

Document Citation

Title	Dr. Strangelove, or: how I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Dr. Strangelove or: how I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb, Kubrick, Stanley, 1964

**DR. STRANGELOVE, OR: HOW I LEARNED TO
STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB—**

(Columbia) *At the Victoria and Baronet.* Peter George's novel "Red Alert," in which a psychotic U.S. general unleashes the next (and last) world war, has been made into a scarifying satiric comedy melodrama—a strangely uneven combination of hair-raising horror, satire, cynicism, and a bumbling burlesque of official and military stupidity that comes close to the fantastically incredible. Continuous switching in mood from satire to sophomoric clowning, along with disconcertingly uneven cutting, often mars and weakens the impact of this anti-war film.

Basically, Mr. George's novel had the merit of suggesting that bombs are nothing to fool around with—and certainly, that the decision to "let go" ought not to be left to "nutty generals." Crackpots and moral blockheads on either side of the Iron Curtain can trigger the next war—and that, of course, is what happens in the over-titled "Dr. Strangelove, Etc." A paranoiac general orders the attack—which automatically releases the retaliatory Russian "Doomsday Machine," triggering a nuclear mechanism that propels the world, and mankind, into oblivion. The President of the United States, his war board, and all the peoples of the world can do nothing to delay The End.

The theme is there. But as adapted and directed by Stanley Kubrick from the screenplay upon which he collaborated (with Terry Southern and Peter George) the constant switching of mood, pace and viewpoint tends to make this a *mélange* rather than a movie, a wobbly satire whose point has been blunted by an overwritten script and frequent hamming. Peter Sellers, acting three roles, plays two well—a British officer, and the President—and is awful in the third as a U.S.-domiciled German scientist with a bomb passion. Sterling Hayden as the looney general is excellent; and so is Keenan Wynn, briefly, as a combat colonel. George C. Scott overacts outrageously as a bomb-loving chief of staff; and Slim Pickens falls into the same error as the bombing pilot. Much of "Dr. Strangelove" is solid, valid and meaningful; but much of it, too, is overdone—and credit for both faults as well as virtues must go to writer-director-producer Kubrick.