer Burpelson Air Force Base
Keenan Wynn....Colonel ‘Bat’ Guano
Slim Pickens....Major T.J. ‘King’ Kong, Pilot
Peter Bull....Russian Ambassador Alexi de Sadesky
James Earl Jones....Lieutenant Lothar Zogg, Bombardier
Tracy Reed....Miss Scott, Gen. Turgidson’s Secretary

Dr. Strangelove was nominated for four Academy Awards: Sellers for Best Actor in a Leading Role, Kubrick for Best Director and Best Picture, and George, Kubrick and Southern for Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium. It fared better at the British Academy Awards: Best British Art Direction, Best British Film, and Best Film from any Source. Even though Strangelove is really a British film, the US National Film Preservation Board has selected it for the National Film Registry.

STANLEY KUBRICK (26 July 1928, New York, New York—7 March 1999, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, England), generally regarded as one of the greatest directors, made only 13 feature films. He so loathed the first of these (Fear and Desire 1953) that he withdrew it from circulation. The others are: Killer’s Kiss 1955, The Killing 1956, Paths of Glory 1957, Spartacus 1960, Lolita 1962, Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb 1964, 2001: A Space Odyssey 1968, A Clockwork Orange 1971, Barry Lyndon 1975, The Shining 1980, Full Metal Jacket 1987, and Eyes Wide Shut 1999. He produced and shared the screenwriting credit on most of his films. He also edited and photographed Killer’s Kiss, Fear and Desire, and two of the three short documentaries he did before he turned to features. There’s a story that Kubrick was so dissatisfied with the work cinematographer Russell Metty was doing on Spartacus, that he told Metty to just sit there while Kubrick did his job. Metty did as he was told—and won that year’s Academy Award for cinematography. Kubrick also did...
The director was reportedly so taken with Sellers' abilities that he kept expanding the movie's scenario to accommodate them, and he subsequently had Sellers play a Milquetoast U.S. president, a pragmatic British soldier, and a mutant German scientist in Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964, an Oscar-nominated performance). After Kubrick, the director with whom Sellers fared best was Blake Edwards, for whom he played the indefatigably inept French detective Inspector Clouseau in the Pink Panther series (beginning with 1964's The Pink Panther and encompassing six films featuring Sellers, the last of which, 1982's Trail of the Pink Panther, Edwards assembled out of previously unseen footage). He was also memorable as a luckless Indian actor in Edwards' slapstick gagfest The Party (1968). When not in Edwards' movies, Sellers spent the late 1960s and early 1970s in faux-hip films of varying success, including What's New, Pussycat? (1965) and the James Bond spoof Casino Royale (1967). In 1979 he fulfilled a longtime ambition by playing Chauncey Gardener, a human tabula rasa, in the film adaptation of Jerzy Kosinski's novel Being There. The role won Sellers a great deal of acclaim from critics and audiences alike, and an Oscar nomination. It was a welcome return to form for Sellers, who'd been squandering his talent of late in a string of (mostly) awful films on both sides of the Atlantic. Unfortunately, this turned out to be something of a last hurrah; long troubled by a weakened heart, he died the following year."

much of the "documentary" footage in Dr. Strangelove. "A film," Kubrick said, "is—or should be—more like music than like fiction. It should be a progression of moods and feelings. The theme, what's behind the emotion, the meaning, all that comes later." Kubrick was nominated for 12 Academy Awards for best screenplay, director, or picture, but the only one he ever got was for Special Visual Effects in 2001.

**GILBERT TAYLOR** (12 April 1914, Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire, England) also shot Dracula (1979), the Israeli locations for Damien: Omen II (1978), Star Wars (1977), The Omen (1976), Frenzy (1972), Macbeth (1971), The Bedford Incident (1965), Repulsion (1965), Ferry Cross the Mersey (1965), A Hard Day's Night (1964), "The Avengers" (TV series,1961), plus several dozen films none of us has seen or, in all likelihood, will ever see.

**TERRY SOUTHERN** (1 May 1924, Alvarado, Texas – 29 October 1995, NYC) is best known as the novelist who wrote Candy (1968), but he also wrote other fiction and wrote or collaborated on the scripts of End of the Road (1970), Easy Rider (1969), Barbarella (1968), Casino Royale (1967), The Loved One (1965), and The Cincinnati Kid (1965).

**PETER SELLERS** (Richard Henry Sellers, 8 September 1925, Southsea, Hampshire, England – 24 July 1980, London, England, heart attack) first came to public attention when he worked with Spike Milligan and Harry Secombe in BBC Radio's "The Goon Show" in the early 1950s. The Goons continued in tv and even made some films, including one of Bruce's favorite films: The Mukkinese Battle Horn. His bio in Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia reads, in part: "In 1959 he won the British equivalent of the Oscar for his performance as a labor leader in I'm All Right Jack, starred in Richard Lester's very funny short-subject The Running, Jumping, and Standing-Still Film, then showed off his versatility by playing three roles in the hilarious satire The Mouse That Roared. Multiple role-playing is an honored tradition among British comic actors, and Sellers apotheosized that tradition while simultaneously bringing it up to date on the big screen. His one-role-only turns of the early 1960s are rather colorless compared with his multifaceted Clare Quilty in Stanley Kubrick's Lolita (1962).
Sterling Hayden said:

"There's nothing wrong with being an actor, if that's what a man wants. But there's everything wrong with achieving an exalted status simply because one photographs well and is able to handle dialogue.

On his films: Bastards, most of them, conceived in contempt of life and spewn out onto screens across the world with noxious ballyhoo; saying nothing, contemptuous of the truth, sullen, and lecherous.

On his fling with Communism: What did I care for labor? For racial discrimination? For civil liberties and the war between the classes? Oh, I cared in my own fashion. I cared just..."
enough to embrace these things as props, flailing away night after night at semi-drunken parties.

I wonder whether there has ever before been a man who bought a schooner and joined the Communist Party all on the same day.

I'm not a member of the Party. I'm not under the discipline or influence of the Party, not that I know of. What's more, I never was, even when I was a member.

On acting: You don't need talent to star in a motion picture. All you need is some intelligence AND the ability to work freely in front of the lens. Why do I always freeze? I went through the war. I jumped out of bombers. I played kick-the-can with E-boats when all we had was a lousy forty-foot dragger with six machine guns and a top speed of six knots. Yet whenever I get a closeup in a nice warm studio, I curl up and die.

I have yet to invest the first dime because I don't believe in unearned income. The question is inevitable: 'If you don't believe in taking what you don't earn, then how could you be reconciled to the astronomical figures [you make]?' I never was. Furthermore, I couldn't stand the work.

Billy Wilder on Stanley Kubrick (from Conversations with Wilder)
The first half of Full Metal Jacket was the best picture I ever saw. Where the guy sits on the toilet and blows his head off? Terrific. Then he lost himself with the girl guerilla. The second half, down a little. It's still a wonderful picture. You know, if he does a thing, he really does it. But this is... this is a career to discuss. Every picture, he trumps the trump. These are all pictures any director would be proud to be associated with, much less make.

CC: What did you think of Dr. Strangelove [1964]?
BW: Oh, I love that. That’s one of my favorite pictures, Dr. Strangelove.

Adrian Turner, Kubrick entry in World Film Directors V. II. Ed. John Wakeman. The H.H. Wilson Co. NY 1988:
At the age of 17 Kubrick was hired by Look as a staff photographer. During his 4 years there he enrolled as a nonmatriculated student at Columbia and attended screenings at MOMA. “I was aware that I didn’t know anything about making films, but I believed I couldn’t make them any worse than the majority of films I was seeing. Bad films gave me

the courage to try making a movie.”

Beginning his study of Kubrick, Alexander Walker wrote that “only a few directors possess a conceptual talent—that is, a talent to crystallize every film they make into a cinematic concept. It transcends the need to find a good story. An absorbing story...It is the talent to construct a form that will exhibit the maker’s vision in an unexpected way. It is this conceptual talent that most distinguishes Stanley Kubrick.

Kubrick’s next three films [after Lolita], made with ever increasing deliberation and secrecy, comprise a trilogy on humanity in the technological age. It begins with Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1963), scripted by Kubrick, Terry Southern, and Peter George from the latter’s novel Red Alert. Originally conceived as a “serious treatment of the problem of accidental war,” like the novel, it modulated into satire when Kubrick found the theme too blackly absurd to be treated in any other way.

Nuclear catastrophe is unleashed by Air Force General Jack D. Ripper, who believes that his sexual impotence is due to a Communist conspiracy to pollute “his precious bodily fluids.” Despite the efforts of a decent but ineffectual President to placate the Russians, despite all the technical fail-safe procedures and mechanisms, lunacy triumphs and Major “King” Kong (Slim Pickens) gleefully rides his great phallic bomb to the apocalypse.

Slim Pickens, Sterling Hayden as the impotent Ripper, George C. Scott as the virile Pentagon hawk Turgidson: they are all mad, and the maddest of all is Dr. Strangelove himself, a former Nazi scientist now employed by the Pentagon, a paraplegic with dark glasses and a mechanical arm constantly snapping into uncontrollable Sieg Heils. He is marvelously realized by Peter Sellers, who also plays a clipped RAF group captain and the President of the United States.

[Orson Welles in 1964 remarked that “amongst the younger generation, Kubrick is a giant.”]

from Stanley Kubrick Directs expanded edition, Alexander Walker, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich NY

This irony—that the sexual neuroses of two militarists should be at the heart of the holocaust—is only the first of the disparities that Dr. Strangelove points up between the smallness of the cause and the enormity of the result.
As the crisis grows, the scene expands—into the Pentagon War Room. This is one of the most functional and imaginative sets ever designed for film. It was created by Ken Adam, a German-born architecture student, whose designs for other movies did much to create the larger-than-life feelings of the James Bond films. It is no accident, therefore, that we see shades of Fritz Lang’s work, especially Metropolis, in this cavernous design.

[Turgidson] urges all-out war, figuring out the possible megadeaths like a lip-smacking computer. “I’m not saying we wouldn’t get our hair mussed. I am saying only ten to twenty million people killed, tops, depending on the breaks.” The speech, says Kubrick, is almost a précis of what has been published in military journals, even to euphemisms, not unlike “hair mussing,” for human casualties. It would be difficult, and dramatically redundant, Kubrick observes, to try to top the statistical and linguistic inhumanity of nuclear strategists.


[on set during filming a conversation with Dundy, Associate Producer Victor Lyndon and Ken Adam the art director]

Adam: “Stanley’s been doing research on this film for two years now. He’s so steeped in his material that when we first met to discuss it his conversation was full of fail-safe points, gyro-headings, strobe markings, and CRM-114S—I didn’t know what he was talking about. You learn fast though. You have to, working with him. I like him. He’s a funny combination of coldness and hypersensitivity. He walked by my wife on the set the other day as if totally unaware of her existence and then rang her that evening to apologize. When he’s working, he just doesn’t take in anything else.


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from Richard Schickel, Schickel on Film. Wm. Morrow & Co, NY 1987 “Stanley Kubrick The Unbearable Brevity of Being”

Kubrick’s virtuosity as a filmmaker, and the range of his subjects, have served to disguise his near-obsessive concern with these two matters—the brutal brevity of the individual’s span on earth and the indifference of the spheres to that span, whatever its length, whatever achievements are recorded over its course. His works, whatever their ostensible themes, must always be seen as acts of defiance against this tragic fate.

On both points he has been quite specific. Here, for example, is Kubrick on the subject of individual mortality: “Man is the only creature aware of his own mortality and is at the same time generally incapable of coming to grips with this awareness and all its implications. Millions of people thus, to a greater or lesser degree, experience emotional anxieties, tensions and unresolved conflicts that frequently express themselves in the form of neuroses and a general joylessness that permeates their lives with frustration and bitterness and increases as they grow older and see the grave yawning before them.” (This was, of course, the theme of the great, and greatly misunderstood Barry Lyndon, in which Kubrick time-traveled deeper into the past than he ever has into the future....)

Dr. Strangelove is not to be read solely as a cautionary tale comically put, though it is surely a great comedy, one that we can see, two decades after its release, is going to hold up for a very long time. That is because it is a true black comedy, a comedy that proceeds from a bleak, but deeply felt, view of human nature and is not dependent for its best thrests on its situation—the desperate attempt by the American high command to recall an atomic strike against the Soviet Union launched by a madman—or upon its satire of the already outmoded technology of the strike and the recall effort it details. What Kubrick is contemplating here are both the ironies of accident and the failure of rationalism to estimate the effects of chance on human endeavors and to build into its contingency planning compensation for these effects.

What he is saying in this film is that though man is sufficiently advanced to imagine a rational world and to build intricately rational systems for governing it, he has not progressed far enough in his evolution to rid himself of his irrational impulses or to rid society of those institutions and arrangements that are projections of that irrationalism.

Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi: Dr Strangelove http://www.visual-memory.co.uk/amk/doc/0097.html

While Herman Kahn was hailed as the quintessential civilian defense intellectual in a variety of contexts, both comic and otherwise, by the middle 1960s he became associated with a fictional former Nazi scientist, the character Dr. Strangelove in Stanley Kubrick’s film of the same name, who was loosely based on the real Werner Von Braun, (whom the United States rehabilitated in order to exploit his ingenuity in missile design.) (Other observers guessed that Kubrick’s model was Henry Kissinger.)The film was released in early 1964, -- three years after the publication of On Thermonuclear War, and therefore plausibly beyond the range of our concerns, nevertheless since its screenplay lifts pages of dialogue from
On Thermonuclear War, we cannot overlook the period’s most felicitous nuclear grotesque.

Thomas Schelling happens to have been the mediator between Peter George’s original novel, Red Alert, and Kubrick’s screenplay. Schelling had been asked to write a magazine article about accidental war, which began with a review of three novels about nuclear war. This was published in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, and picked up verbatim by the Observer in London, which featured it as the lead article in the second section of a Sunday edition. Kubrick happened to have been in London at the time. In the article, Schelling claimed that George had done a better job of analyzing how a war might start than any professional analysts. Kubrick was impressed with the article, tracked down George, and immediately asked him to go with him to the United States and help him write the screenplay for Dr. Strangelove.

Kubrick and George visited Schelling in Cambridge to consult with him. They had had a problem with the crisis scenario. When Red Alert was published in 1958, the American nuclear force was carried by bomber aircraft. By the time Kubrick wished to make his movie, the bomber force had been augmented with Minuteman ICBMs and Polaris submarine-launched missiles. In Red Alert, a rogue General launches a wing of SAC bombers against Russian targets under radio silence under the provisions of a retaliatory plan which authorized a base commander to launch his forces in the event that Washington and SAC headquarters had been eliminated in an enemy strike. The General’s plan was to coerce the American President to accept preventive war. In fact, in the novel, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff urges the President to follow through the initial attack. Accepting we cannot recall the bombers of the 843rd wing, there is an absolute military necessity to follow up their attack as hard and as fast as we can. Any other course of action will inevitably mean that we lose cities, and take casualties…. Mr. President, the Joint Chiefs unanimously recommend that a full scale attack on Soviet Russia be launched immediately.

George’s original scenario for unintended war was already obsolete. By 1962 it was difficult to believe that a rogue general could order a missile launch. Schelling recalled, “There was no way that you could launch them and then call the President and tell him the strike is on the way, you’d better launch the whole outfit. The question was how could a Brigadier General somewhere get the war started? He, Kubrick, and George spent most of the afternoon devising one scenario after another. “We wanted to show that getting a war started was going to be very very hard, but not impossible. By the time we broke up, we decided that there wasn’t a very plausible way to get this unintended war started.” Schelling added, that it was only after his meeting with Kubrick and George that they decided to make Dr Strangelove a comedy “in order to make it happen.”

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April 24 Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, Singin’ in the Rain 1952

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Contacts:
...email Diane Christian: engdc@buffalo.edu
...email Bruce Jackson bjackson@buffalo.edu
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