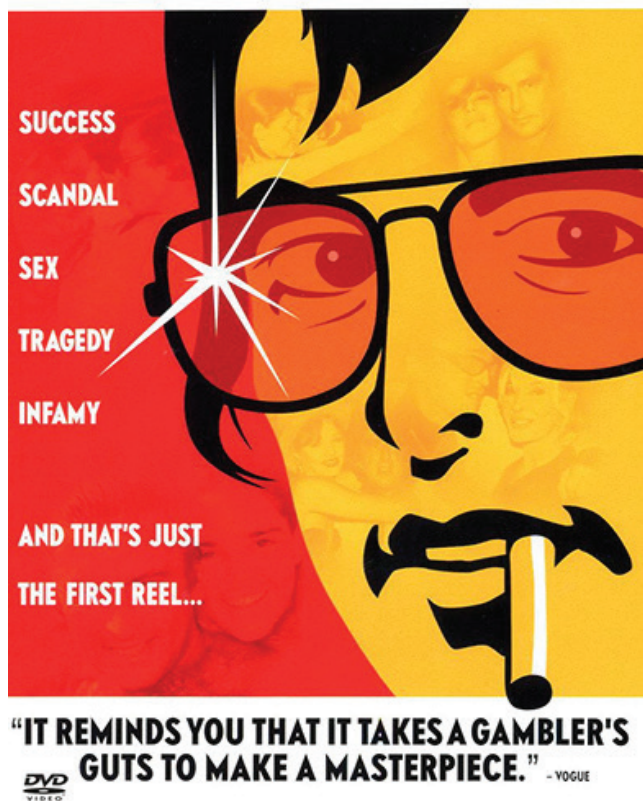


THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE



The Kid Stays in the Picture Discussion Guide

Directors: Nanette Burstein, Brett Morgen
Year: 2002
Time: 93 min

You might know these directors from:
Going the Distance (2010)
American Teen (2008)
On the Ropes (1999)

FILM SUMMARY

Based on his best-selling autobiography, Oscar-nominated film, *THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE*, takes us through the extraordinary life and career of boy wonder film producer, Robert Evans. Despite his reputation of being a bullshitter's bullshitter, Evans exposes his highs and lows with all honesty, along with large doses of self-reflection and deprecation.

Evans was the driving force behind some of the greatest films to ever come out of Hollywood, including *Chinatown*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *Godfather I and II*, *Harold and Maude*, and a jaw-droppingly impressive list of others. To hear his tales about how these films were made - and the drama behind the scenes - is riveting.

Unique in documentary filmmaking, Evans speaks 'to' the camera, narrating the story in his distinctive old-Hollywood style while liberally employing the use of out-dated hipsterisms such as 'dame', 'broad' and 'buckeroos'. His remarkable collection of photographs become almost film-like, giving the viewer a unique view into his life, as well as into some of Hollywood's golden periods.

It is the friends, enemies, lovers, haters, admirers and many others in Evans' network who create the fabric of this story. Everyone made their mark on him in some way, and by the film's end, we understand why the kid was able to stay in the picture, despite some extraordinary falls from grace.

FILM THEMES

The film is a study in loyalty, perseverance, opportunism and love. Together they result Robert Evans' exuberance for his work and life.

OPPORTUNISM

Prone to coveting the lives of others whom we consider to be lucky, we wish we'd been luckier ourselves. Then maybe our lives would be different. Yet, according to Robert Evans, "Luck is when opportunity meets preparation." Even if he was lucky to be in the right place at the right time, Evans also recognized opportunity when it appeared. At the risk of falling flat on his face, he seized the chances offered to him. Oftentimes, we are presented with opportunities but either fail to recognize them as such, or we allow fear and self-doubt to get in the way, only to later lament a life not fully lived due to these missed opportunities.

PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance is key to accomplishing anything in life. It goes hand and hand with recognizing opportunity. When you grab an opportunity, you must have the will to see it through, despite the obstacles you are sure to encounter along the way. Evans faced some pretty hefty obstacles during his long career, from criminal charges to a brush with a murder case. However, he continued to persevere even when all hope seemed lost. The result is a man who may not have climbed back up to the heights from which he fell, but who certainly regained his hard-earned spot as a Hollywood legend.

LOYALTY

Loyalty isn't always a two-way street, and *THE KIDS STAYS IN THE PICTURE* reveals that from both sides. Evans shows immense loyalty to friends and family, some of who are loyal in return, and some who are not. Cast aside by people he believed he could depend on, Evans experiences both personal and professional hurts and displays a remarkably fatalistic attitude about other peoples' opinions. In the end, however, he seems to realize, as most of us do, that he can count on a few people, and those few are the only ones who really count.

LOVE

Love is the great equalizer, as the adage goes. Yet we all experience disappointment in love throughout our lives. While Robert Evans distinguishes between love, lust and plain old like, he is no different than the rest of us when it comes to matters of the heart. Though married seven times, only his third wife, Ali MacGraw, is mentioned. When Evans speaks of MacGraw, his hard-boiled exterior melts away. Even after so many years, his pain at losing her is profoundly apparent. Although an endless stream of wives, mistresses and companions followed MacGraw in Evans' life, she seems to remain the one who got away.

“Luck doesn’t happen by mistake. Luck is when opportunity meets preparation.”

Robert Evans

“There are three sides to every story: your side, my side, and the truth. And no one is lying. Memories shared serve each differently.”

Robert Evans

FURTHER DISCUSSIONS:

1. How did you react to Evans’ candor about his many failures and mistakes?
2. How surprised were you to learn of all the legendary films Evans has produced over the years? Which ones surprised you most and why?
3. How important do you think Evans’ involvement was in creating films such as The Godfather, Chinatown, and Rosemary’s Baby?
4. Do you think Evans was completely honest about his involvement - or lack thereof - in the Cotton Club murder?
5. Evans often speaks of women with the derision of an old-school movie mogul. What is your reaction to his views on various women in his life? On women in general?
6. Why do you think Evans’ Beverly Hills home, Woodland, has been such an important place in his life?
7. Do you have “the one who got away” in your life? Has the loss of that person stayed with you?
8. Have any unusual opportunities presented themselves to you in life? If so, have you taken advantage of them? If one came along now, how would you handle it?
9. Is loyalty an important factor in your relationships? How did you respond to those who abandoned Evans during his numerous hours of need? What did you think of Evans’ response?
10. Drugs nearly ruined Evans, and while he has rebuilt his life he will never reach the same heights he once scaled. Do you find his story unusual? Relatable? Valuable? Explain why.

NOTES:

FILM FACTS:

- Despite 144 Oscar nominations for films he backed at Paramount Pictures, Robert Evans has never won an Academy Award.
- Evans produced Chinatown under his own banner. The film received 11 Oscar nominations at the 1975 Academy Awards. Only one award was given - to Robert Towne for his screenplay.
- THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE is based on Robert Evans' best-selling autobiography, which has been called the greatest, most outrageous and unforgettable show biz memoir ever written.
- Dustin Hoffman is the only person, other than Robert Evans himself, to speak in THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE, but his cameo doesn't come until the credits have already started rolling.
- Ernest Hemingway and fellow actors were all opposed to Evans starring in his second film The Sun Also Rises. Producer Darryl Zanuck kept him in the roll, saying, "The kid stays in the picture."
- Robert Evans has one son born to his third wife and love of his life, actress Ali MacGraw. When Ali insisted that he visit Venice only when he's madly in love, Evans replied, "Never plan, kid. Planning's for the poor."
- As a child, Evans worked as a voice actor in New York City, appearing in numerous radio plays.
- Actress Norma Shearer, widow of producer Irvin Thalberg, 'discovered' Evans by the pool at the Beverly Hills Hotel, handpicking him to play her husband in Man with a Thousand Faces.
- Evans' beloved Beverly Hills home, Woodland, was once owned by Greta Garbo. Evans was forced to sell the home at one point and lived there paying rent until actor Jack Nicholson bought it and gave it to Evans as a gift.
- Vanity Fair editor, Graydon Carter, produced THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE.
- Evans' conviction for cocaine trafficking resulted in a sentence requiring him to make an anti-drug commercial. Instead, Evans created the hour-long "Get High on Yourself" television program, featuring many celebrities who sang and danced their stance against drugs.
- When the reclusive Marlon Brando refused to attend the premiere of The Godfather, Evans' fixer and mob-affiliated lawyer, Sidney Korshak, helped finagle a somewhat adequate replacement for Brando in Henry Kissinger.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. Read the book, THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE. It fleshes out Robert Evans' story to a greater extent, giving insight into his childhood and other aspects of his life that were not included in the film.
2. Think about the importance of taking opportunities - or offering them to others - in your life. What can you do to fulfill your potential or help others do so?
3. Write your own memoir - scars, warts and all - with an eye towards sharing, even if only with trusted people.
4. Support great cinema by watching the many great films Robert Evans produced. Share the viewing experience with others and consider discussing the films for a richer experience.