

ely
film
society

NOV
2018

the
notes

coming up
@ kings lynn

- CLOSE-UPS EVENT
Thursday 29th November
7.30pm **Heist Films**
- SOCIAL EVENT Thursday 13th Dec
6.30pm
Pre-film Mulled Wine and Mince Pies
- FILM Thursday 13th Dec 7.30pm
THE BISHOP'S WIFE
- FILM Thursday 10th Jan 7.30pm
WONDERSTRUCK

further details klccc.uk

The Player

Robert Altman, US 1992

Screenplay by Michael Tolkin
from his novel

Tim Robbins Griffin Mill
Greta Scacchi
... June Gudmundsdottir
Fred Ward Walter Stuckel
Whoopi Goldberg ... Detective Avery
Peter Gallagher Larry Levy
Brion James Joel Levison
Cynthia Stevenson ... Bonnie Sherow
Vincent D'Onofrio David Kahane
Dean Stockwell Andy Civella
Richard E. Grant Tom Oakley
Sydney Pollack Dick Mellen
Lyle Lovett Detective DeLongpre
Dina Merrill Celia
Angela Hall Jan
Leah Ayres Sandy
Paul Hewitt Jimmy Chase
Randall Batinkoff Reg Goldman
Jeremy Piven Steve Reeves
Gina Gershon Whitney Gersh

Music by Thomas Newman
Cinematography by Jean L epine
Film Editing by Maysie Hoy and
Geraldine Peroni
Production Design by Stephen
Altman, Ken Kaufman



It would be hard to describe Griffin Mill's job in terms that would make sense to anyone who has had to work for a living. He's a vice president at a movie studio, which pays him enormous sums of money to listen to people describe movies to him. When he hears a pitch he likes, he passes it along. He doesn't have the authority to give a "go" signal himself, and yet for those who beseech him to approve their screenplays, he has a terrifying

negative authority. He can turn them down. Griffin starts getting anonymous postcards from a writer who says he is going to kill him. Griffin's crime: He said he would call the writer back, and he never did.

Robert Altman's *The Player*, which tells Griffin's story with a cold sardonic glee, is a movie about today's Hollywood -- hilarious and heartless in about equal measure, and often at the same time. It is about an industry

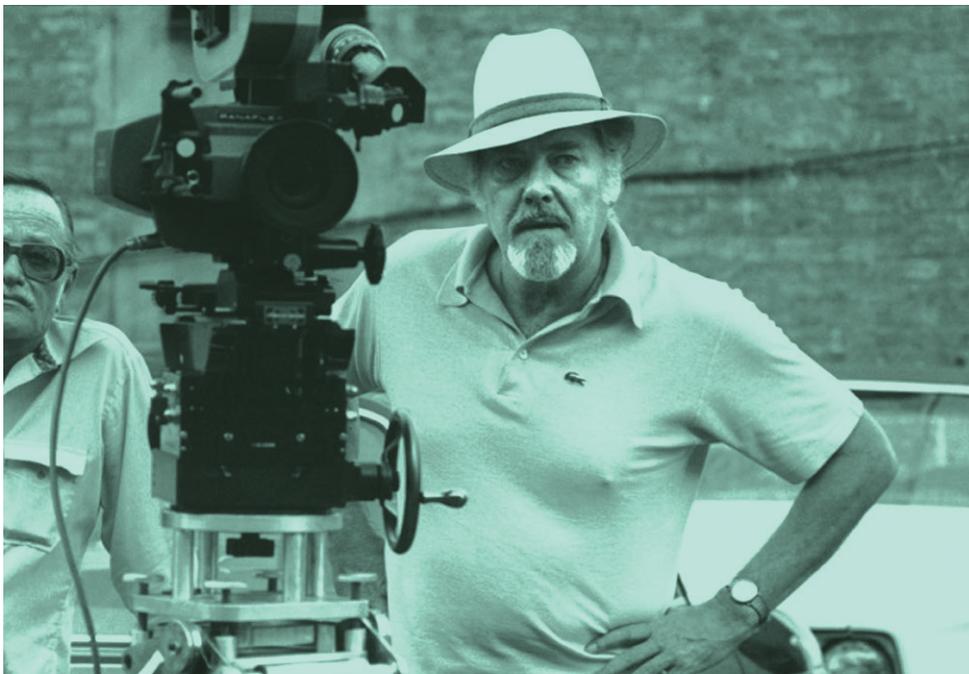
that is run like an exclusive rich boy's school, where all the kids are spoiled and most of them have ended up here because nobody else could stand them. Griffin is capable of humiliating a waiter who brings him the wrong mineral water. He is capable of murder. He is not capable of making a movie, but if a movie is going to be made, it has to get past him first.

This is material Altman knows from the inside and the outside. He owned Hollywood in the 1970s, when his films like *MASH*, *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* and *Nashville* were the most audacious work in town. Hollywood cast him into the outer darkness in the 1980s, when his eclectic vision didn't fit with movies made by marketing studies. Now he is back in glorious vengeance, with a movie that is not simply about Hollywood, but about the way we live now, in which the top executives of many industries are cut off from the real work of their employees, and exist in a rarefied atmosphere of greedy competition with one another.

Altman fills his film with dozens of cameos by recognizable stars, most

of them saying exactly what's on their minds. And he surrounds Griffin with the kind of oddball characters who seem to roll into Los Angeles, as if the continent was on a tilt: Whoopi Goldberg as a Pasadena police detective who finds Griffin hilarious, Fred Ward as a studio security chief who has seen too many old *Dragnet* episodes, Sydney Pollack as a lawyer who does for the law what Griffin does for the cinema, Lyle Lovett as a sinister figure lurking on the fringes of many gatherings.

Watching *The Player*, we want to despise Griffin Mill, but we can't quite manage that. He is not dumb. He has a certain verbal charm. As played by Tim Robbins, he is tall, with a massive forehead but a Dana Carvey smile, and he wears a suit well. Watching him in some shots, especially when the camera is below eye level and Altman uses a mock-heroic composition, we realize with a shock that Griffin looks uncannily like the young "Citizen Kane". He has a similar morality, too, but not the breadth of vision.



" [*The Player* is] not a truthful indictment of Hollywood. It's much uglier than I portrayed it, but nobody would've been interested if I'd shown just how sadistic, cruel and self-orientated it is. "

ROBERT BERNARD ALTMAN

February 20, 1925, Kansas City, Missouri

November 20, 2006, Los Angeles

FEATURE FILMS

- 1957 *The Delinquents*
- 1968 *Countdown*
- 1969 *That Cold Day in the Park*
- 1970 *MASH*
Brewster McCloud
- 1971 *McCabe & Mrs. Miller*
- 1972 *Images*
- 1973 *The Long Goodbye*
- 1974 *Thieves Like Us*
California Split
- 1975 *Nashville*
- 1976 *Buffalo Bill and the Indians,*
or Sitting Bull's History Lesson
- 1977 *3 Women*
- 1978 *A Wedding*
- 1979 *Quintet*
A Perfect Couple
- 1980 *Health*
Popeye
- 1981 *Endless Love*
- 1982 *Come Back to the Five and*
Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean
- 1983 *Streamers*
- 1984 *Secret Honor*
- 1985 *Fool for Love*
O.C. & Stiggs
- 1987 *Beyond Therapy*
- 1990 *Vincent & Theo*
- 1992 *The Player*
- 1993 *Short Cuts*
- 1994 *Prêt-à-Porter*
- 1996 *Kansas City*
- 1998 *The Gingerbread Man*
- 1999 *Cookie's Fortune*
- 2000 *Dr. T & the Women*
- 2001 *Gosford Park*
- 2003 *The Company*
- 2006 *A Prairie Home Companion*

NEXT MONTH'S FILM IS
**A GIRL WALKS HOME
ALONE AT NIGHT**
(Ana Lily Amirpour, US 2014)
Monday 17 December

www.elyfilmsociety.com

[www.meetup.com/
ely-film/](http://www.meetup.com/ely-film/)

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