

The Shining (1980)

Director: Stanley Kubrick
Writers: Stanley Kubrick

(Based on the novel by Stephen King)

Cast

Jack Nicholson (Jack Torrance)
Shelley Duvall (Wendy Torrance)
Danny Lloyd (Danny Torrance)
Scatman Crothers (Dick Hallorann)



Plot Synopsis

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" -- or, rather, a homicidal boy in Stanley_Kubrick's eerie 1980 adaptation of Stephen_King's horror novel. With wife Wendy (Shelley_Duvall) and psychic son Danny (Danny_Lloyd) in tow, frustrated writer Jack Torrance (Jack_Nicholson) takes a job as the winter caretaker at the opulently ominous, mountain-locked Overlook Hotel so that he can write in peace. Before the Overlook is vacated for the Torrances, the manager (Barry_Nelson) informs Jack that a previous caretaker went crazy and slaughtered his family; Jack thinks it's no problem, but Danny's "shining" hints otherwise. Settling into their routine, Danny cruises through the empty corridors on his Big Wheel and plays in the topiary maze with Wendy, while Jack sets up shop in a cavernous lounge with strict orders not to be disturbed. Danny's alter ego, "Tony," however, starts warning of "redrum" as Danny is plagued by more blood-soaked visions of the past, and a blocked Jack starts visiting the hotel bar for a few visions of his own. Frightened by her husband's behavior and Danny's visit to the forbidding Room 237, Wendy soon discovers what Jack has really been doing in his study all day, and what the hotel has done to Jack.

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Stanley Kubrick's Techniques

Stanley Kubrick's films have several trademark characteristics. All but his first two full-length films and *2001* were adapted from existing novels (*2001* being based on *The Sentinel* as well as having its own planned novelization), and he occasionally wrote screenplays in collaboration with writers (usually novelists, but a journalist in the case of *Full Metal Jacket*) who had limited screenwriting experience. Many of his films had voice-over narration, sometimes taken verbatim from the novel. With or without narration, all of his films contain extensive character's-point-of-view footage. The closing of films with "The End" went out of style with the advent of long closing credits, but Kubrick continued to put it at the end of the credits, long after the rest of the film industry stopped using it. On the other hand, Kubrick occasionally dispensed with opening credits (in *Space Odyssey* and *Clockwork Orange*) long before the industry started doing so commonly. His credits are always a slide show. His only rolling credits are the opening credits to *The Shining*.

In his review of *Full Metal Jacket*, Roger Ebert^[99] noted that many Kubrick films have a facial closeup of an unraveling character in which the character's head is tilted down and his eyes are tilted up. Kubrick also extensively employed wide angle shots, character tracking shots, zoom shots, and shots down tall parallel walls.

Tidbits and Trivia

- Stanley Kubrick decided that having the hedge animals come alive (as they do in the book) was unworkable due to restrictions in special effects, so he opted for a hedge maze instead. The name of the high school is Bates High, a reference to Norman Bates from *Psycho* (1960). In addition, the four note violin theme from *Psycho* is used over and over in the film. Although the score was arranged by Lennie Niehaus, the main theme was written by Eastwood himself.
- There is a great deal of confusion regarding this film and the number of retakes of certain scenes. According to the Guinness Book of Records, the scene where Wendy is backing up the stairs swinging the baseball bat was shot 127 times, which is a record for the most takes of a single scene. However, both Steadicam operator Garrett Brown and assistant editor Gordon Stainforth say this is inaccurate - the scene was shot about 35-45 times. Brown does say however that the scene where Hallorann explains to Danny what shining is was shot 148 times, which is a world record. The pig's blood dumped on Sissy Spacek was karo syrup and food coloring, although she was willing to have real blood dumped on her.
- Stanley Kubrick considered both Robert De Niro and Robin Williams for the role of Jack Torrance but decided against both of them.
- Stephen King tried to talk Stanley Kubrick out of casting Jack Nicholson in the lead suggesting, instead, either Michael Moriarty or Jon Voight. King had felt that watching either of these normal-looking men gradually descend into madness, would have immensely improved the dramatic thrust of the storyline.
- During filming, Stanley Kubrick made the cast watch *Eraserhead* (1976), *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *The Exorcist* (1973) to put them in the right frame of mind.
- The "snowy" maze near the conclusion of the movie consisted of 900 tons of salt and crushed Styrofoam.