



# THE PURITAN POST

| by Hank W. Mardukas |

## This Week on TV

### *Servant* (Apple TV+)

A few weeks back, Apple TV+ released *Servant*, a series produced by and with a pilot directed by the legendary M. Night Shyamalan. *Servant* is not only the best show by Apple so far, but also one of the best shows currently on TV. After a couple tragically loses their baby, the husband helps console his wife by pretending to raise a doll with her, which she still genuinely believes is her own child. They proceed to hire a mysterious nanny for the baby/doll and this is when a series of bizarre and inexplicable situations arise. Without giving too much away, the pilot has one of the best hooks I have ever seen on TV and each episode provides a similarly engrossing cliffhanger to keep you interested. I also commend Apple for releasing new episodes every week to keep audiences coming back.

## Also This Week on TV

### *A Nasty Piece of Work* (Hulu)

Last week I reviewed a Thanksgiving themed installment of Hulu and Blumhouse's anthology series *Into the Dark* and this week we're onto this year's Christmas episode. The movie centers on a man named Ted, who after being denied a Christmas bonus by his greedy boss, is then invited by his boss to a small get together at his mansion. He and his wife, along with a rival employee and his wife, attend the party only to find that his boss has planned series of twisted games designed to test the coworkers and see which is cut out to be given a raise and promotion. After being disappointed by the last few, this *Into the Dark* movie is one of the best yet and I was very impressed with the script, direction, and cast. It's filled with fun twists and turns and culminates with a satisfying, albeit fairly predictable, ending.

## Director Spotlight:

### Richard Donner



**Birth:** 4/24/1930 New York, NY

**Notable Works:** *The Omen*, *Superman*, *Superman II*, *The Goonies*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Scrooged*, *Lethal Weapon 2*

**Fun Facts:** His wife, Lauren Shuler Donner is a notable producer behind great movies like *You've Got Mail*.

## THE PURITAN POST'S IV WEEKS of CHRISTMAS Week II: Why *EYES WIDE SHUT* (1999) is Definitely a Christmas Movie

In last year's IV Weeks of Christmas Issues, specifically Issue No. 21, I wrote an article why *Die Hard* is definitely a Christmas movie. This year I will be discussing the reasons why Stanley Kubrick's 1999 swan song masterpiece *Eyes Wide Shut* is definitely a Christmas movie as well. This week, my lovely wife Prudence and I attended a 35mm screening of *Eyes Wide Shut* at Quentin Tarantino's New Beverly Theater here in Los Angeles. It was a fantastic early Christmas present to see the movie on film, and as I watched I kept thinking about the many ways in which the flick is actually a perfect Christmas movie. Here are the reasons why.

When I staked my claim that *Die Hard* is a Christmas movie, I said the most important factors on whether a film is a true Christmas movie are its setting and its themes; specifically themes of family, greed and redemption. Right off the bat, *Eyes Wide Shut* meets the first Christmas movie qualification of setting, as it is, in its entirety, set during Christmas time in New York City. Christmas plays an integral role in the story, with the first major sequence being a ritzy Christmas party attended by protagonist Dr. Bill Harper, played by Tom Cruise, and his wife Alice, played by Cruise's actual wife at the time, Nicole Kidman. The Christmas setting also directly connects to the three central themes of family, greed and redemption, all perfectly exhibited in this film.

One of the central themes of *Eyes Wide Shut* is family. In the movie, Bill has what appears to be a pretty ideal family life: a beautiful wife, an adorable daughter, and a picture perfect apartment in New York. That said, it becomes clear early on that Bill doesn't entirely value his family and perhaps takes them for granted. This leads to the second major theme of Christmas movies, greed. Because of his own greed, Bill thinks that he can have his ideal family existence but also wants more, and proceeds to begin fraternizing with prostitutes and contemplates cheating on Alice. This desire, combined with jealousy stemming from sexual dreams Alice has about other men, leads Bill into seeking out a mysterious sex party hosted by an enigmatic and powerful cult. Due to Bill's greed he then becomes targeted by said secret society and soon begins to regret his curiosity. This leads to the final Christmas theme exhibited in the picture, redemption. While it takes significant threats from dangerous and powerful people to get him there, Bill does come to repent his sins against his wife and family. He comes clean to Alice, and while she doesn't fully forgive him, Alice says in the final scene that she and Bill must be grateful for what they have and implies they'll work through their problems, ultimately giving Bill redemption.

So there you have it, *Eyes Wide Shut* is definitely a Christmas movie, and one of my all time favorites at that. Perhaps, in a future Issue we will discuss why I believe Stanley Kubrick was murdered for making this film, but that just didn't seem like a very Christmasy subject matter.

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