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# The Dartmouth Film Society

## (KING AND COUNTRY) (Great Britain, 1964)

|                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 94132 Captain Hargreaves        | DIRK BOGRADE    |
| Hamp                            | TOM COURTENAY   |
| Captain O'Sullivan              | LEO McKERN      |
| Lieutenant Webb                 | BARRY FORSTER   |
| Captain Midgley                 | JAMES VILLIERS  |
| Colonel                         | PETER COPLEY    |
| Lieutenant Prescott             | BARRY JUSTICE   |
| Padre                           | VIVIAN MATALON  |
| Sparrow                         | JEREMY SPENCER  |
| Sykes                           | JAMES HUNTER    |
| Wilson                          | DAVID COOK      |
| Sergeant Major                  | LARRY TAYLOR    |
| Corporal M. P.                  | JONAH SEYMOUR   |
| Corporal of the Guard           | KEITH BUCKLEY   |
| Guard 'Charlie'                 | RICHARD ARTHURE |
| Captain (at Court Martial)      | DEREK PARTRIDGE |
| Lieutenant (at Court Martial)   | BRIAN TIPPING   |
| 1st Soldier (in Hamp's Platoon) | RAYMOND BRODY   |
| 2nd Soldier (in Hamp's Platoon) | TERRY PALMER    |
| 3rd Soldier (in Hamp's Platoon) | DAN CORNWALL    |

Screenplay: EVAN JONES, from the play Hamp by JOHN WILSON based on a story by JAMES LANSDALE HODSON. Photography: DENYS COOP. Art Director: PETER MULLINS. Editor: REGINALD MILLS. Music: LARRY ADLER. Sound Mixer: BUSTER AMBLER. Camera Operator: CHIC WATERSON. Design Consultant: RICHARD MacDONALD. Make-up: BOB LAWRENCE. Wardrobe Master: ROY PONTING. Continuity: PAMELA DAVIES. Associate Director: SCOTT WODEHOUSE. Associate Producer: RICHARD GOODWIN. Produced by JOSEPH LOSEY and NORMAN PRIGGAN for B.H.E. PRODUCTIONS. Released in the U.S. by THE LANDAU/UNGER COMPANY and distributed by AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES.

Directed by JOSEPH LOSEY

The ... piece of steel in the picture is Losey's sense of form. The scheme of KING AND COUNTRY is as stiff as a grid, a shape that you could lift off the story like a motif imprinting wet cement. One image recurs, of writhing flesh mimicked in dead matter... The officers' scenes and the men's are in formally opposed styles, pitted against each other almost like Greek narrative and chorus. The officers have distinct and characterized personalities and their speech is a subtly period kind of upper-class utterance... By comparison the Tommies are deliberately generalized and inarticulate. They have nothing to do except wait to be pushed around and killed....

---Penelope Gilliatt

KING AND COUNTRY contains perhaps Losey's most violent statements on war and the class struggle. By bringing together a lower class volunteer and an upper class officer a question develops as to whether the officers deserve the right to have others fight for them. Obviously they wish to remain away from the war as much as possible -- this is pointed out by the fact that they punish Hamp for merely "taking a walk" after spending three years of his life in filth. The officers have spent the same time wallowing in it as have the soldiers, but who has done the fighting and who has been waited on?

From the beginning of the film, there is a certain inevitability about the outcome due to the camera which gives close examination to the settings before characters are introduced. A typical Losey technique, this allows assimilation to the prevailing conditions of the soldiers, making it easier to be drawn into this tight court-room drama.

The inevitability is hinted at from the inscription of the war memorial in the first scene; "The Royal Fellowship of Death" and it comes to a full circle when the camera closes in on Hamp's feet in the mud which are transformed into those of the figure in the statue of the beginning.

Probably the most moving portions of the film are the stylistic fade-ins from picture to action and back out again; yet, Losey does not agree:

The cut-ins were a stylistic thing which I thought would work. It seemed to me essential to give subliminal flashes of the kind of thing which Hamp had come from which were not intended to be exact. They were not memories, and they were not realistic reproductions, but they were a combination of memory and fantasy and reality. Many people haven't even observed them, which is pleasing when it happens.

from an interview with Joseph Losey in  
The Cinema of Joseph Losey, James Leahy

KING AND COUNTRY is endowed with a script by Evan Jones which, unlike the super-sophisticated scenario by Harold Pinter for THE SERVANT, speaks plainly as the characters should; all crypticism is gone. Penelope Gilliatt in Sight and Sound felt that Losey's direction, combined with Courtenay and Bogarde's acting, make the script more convincing:

... The pervading mood is not a towering rage but rather a trivial kind of irritability... Everyone in the film is near the end of his tether, and his responses are spinsterish and cross...

The photography, adds Miss Gilliatt, creates a "claustrophobia which is the real one of the trenches, not the photographed one of a play.... It is dark and undecorated, like the character of the film."

KING AND COUNTRY is similar to other Losey films in its barren landscape; THE DAMNED, THE PROWLER, and THE CRIMINAL had desert and snow scape in their respective final scenes. In this film, the surroundings are ugly and barren throughout, mud is everywhere, the action opens and closes on a shot in the mud. It is also similar in respect to its production. Costing less than \$125,000, it was shot in 18 days, one day more than THE PROWLER, which was also shot on a miniscule budget.

The Monthly Film Bulletin of the British Film Institute was enthusiastic over the film and the acting:

The performances of Bogarde, as the exemplary officer thrust into a situation where his efficiency has less relevance than his inadequacy in human terms, and of Courtenay, as the inarticulate, terror-stricken prisoner, both in their ways suggest animals in a trap...

Not all were so balanced in their praise of the stars; Films and Filming felt "the real power of the piece emerges by degrees through the character of the defending officer, played with anticipated perception by Dirk Bogarde." Courtenay, it went on to say "can suggest innocence and simplicity in a genuine, unsentimental way," neglecting to mention his subdued acting in scenes which easily could have been over-acted.

Of all the anti-war films made recently, KING AND COUNTRY stands as the best to date. THE WAR GAME is a fine documentary but therein lies its fault. It is impersonal and hypothetical. Losey's film, unlike Peter Watkins', focuses in on one boy and the effect of the war

on him. It is entirely personal and is based on an actual court-martial. The reality of the mud and filth in Losey's trenches is much more horrifying than the make-up and smoke pot fires used in THE WAR GAME and the rats present a stronger sense of danger than all of Watkins' threats and smoke put together. Easily, this film ranks with THE BIG PARADE, ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, and PATHS OF GLORY as a powerful statement on man's brutality to man.

Losey, in this film, created a true, cinematic masterpiece that was not to be rivaled by any of his other works until this year when he directed ACCIDENT, again using the talents of Dirk Bogarde. This film, like KING AND COUNTRY, was shown at the Venice Film Festival and was highly acclaimed. It seems that after much experimentation Joseph Losey has at last found a way to make films which interest him, with virtually complete artistic freedom.

---Jeffrey McFarland

Short Subject: A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES (1962), produced, directed and photographed by Marvin Lichtner. A visual accompaniment, prepared in the animation or "moving still" technique, to Dylan Thomas' reading of his short story, "A Child's Christmas in Wales."

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We recommend Joseph Losey's ACCIDENT, now playing at the Nugget Theater, Except for Bosley Crowther, all major U.S. and British critics have praised the film, calling it one of the best productions of 1967. ACCIDENT also received two major awards at the Cannes Film Festival, including Best Picture.

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Joseph Losey's MODESTY BLAISE, starring Monica Vitti, Terence Stamp and Dirk Bogarde, will be shown Tuesday, December 5, at 4 & 3:30 p.m. by the Dartmouth Film Society.