

The Main Feature



Season 35 - Issue 10 (screening 12.2.15)

UK released 11 October 2013
Cert 15 running time 93 minutes

Director: Roger Michell
Writer: Hanif Kureishi
Cinematography: Nathalie Durand
Music: Jeremy Sams

Cast:
Lindsay Duncan Meg
Jim Broadbent Nick
Jeff Goldblum Morgan

Le Week-End is a wonderful film – one which examines the relationship between love and need with enormous delicacy.

Behind his diffident exterior, Broadbent's character, Nick, is a man riven with regrets. He's also possessed of a deep, dark pit of anger. It therefore comes as a bit of a shock to hear Broadbent say that Nick is more like him than any character he has ever played. "Oh yes, I think so," he says quietly.

"Certainly, I had to do much more tapping into myself than usual much more tapping into myself than usual."

"I don't think I'm actually a regretful person. But some of Nick's neediness I recognise. And I admire his honesty – I don't know if I've got that or not, but I'd like to. As for anger, I think I'm probably quite difficult, though not really angry. But I'm not as brave as Nick is in saying what's on my mind. I tend to be more guarded."

"Whatever some people say – and, as you may have noticed, it's so often younger, single people who'll tell you how a marriage should be – things aren't always perfect. It's very easy to assume how it will be," says Jim, "but a long relationship is something to be proud of, and the film celebrates that. There's a commitment on both their parts even if neither of them quite know what it is."



'I loved the grown-up, sophisticated view of a marriage,' he says. 'It wasn't the usual trite stuff.'

'When I read the script for "Le Week-End", a lot of it was familiar – things I might have said or been,' he says. 'But I'm not really tapping into me. You just recognise things.'

'I think the whole film is about love, generally and specifically. Love is such a complicated thing, so it's not one or the other. It's all mixed in the pot. They've got



a very complicated relationship that has built up over the years which is interdependent in different ways but I think the very fact that they're together and laughing after 30 years means that it's love. '

'I love stories. I've always loved movies from the word go. Sometimes when I was a young lad I'd love going to the movies even if I didn't know or understand what the film was about. The whole element of being in the cinema and getting your tickets for three and six and the whole magical feeling of being in the movie theatre and that's stayed with me to a degree. When I was at school it was sometimes a very naughty thing to do. To get out and bunk off and see X-rated films I wasn't meant to be seeing.'

Although Roger and Hanif had been working on the idea for some eight years, the actual filming process was very short. The director called the rehearsal period "intense" although Jim laughs that off. "It was short, but I wouldn't have said intense. Well, not for us!"

"We had a few days going through the script, suggesting line changes if there were things we found difficult to say. It's our job to make this sound real, so it helped with that, for us to get the whole background, to make sure we're all on the same page. And Lindsay and I have worked together before [on *Longford*] so we knew we'd get on."



"Jeff's energy came right at the end of filming," reveals Jim, "in the last week of filming, more or less where it comes into the story, so it fitted exactly into the relationship. It was a bit of a 'coup de cinema' really, that American dynamism which was perfect for the filming."

It's an oddly realistic approach to the "rom com" genre, and a pleasing contrast to the location. "Paris has a certain natural romance and that does a lot of the work for you, although in this instance, there's no great change of heart or rediscovery of deep feelings. There's sarcasm, bitterness, bickering... but there are also shared jokes and old memories that are still worth holding on to."

He smiles. "The film recognises how things are. That's how it works sometimes."

Duncan's performance as a woman who both loves her husband deeply and yet is infuriated to the point of desperation by his defeated view of life has been described as "by turns hilarious, poignant and toweringly sexy". She has seen the film at various festivals and has been heartened to hear what she describes as "huge, solid laughs of recognition" from every single audience.

"What you sense with them is that they started out with passion blazing in every area – their sex life, politics, work. They grew up in the Sixties and Seventies – the optimistic decades – believing they could conquer the world. Then real life takes over and when you get further down the road, you're maybe no

longer so passionate about all these things. The job bores you, and the kids have worn you out a bit, and they're still wearing you out now and costing you money. And your simmering sex life is a distant memory."

"But Meg's point – that she is constantly drumming home to Nick – is that you have to keep living and moving on to the next chapter of your lives, or what's the point? That's the movie's fundamental message."

"And although there are no trite,



romantic endings, I do find it basically optimistic.”

The story had some resonance for Lindsay Duncan as at one point, she and her husband had a stolen Christmas in Paris together. They’d been a couple for a few years and ran away briefly from family responsibilities to stay in a friend’s garret. So, did *Le Week-End* bring back memories?

“All I will say is that, yes, my husband and I have seen the movie together and I’m pleased to say that he laughed as much as the next man at those recognisable moments that occur between couples.”



“For me, *Le Week-End* is a real marker. It’s one of those things where, honestly, if I don’t make another film – and I hope I do – then there is a film out in the world that I’m really proud of.”

Roger Michell and Hanif Kureishi – British and in their late fifties, but seemingly as different as could be – have maintained a close working relationship for two decades. Michell, a director whose films include *Notting Hill* and *Changing Lanes*, and Kureishi, the novelist who also wrote the screenplay for *My Beautiful*

Laundrette, stay constantly in touch, and every so often make a film that is unmistakably their own.

HK I didn’t really want to be a screenwriter. If I write films, I write them for Rog. I know that he’ll know what I’m on about, because of our shared background. I know he’ll have new ideas, that he’ll also frustrate me, but make me more interested in what I’m doing than I was before.

RM We do find each other very annoying. But we stimulate each other in ways I’m not stimulated by other writers. Each “marriage” (with a writer) is particular, and this is the longest of the “marriages”, I guess. And around every seven years we bring out another...

HK (laughing) ...massive box-office success...

RM ...which in some way documents our changed lives and changed circumstances. Sometimes it works.

HK We’ve known each other and been friends for a long time, and it seemed to me, and perhaps Roger as well, that writing about older people is more interesting than younger people. Most people in films, when they have sex together, it’s for the first time. And I thought: what’s it like, having sex with someone after 30 years?

RM Yet there’s very little sex in our films. There’s no sex in *Venus*, no actual sex in this film. There is in *The Mother*; it always struck me that’s a film about sex and carnality. *Venus* is a film about love. *Le Week-End* seems to be about both those things

HK I thought of it as being much more like a Woody Allen film. But with jokes!

Iain McGlashan

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Comments and reactions to: **Un Secret**

Interesting to have the present day in black and white and past in colour, unlike the usual convention. Apt choice for the occasion.

Somehow not a very convincing story

Well acted – a bit too predictable

Worth all the concentration

Harrowing, moving film

Confusing at times but ultimately very affecting

Difficult to understand

Confusing editing at times but the acting and direction was good.

So what happened next.(or was that previously) was...

Brilliant acting. Too much jumping about with timelines at start.

A quietly moving film, once the relationship was explained

Very touching. Piecing it together added to the tension

V good – needs another viewing to get every nuance

Need to see it again to follow all the characters at the different stages of their lives

Not “enjoyable” as such, but very powerful and moving and well worth watching

An “enjoyable” film – lovely swimmer and costume! A bit confusing to follow at times and very French at times

A very clever film, moving and with emotion as only the French can do.

Illustrates that it’s easier to hate a group than individuals – we care more for named people than the many

Score **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
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No of reaction slips received = 37

Average Score = 6.92

Position	Film	Average Score
1 st	Captain Phillips	8.1
2 nd	Saving Mr Banks	7.78
3 rd	A Royal Affair	7.76
4 th	All Quiet on the Western Front	7.19
5 th	Wadjda	7.06
6 th =	Sunshine on Leith	6.92
8 th	Behind the Candelabra	6.47
9 th	Mintras Duermes	5.8

Our next film

Thursday 26 February 2015:

“The visually stunning location of Laos provides an enthralling and evocative backdrop for director/screenwriter Kim Mordaunt's engaging film The Rocket, a lush and bruising coming-of-age story.”

“An extremely rewarding and entertaining film made all the stronger for the integrity and cultural details that underpin it.”

“This utterly charming, fable-like coming of age tale will live long in the hearts and minds of audiences.”

