Director Orson Welles
Script Orson Welles wrote the screenplay, based on Whit Masterson's novel *Badge of Evil*
Producer Albert Zug Smith
Original music Henry Mancini
Cinematographer Russell Metty (uncredited director of reshots–Harry Keller)
Film Editor Edward Curtiss, Walter Murch (director's cut), Aaron Stell, and Virgil W. Vogel

In 1993, the film was selected for preservation by the National Film Registry.

Cast
Orson Welles…Hank Quinlan
Marlene Dietrich…Tanya
Charlton Heston… Ramon Miguel 'Mike' Vargas
Dennis Weaver…Motel Manager
Janet Leigh…Susan Vargas
Mercedes McCambridge…Leader of the gang
Joseph Calleia…Pete Menzies
Zsa Zsa Gabor…Nightclub Owner
Akim Tamiroff…"Uncle Joe" Grandi
Joseph Cotton…Police surgeon
Joanna Cook Moore…Marcia Linnekar
Keenan Wynn…Bit Part (uncredited)

ORSON WELLES (b. George Orson Welles on May 6, 1915 in Kenosha, Wisconsin—d. October 10, 1985, age 70, Hollywood, California) did it all: actor, director, writer, producer, editor, cinematographer, shill for Gallo Wines. His 1938 radio adaptation of H.G. Wells "War of the Worlds" panicked thousands of listeners. He made his first film, *Citizen Kane* (1941), which tops nearly all lists of the world's greatest films, when he was only 25. Despite his reputation as an actor and master filmmaker, he maintained his memberships in the International Brotherhood of Magicians and the Society of American Magicians and regularly practiced sleight-of-hand magic in case his career ended abruptly. Welles occasionally performed at the annual conventions of each organization and was considered by fellow magicians to be extremely accomplished. Laurence Olivier had wanted to cast him as Buckingham in *Richard III* (1955) but gave the role to Ralph Richardson, his oldest friend, because Richardson wanted it. In his autobiography, says he wishes he had disappointed Richardson and cast Welles instead, as he would have brought an extra element to the screen, an intelligence that would have gone well with the plot element of conspiracy. His bio

lists more than 160 acting credits, beginning as Death in the 1934 film *Hearts of Death*. Many of those credits were as "narrator": he was the off-screen voices of the narrator in "Shogun" and Robin Masters in "Magnum P.I." He played some of history's great characters: Cardinal Wolsey in *A Man for All Seasons* (1966), Falstaff in *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), Harry Lime in *The Third Man* (1949), Cesare Borgia in *Prince of Foxes* (1949), and the title role in *Macbeth* (1948). Not one of the 14 films he completed is uninteresting and several are masterpieces including *Citizen Kane* (1941), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), *The Stranger* (1946), *The Lady from Shanghai* (1948), *Macbeth* (1948), *Othello* (1952), *Mr. Arkadin* (1955), *Touch of Evil* (1958), *The Trial* (1962), *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), *The Immortal Story* (1968), *F for Fake* (1973), and *Filming 'Othello'* (1978). He won a lifetime achievement Academy Award 1971, was nominated for *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *Citizen Kane* in 1941 and 1942, won for best writing original screenplay for *Citizen Kane*. The American Film Institute gave him its Lifetime Achievement Award in 1975. Has the distinction of appearing in both the American Film Institute and British Film Institute's #1 movie, before BFI decided to put Hitchcock's *Vertigo* in the top spot in 2012. For AFI, it was *Citizen Kane* (1941). For BFI, it was *The Third Man* (1949). Welles shares this distinction with Joseph Cotten, who also starred in both movies. One of only six actors to receive an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for his first screen appearance. The other five actors are: Paul Muni, Lawrence Tibbett, Alan Arkin, James Dean and Montgomery Clift.

RUSSELL METTY (b. September 20, 1906 in Los Angeles, California—d. April 28, 1978 (age 71) in Canoga Park, California) began around 1925 as an assistant with Standard Film Laboratory, who was then was hired by Paramount Pictures working in the camera department. He became a regular cameraman at Universal Studios, and was a regular collaborator with Douglas Sirk, making eleven films altogether with Sirk. He won an Oscar in 1961 for his work on *Spartacus* (1960). These are some of the many films he worked on: *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *The Stranger* (1946), *Arch of Triumph* (1946), *Ivy* (1947), *The Lady Gambles* (1949), *All I Desire* (1953), *There's Always Tomorrow* (1955), *All that Heaven Allows* (1955), *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* (1958), *Touch of Evil* (1958), *The Misfits* (1961), *The War Lord* (1964), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967), and *The Omega Man* (1971).

HENRY MANCINI (b. April 16, 1924, Cleveland, Ohio—d. June 14, 1994, Los Angeles, California) was an American composer, conductor, arranger, pianist and flautist. Often cited as one of the greatest composers in the history of film (a staggering 369 credits), he won four Academy Awards, a Golden Globe, and twenty Grammy Awards, plus a posthumous Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1995. His works include the theme and soundtrack for the Peter Gunn television series as well as the music for The Pink Panther film series ("The Pink Panther Theme") and "Moon River" from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). These are some of his many film soundtracks: *The Raiders* (1952), *The Glenn Miller Story* (1953), *Abbott and Costello Go to Mars* (1953), *Touch of Evil* (1958), *Charade* (1963), *The Pink Panther* (1963), *A Shot in the Dark* (1964), *Wait Until Dark* (1967), *The Molly Maguires* (1970), *The Thief Who Came To Dinner* (1973), *That's Entertainment!* (1974), *Mommie Dearest* (1981), *Victor Victoria* (1982), *Santa Claus: The Movie* (1985), *The Great Mouse Detective* (1986), *Fear* (1990), and *Son of the Pink Panther* (1993).

WALTER MURCH (b. July 12, 1943, New York City, New York) got Welles' 58 pages of notes and is responsible for us seeing the film Welles was trying to make. Some of the films Murch edited are *Jarhead* (2005), *Cold Mountain* (2003), *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999), *The English Patient* (1996), *The Godfather Trilogy: 1901-1980* (1992), *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and *Julia*

(1977). He edited sound for *The English Patient*, *Apocalypse Now, The Conversation* (1974), *The Godfather: Part II* (1974), *American Graffiti* (1973), *THX 1138* (1970), and *The Rain People* (1969). He has been nominated for nine editing Academy Awards and won three of them: *The English Patient* (editing and sound) and *Apocalypse Now* (sound).

CHARLTON HESTON (b. 4 October 1924, Evanston, Illinois—d. April 5, 2008 (age 84) in Beverly Hills, California) played Long John Silver and had a voice people liked enough to hire him as narrator for commercials and films long after he'd stopped being of interest as an actor. There the similarities end. Heston appeared in more than 100 films, among them *Wayne's World 2* (1993), *Earthquake* (1974), *Airport 1975* (1974), *Soylent Green* (1973), *The Omega Man* (1971), *Will Penny* (1968), *Planet of the Apes* (1968), *Khartoum* (1966), *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (1965), *Major Dundee* (1965), *El Cid* (1961), *Ben-Hur* (1959), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *Ruby Gentry* (1952), and *Peer Gynt* (1941). In 1960 Heston won a best actor Oscar for *Ben-Hur*, and, in 1978, he won the Academy's Gene Hersholt Humanitarian Award. That was pre-NRA. He was responsible for Welles's getting the director job in *Touch of Evil*.

JANET LEIGH (b. July 6, 1927 in Merced, California—d. October 3, 2004 (age 77) in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, California) was an American actress whose career spanned over five decades. Raised in Stockton, California by working-class parents, Leigh was discovered at 18 by actress Norma Shearer, who helped her secure a contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Leigh had her first formal foray into acting, appearing in radio programs before making her film debut in the drama *The Romance of Rosy Ridge* (1947). Early in her career, she appeared in several popular films for MGM which spanned a wide variety of genres, including *Act of Violence* (1948), *Little Women* (1949), *Angels in the Outfield* (1951), *Scaramouche* (1952), *The Naked Spur* (1953), and *Living It Up* (1954). Leigh played mostly dramatic roles during the latter half of the 1950s, in such films as *Safari* (1956) and Orson Welles's film noir *Touch of Evil* (1958) but achieved her most lasting recognition as the doomed Marion Crane in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), which earned her a Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actress and a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. After starring in *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), Leigh remarried and scaled back her career. Intermittently, she continued to appear in films, including *Bye Bye Birdie* (1963), *Harper* (1966), *Night of the Lepus* (1972), and *Boardwalk* (1979). She would also go on to appear in two horror films with her daughter, Jamie Lee Curtis: *The Fog* (1980) and *Halloween H20: 20 Years Later* (1998).

MARLENE DIETRICH (Marie Magdelene Dietrich, 27 December 1901, Berlin-Schöneberg, Germany— 6 May 1992, Paris) liked to deny she'd ever been in silents. If that's true, then *Madame wünscht keine Kinder* (1926), *Tänzerin* (1926), *Der Münch von Santaren* (1924), *So sind die Männer* (1922), and *Im Schatten des Glücks* (1919) have soundtracks no mortal ear has ever heard. No matter. She's great when she did get around to talking, whenever it was. Some of her other films are *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956), *Rancho Notorious* (1952), *Destry Rides Again* (1939), and *Der Blaue Engel* (1930).

Jaime N. Christley: "Welles, Orson" (*Senses of Cinema* January 2003)

Orson Welles: An Incomplete Education

Here is a man, a great director and a great man, whose obituary has yet to be written, for once and for

all. If the old stories are true about ghosts and lost souls hanging around the living for the sake of some unfinished business, Orson Welles might still be with us, rattling chains and wailing for two reasons: because so many of us have misperceptions or an inadequate understanding of the trajectory of his movie career, and because so much of his work—including films that some have said are among his very best—is tied up in a depressing legal quagmire that resulted from a dispute over Welles' estate.

Ghosts don't exist, but there's plenty of wailing to be done in the interest of coming to a better understanding of Welles' legacy—and not just wailing. The importance of campaigning for the release, in any form, of Welles' unseen (1) films cannot be overestimated. As seen in the invaluable documentary, *Orson Welles: The One Man Band* (Vassili Silovic, 1996), there exists an enormous number of fragmented and completed works in the vaults, garages, and closets of Welles' estate. Some seem more fascinating than others, most are informed by the "Welles" we've come to know as cinema-author, while others are unusual in ways that could potentially lead to the modification of our understanding of his career and his image. Just as it would be ridiculous to evaluate the authorship of Jean-Luc Godard or Howard Hawks by focusing strictly on the films that are relevant only to our so-called "official" cultural indicators, like box office receipts, Academy Awards, and festival attendances, so too is it only sensible to realize that informed judgments cannot be made on the shapes, textures, and meanings of Welles' career, if all we have is a very limited pool of evidence.

Here is a limited account of the "unseen cinema" of Orson Welles:

The Other Side of the Wind : Welles showed two clips for this at a 1975 American Film Institute gala tribute to him and his most recognizable film work, and there is a third one in the *One Man Band* documentary. It tells the story of a famous, aging Hollywood director named Jake Hannaford (John Huston, then approaching 70) trying to make an ambitious, personal, and complex art film, despite old age, the stifling adulation and skepticism of the press, and the intractable Hollywood apparatus. (One may easily perceive some autobiographical elements in the movie.) This extremely ambitious production, a labor of love comparable to Sergei Eisenstein's unfinished triptych of *Ivan the Terrible* (1945/1958), Jacques Tati's *Playtime* (1967), Samuel Fuller's *The Big Red One* (1980), or even Welles' own *Don Quixote*, was shot between 1970 and 1976. The available excerpts suggest a bizarre, stunning, and formally radical piece of work, the intricacy of which is hinted at with the fractured editing and overall tenor of *F for Fake* (1973). To what extent Welles was able to edit or arrange his footage, only a few individuals know with any certainty—close friends like Gary Graver and Peter Bogdanovich have made assurances that the work is in nearly presentable form. According to filmmaker Curtis Harrington, also an actor in the movie, "It's all shot, it just needs final editing, sound effects, the final music and the whole production will be finished." Among his unreleased films, this is probably the most eagerly anticipated.

Filming 'The Trial': Welles enjoyed the experience of making *Filming 'Othello'* (1978; for all intents and purposes, his last completed and released feature film) so much that he wanted to continue in the same vein with a similar project focusing on his 1962 Kafka adaptation. Using a 16-millimeter camera and color reversal stock, Graver shot footage of Welles speaking to an audience at the University of Southern California in 1981. The project remained uncompleted when Welles passed away in 1985. The footage of the university talk, cobbled together and attached to the original trailer for *The Trial*, was presented at the Filmmuseum Munich, for a listed running time of 82 minutes.

The Deep: The plot of this film, from a novel by Charles Williams, was used for the thriller *Dead Calm* (Phillip Noyce, 1989); a stranger, claiming to have survived a sinking boat, joins a couple on their yacht, but when the husband investigates the visitor's story and discovers the truth, his wife is kidnapped and he's saddled with another survivor, possibly as dangerous as

the first. Welles' enthusiasm for the project—one of his few explicitly commercial (while unquestionably independent) ventures—was said to have been on the wane by the time his star, Laurence Harvey, succumbed to stomach cancer in 1973. It's a good bet that Welles foresaw profits from *The Deep* becoming useful in the production of *The Other Side of the Wind*; like that film, *The Deep* is in an almost-complete form which might limit its release prospects, except in the revival and repertory circuits, where incomplete works have a chance to find an audience.

The Dreamers: Welles adored Isak Dinesen, whose memoirs would become the basis for the Oscar-winning *Out of Africa* (Sydney Pollack, 1985), and whose novel he adapted as *The Immortal Story* (1968); and he filmed portions of *The Dreamers* piecemeal over three years in the early 1980s. The prevailing interpretation is that Welles shot the scenes (20 minutes in all) as test footage with the thought of re-shooting later, with a better budget. Without more of a context, or having read the story, the fragments remain incoherent as narrative, although they are of interest not only for Welles completists, but also as an example of Welles' talent for generating vivid emotional textures with minimal production values.

The Merchant of Venice: This is the strange case. Welles' 1969 movie, his fourth adaptation of Shakespeare's work, was actually completed (for inclusion with the television project, *Orson's Bag*), but two reels of the soundtrack—out of three—were stolen, and have not been recovered. Welles would later film the famous "hath not a Jew eyes" speech with no makeup or staging—this performance, which is spellbinding, along with shards of the original *Merchant*, are featured in the *One Man Band* documentary.

Don Quixote: Another strange case, in that this is the only item on the list that has received a theatrical and home video release. But it may as well still be "lost," more lost, perhaps, than the projects we have yet to see. *Don Quixote* probably exceeds *The Other Side of the Wind* as the project to which Welles devoted the most time, love, and passion. He began shooting in 1955 (2) and was still making plans for it in 1985, shortly before his death. The story behind the attempted restoration of *Don Quixote* is as convoluted as the production story of the movie itself—suffice to say that, barring a miracle, we will never have anything remotely approximating the *Don Quixote* that Welles wanted, but, until then, there was in 1992 a repulsive and inept edit carried out by the Spanish filmmaker Jesus (Jess) Franco.

There's a great deal more. The Silovic documentary contains comic performances from a television program called *Orson's Bag*: Welles in a sketch about arrogant British tailors, another one in which he plays multiple roles: a London policeman singing about the "one-man band," the actual one-man band, an ugly stereotype of a Chinese proprietor of a striptease club, and an old woman selling violets and dirty postcards. Welles impersonates Winston Churchill, and rehearses *Moby Dick*. Welles also hosted his own, very short-lived talk show (among his guests: the Muppets, Burt Reynolds, Angie Dickinson). Welles' unrealized, incomplete, unreleased, aborted or otherwise cancelled film projects span the entirety of his motion picture career—even before the first frame of film for *Citizen Kane* (1941) was exposed, even before the infamous *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast, his recorded narration for *The Spanish Earth* (Joris Ivens, 1937) was rejected in favor of one by Ernest Hemingway. Other uncompleted and unrealized works include an ambitious adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, films of a dozen major literary works, from Shakespeare to *Catch-22* to *Crime and Punishment*, a tale called *The Landru Story* that would eventually be filmed by Chaplin (with a story credit for Welles) as the masterful *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), and a number of other properties.

In 2002, Showtime, an American cable network, joined forces with Oja Kodar, Welles' companion in the latter part of his life, and performer in many of his films, and Graver, Welles' friend and frequent cinematographer throughout the 1970s and 80s, to

get *The Other Side of the Wind* completed and shown. As of August, Beatrice Welles-Smith, Orson's daughter, blocked the effort, brandishing the kind of legal tenacity that plays on the fear that large commercial entities (3) have of long and costly court battles, and smothers the efforts of individuals who don't have the power or the money to wage battles of any kind.

Thankfully, one aspect of his career in movies is satisfactorily documented: the movies he completed, in America or abroad. I could easily regurgitate the well-known stories behind the genesis, production, and reception of *Citizen Kane*, and the disheartening tragedy of the corruption of *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), (4) but I would rather assume the reader is at least faintly aware of the place *Kane* has assumed in cinema and cultural history, and concentrate on a few of his less-heralded but often comparable, sometimes superior, later films.

The Lady from Shanghai (1948): This macabre, pulpy, and hugely entertaining thriller, a project which Welles took on in the hopes of counterbalancing the failure of the Mercury production of *Around the World* (from the Jules Verne novel), was mangled by Columbia executives who, after bad previews, turned the editing over to Viola Lawrence, in an attempt to "save" the story. The picture is riddled with evidence of studio meddling: artfully composed shots and sequences are interrupted by bizarre close-ups, undoubtedly squeezing the last nickel from each star visage (Rita Hayworth, and also Welles), process shots, and studio fakery. James Naremore, in his description of the film's production and Columbia's alterations, has suggested that a trained eye may easily discern which shots are of Welles' design, and which are "deliberate kitsch." (5) In addition to these changes, the movie was taken out of Welles' hands before a proper soundtrack could be added, so in place of the temp track, Columbia's composer-for-hire Heinz Roemheld wrote a score which, going by Welles complaints (in the form of a memo to Columbia), did not suit the picture very well. Despite interference, however, the viewer can still count this as 75 percent Welles, as opposed *Ambersons*, which might be 40-50 percent, at best.

Othello (1952): Few filmmakers idolized Shakespeare as much as Welles, but he was the first major filmmaker to question the conventions of "faithful" adaptation; (6) his radical attitude towards the Bard's work helped to pave the way for such exciting, recent adaptations/meditations as *King Lear* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1987), *Titus* (Julie Taymor, 1999), and *Hamlet* (Michael Almereyda, 2000). The production of *Othello*—shot, for the most part, "on the fly," over a period of several years, primarily in Morocco and Italy, often only a bit at a time—is indicative of the kind of filmmaking that would characterize all of Welles' work outside the American studio apparatus: making do with nothing, or next to nothing, and still managing to make cinema. Therein, perhaps, lies one facet of Welles' genius: that he could make two of America's greatest films (*Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*) with an entire Hollywood studio at his disposal, and, as an encore, make several of the world's greatest films with practically no money, very little in the way of sets, and a change of crew with each new continent.

Mr. Arkadin (1955; better known to some as *Confidential Report*): Welles' international-jaunt/thriller is a mess, but a brilliant one. Those willing to question *Arkadin*'s footnote status and research the circumstances of the film's history (7) will discover that what's "wrong" with the movie—it is bizarre, fragmented, tawdry, often seemingly the result of incompetence in sound recording, casting, and cutting—is divided into two parts: what isn't really wrong (8) and what isn't really Welles. And to complicate matters further, there are several different versions of the movie in circulation, each different in ways that could significantly affect viewer interpretation.

The Trial (1962): This one was derided by François Truffaut, who felt that Welles was doing "a Kafka" in the same rather cold, reverent spirit with which a theater company might do "a Shakespeare." Naremore and Joseph McBride have suggested that Alfred Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man*, which is based on

a true story, is a closer "filmic approximation" of Franz Kafka's novel than Welles' direct adaptation. As with Shakespeare, the idea of "faithfulness" might be set to one side, that we might examine the work as it stands, rather than as what we'd like it to be. (Surely this is a necessary step in the evolution of the medium.) *The Trial* remains, for me, among the most pleasurable of Welles' films, perhaps because it is one of the few that can be seen, today, in its original form. The classic expressionist nightmare is given an effective center by Anthony Perkins, an unorthodox Welles hero but a perfect victim for the relentless machine that pursues K. Welles balances long takes and long shots with as many claustrophobic close-ups and rapid, uneasy cuts, imbuing the story with a feeling of loss, isolation, and perhaps freedom, as K's murder becomes imminent.

Chimes at Midnight (1966): I neglect to mention Welles' 1948 *Macbeth*, a lesser work (but still fascinating and effective), in favor of one of his greatest works, a daring blend of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* parts one and two, *Richard III*, *Henry V*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and using one of Shakespeare's key sources for the history plays, Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Of primary interest, apart from the film's stunning visual poetry, Welles performance of Falstaff, and the climactic battle sequence, is that it never seemed Welles' intention to be stodgily "faithful" to the text, eliminating his own voice from the creation. *Chimes at Midnight*, like *Othello*, is all about Shakespeare, and all about Welles, simultaneously. His efforts to render Shakespeare's work in filmic terms was considerably more imaginative (9) than Olivier's, whose attempts at cinema, which are generally favored in mainstream canons, seem limited to "I think Shakespeare would have a close-up here," or the like. Branagh's *Henry V* (1989) is unmistakably influenced by *Chimes at Midnight*, particularly in the mud-encrusted battle scenes, but his subsequent efforts—*Hamlet* (1996) and *Love's Labour Lost* (2000)—reflect the mind of a filmmaker who has chosen either to avoid experimentation, or to mock the efforts of others in the same direction. It's probably unnecessary, here, to mention the countless, anonymous, utilitarian, television productions of Shakespeare's work. *Chimes at Midnight* is everything these films are not: brutish, earthy, messy (not counting Branagh's *Henry V*, which is certainly "earthy," but via Welles, not via Shakespeare), and also fraught with emotion. It may be that what Shakespeare buffs fear most is exactly what Welles accomplishes so beautifully with *Chimes*: he has the effrontery to imagine the Bard's work in a medium other than text, or theatre.

F for Fake: This is the Welles movie that people seem to discover on their own, perhaps by accident, and after the discovery, they cannot contain their enthusiasm. A friend of mine recently saw it for the first time, and declared it: "Cinema, Cinema, Cinema!" The project originated as a François Reichenbach documentary on the great art forger Elmyr de Hory, who was being profiled for a biography by Clifford Irving. When an unexpected turn of events revealed that Irving was as much of a trickster as Elmyr (whose name becomes a mantra throughout the film), Welles, who was on the Spanish island of Ibiza at the time, took over the project (10) and created a rather intricate model of the film-essay. The subject, ostensibly, is fakery, but the French title (*Vérités et mensonges*, which in English means "Truths and lies") might dissuade one from approaching the work as being merely a sensationalistic exposé of forgers and charlatans; what emerges is a thoughtful, sometimes sad, sometimes hilarious meditation not just on that subject but also on Welles' life, his career, and the cinema.

Filming 'Othello': Any reply to the accusation that *Filming 'Othello'* is merely a recorded lecture on his 1952 masterpiece must begin with, "Oh, but *what* a lecture." Welles' immense, baritone voice had, through age and endless cigars, begun to sound coarse and gravelly, but his formidable storytelling skills, as well as his insights into the production, and his feelings about his work (and Shakespeare: "Among all dramatists the first. The greatest poet, in terms of sheer accomplishment, very possibly our greatest man. So where does that leave a mere moviemaker? Nowhere.") make this essay-commentary essential viewing. *Filming 'Othello'* could also be counted among Welles' "lost"

works, since the estate has repressed all public showings, including a video release.

The greatness of Welles and the "Welles" image, as well as any misgivings we may have about him, seems inseparable from notions of a grand, epic quality in all things: an outsized personality with a voice like a cartoon giant (albeit one capable of subtler textures than most would guess), given to larger-than-life acting roles and grand, theatrical gestures. Stupendous and superlative achievements. Great risks and bold experimentation. Leave it to the hack poet journalist to equate his enormous girth with enormity in self-image, excess in dreaming and plans with no follow-through. He did not suffer from an excess of money, or we might have a few more finished works. It's difficult to imagine that, like Kane, his lasting dream would have been to

acquire a warehouse full of great artworks—and the available evidence would seem to hint at the possibility for a few—for no one to look at.

***Orson Welles* Interviews. Ed.Mark W. Estrin. University of Mississippi. Jackson, 2002.**
Andre Bazin and Charles Bitsch 1958

Welles: But for my style, for my vision of film, editing is not an aspect, *it is the aspect*. Directing is an invention of people like you. It's not an art, it's at most an art for one minute per day. This minute is terribly crucial, but it happens only rarely. One can only take control of a film during the editing. Well, in the editing room I work very slowly, which always enrages the producers who tear the film from my hands. I don't know why it takes me so long. I could work for an eternity editing a film. As far as I'm concerned, the ribbon of film is played like a musical score, and this performance is determined by the way it is edited. Just as one conductor interprets a musical phrase *rubato*, another will play it very dryly and academically, a third romantically, etc. The images alone are insufficient. They are very important but they are only images. The essential thing is how long each image lasts, what follows each image. All of the eloquence of film is created in the editing room.

What we would like to extract is the quintessential character who runs through all your films. Is he the one referred to by Truffaut in Arts *when talking about* Touch of Evil*: the genius who cannot help doing wrong, or should one see in him a certain ambiguity?*

Welles: It's a mistake to think that I approve of Quinlan at all. To me, he's hateful: there is no ambiguity in his character. He's not a genius; he's a master in his own field, but as a man he's detestable. The personal element in the film is the hatred I feel for the way the police abuse their power. And that stands to reason: it's more interesting to discuss the ways in which the police abuse their power when you are dealing with a man of a certain stature—not only physically, but in terms of character—than it is with a little ordinary cop. So Quinlan is more than a little ordinary cop but that does not stop him being hateful. There is no ambiguity about that. But it is always possible to feel sympathy for a swine, because sympathy is a natural human attribute. Hence my tenderness for people who I make no secret of considering repellent. This feeling doesn't arise from the fact that they are gifted, but from the fact of their being human beings. Quinlan is sympathetic because of his humanity, not his ideas: there is not the least spark of genius in him; if there does seem to be one, I've made a mistake.

Technically, he's good at his job, he's an authority. But because he has a certain breadth of ideas, because he has a heart, you can't stop yourself feeling a certain sympathy for him; in spite of everything he's human. I think Kane is a detestable man, but I have a great deal of sympathy for him as a human being....

Isn't the feeling of ambiguity reinforced at the end or the film, when it is discovered that Quinlan was right all the same, since the young Mexican is guilty?

Welles: He was wrong in spite of everything: it's pure chance. Who cares whether he's right or not?

Isn't it important?

Welles: That depends on your point of view. I personally believe what the Heston character says. The things said by Vargas are what I would say myself. He talks like a man brought up in the classic liberal tradition, which is absolutely my attitude. So that's the angle the film should be seen from; everything Vargas says, I say. Also, is it better to see a murderer go unpunished, or the police being authorised to abuse their power? If one had to choose, I'd rather see crime going unpunished. That is my point of view. Let's consider the fact of the young Mexican being really guilty: what exactly is his guilt? That's no business of ours. The subject of the film is elsewhere. That man is only a name in a newspaper; nobody cares a damn whether he's guilty or not. It's a pure accident of the plot; the real guilty one is Quinlan. And when Andre Bazin writes that Quinlan is a great man etc. it's because Menzies, Quinlan's friend, says he's a great man. Nobody else says it. And Menzies says it because he sincerely believes it, but that tells you something about Menzies's personality, not Quinlan's. Quinlan is his god.

And as Menzies adores him the real theme of the script is betrayal; the terrible necessity for Menzies to betray his friend. And that's where there is ambiguity, because I don't know whether he should have betrayed him or not. No, I really don't know. I force Menzies to betray him, but the decision does not come from him, and frankly, in his place, I would not have done it!

While we are talking about Menzies and Quinlan, there was one thing we did not quite understand; when Quinlan is dying, by the recording machine, he says this is the second bullet which be got because of Menzies.

Welles: That's why he limps. He saved Menzies' life once in the past, and in the process got a bullet in his leg. Menzies tells Vargas's wife about it when he takes her away in the car....

And so are we to understand that your sympathy for Quinlan is purely human, and has nothing to do with his moral attitude?

Welles: Certainly not. My sympathy is with Menzies, and above all with Vargas. But in that case, it is not human sympathy. Vargas isn't all that human. How could he be? He's the hero of a melodrama. And in a melodrama, the human sympathy goes, of necessity, to the villain. I want to be clear about my intentions. What I want to say in this film is this: that in the modern world we have to choose between the law's morality, and the morality of simple justice, that is to say between lynching someone and letting him go free. I prefer a murderer to go free, than to have the police arrest him by mistake. Quinlan doesn't so much want to bring the guilty to justice, as to murder them in the name of the law, and that's a fascist argument, a totalitarian argument contrary to the tradition of human law and justice such as I understand it. So, for me, Quinlan is the incarnation of everything I'm fighting against, politically and morally speaking. I'm against Quinlan because he takes the right to judge into his own hands, and that's something I hate more than anything else, people who want to be the judge on all their own. I believe one only has the right to judge if one does it according to the principles of a religion or a law or both; otherwise, if people simply decide personally whether someone is guilty or innocent, good or bad, the door is open to people who lynch their fellow-men, to gangsters who walk the streets doing

what they like, it's the law of the jungle. But of course there's one thing I gave Quinlan, which I must love him for: that is, that he did love Marlene Dietrich, and that he did get that bullet in the place of his friend, the fact that he has a heart. But his beliefs are detestable. The possible ambiguity is not in Quinlan's character, it is in Menzies's betrayal of Quinlan. Kane, too, abuses the power of the popular press and challenges the authority of the law, contrary to all the liberal traditions of civilization. He also has very little respect for what I consider to be civilization, and tries to become the king of his universe, a little like Quinlan in his frontier town. It's on that level that these people resemble each other, similarly Harry Lime, who'd like to make himself king of a world which has no law. All these people have this in common, and they all express, in their different ways, the things I most detest. But I love, and I understand, I have human sympathy for these different characters that I have created, though morally I find them detestable. Goering, for example, was a detestable man, but nevertheless one has a certain sympathy for him; there was something so human about him, even during the trial....

Sven Mikulec: "Touch of Evil": Orson Welles' Grandiose Film Noir that Took Four Decades to Shine In Its Intended Form" (*Cinephilia & Beyond*). (This is followed by the shooting script and several videos, one of them *"Behind the Edit: The Orson Welles Memo,"* about the 58-page Welles memo used for the reconstruction of the film)

When Universal approached Orson Welles with an intriguing supporting role in a new thriller tentatively called *Badge of Evil*, the filmmaker was at a difficult point of his career, not having directed an American film in a full decade. He spent the last ten years directing international productions like *Othello* (1952), whose budgets he managed to cover through acting gigs. Welles had just finished acting in *Man in the Shadow*, a Universal film in which he was allowed to rewrite many of his scenes, and the studio agreed to offer him another role, but this specific gig was to be limited to that of a supporting pillar to *Badge of Evil* star Charlton Heston. But the thing is, Heston agreed to star in the film partly because he mistakenly thought Welles was there to direct it. When he figured out the truth, he pressured Universal to hand over the director's chair to Welles, a recommendation further supported by Universal's head of post-production, Edward Nims, who had the pleasure of collaborating with Wells back in the forties. Universal reluctantly agreed, but offered to pay Welles only for his acting service. The filmmaker, who carried a grudge against the studio system and felt he was more than good enough to succeed in Hollywood, saw this as an opportunity for a major comeback, for a new project that would completely obliterate all the past misunderstandings and the lack of appreciation that forced him to continue his filmmaking career abroad.

According to Welles himself, he had the time of his life directing the movie that would later get the title of *Touch of Evil*: minimal studio interference, a hugely talented and respected cast eager to work with him and honored to be included in his inspiring creative process, a distinguished cinematographer ahead of his time and peers… Everything seemed perfect, and Welles honestly believed he was back in the game and there to stay. However, when *Touch of Evil* premiered as the bottom half of a double bill (alongside *The Female Animal* with Hedy Lamarr) after extensive studio re-editing without Welles' authorization or creative input, he was appalled, bitter, disappointed and disillusioned both with the quality of the final product and with his future chances of establishing himself as a triumphant director within the studio system.

Failing to prosper at the box office, *Touch of Evil* was written off by Universal as a failure, sealing Welles' fate in America, but found its audience in Europe right away. This success has plenty to do with the film's unexpected appearance at the 1958 Brussels World Fair without the studio's blessing: not only was *Touch of Evil* named best film at the competition, but Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut sat on the jury, lauding Welles' picture and preparing the turf for a warm and enthusiastic welcome Welles could have only dreamed of back in the States. Getting the directing gig by chance and thanks to the two-decade old reputation from the glory days of *Citizen Kane*, enjoying a fruitful, harmonious production without any hints as to the possibility of any significant studio interference, Welles felt he had a masterpiece in his hands. It took a couple of decades and the admiration of film lovers from a whole other continent for *Touch of Evil* to gain the reputation it fortunately still enjoys today.

The dark, convoluted, spiraling story of a Mexican and American investigator battling for dominance in a corrupt, gritty little border town was based on the novel 'Badge of Evil' written by American authors Robert Allison Wade and H. Bill Miller, who published their work under the pen name of Whit

Masterson. The story might seem a bit tricky to follow the first time you watch the film, but it's not the narrative that mesmerizes and attracts you during first contact. "I'd seen the film four or five times before I noticed the story," confessed Peter Bogdanovich to Welles, explaining it was the direction and cinematography that blew him away. The re-appreciation of *Touch of Evil* lauds its spatial choreography, effective acting improvisations, and especially the work of expert cinematographer Russell Metty. It's curious to note Metty's relationship with Welles started on somewhat uneasy terms. Impressing RKO by his work on *Bringing Up Baby*(1938), Metty was hired for the infamous reshoot of Welles' *The Magnificent Ambersons*.

As we know, Welles finished production and went to South America to help the United States' government boost its relations with those countries, and in his absence, RKO hired two directors (Robert Wise, Fred Fleck) and Metty to provide additional scenes for Welles' classic adaptation of Booth Tarkington's novel. It's safe to say Welles was largely displeased with the studio's decision, but found Metty's work impressive enough to swallow his pride and bring him in to work on his film *The Stranger* and, later, *Touch of Evil*. His mastery is aptly demonstrated at the very start of the film, with the breathtaking, over three minutes long tracking shot. It's a huge pity this sequence was tarred in the original release by the studio's choice to paste the distracting credits and Henry Mancini's theme to it, but the later versions thankfully corrected this mistake.

Casting was certainly not an issue for Welles on this project, as distinguished actors and actresses were going far out of their way just to get the chance of working with him. As we already stated, Heston practically twisted the studio's arm into hiring Welles in the first place. Although Janet Leigh's agent originally refused the offer on his client's behalf, Orson Welles sent her a personal letter professing his happiness over the fact they would be working together, so Leigh was furious at her agent and eager to join the production, however small a salary she could be offered. Mercedes McCambridge, who won an Oscar for *All the King's Men* (1949), joined the cast because Welles managed to convince her at one lunch during production. Dennis Weaver was chosen for a supporting role because he impressed the director with his performance in Gunsmoke, while Marlene Dietrich joined the project without the studio's knowledge. She filmed her entire role in a single day as a personal favor to Welles and at minimum union wage, but upon seeing the rushes, Universal decided to give her a full credit so it would help with the film's promotion.

A big role in the creation of *Touch of Evil* was played by Universal's staff producer Albert Zugsmith, who not only approved of giving the directorial gig to Welles, but also allegedly helped him create in peace without studio interference. Unfortunately for Welles, when the editing process began, Zugsmith had already transferred to MGM, but during production, Zugsmith and Welles had a great relationship, as can be seen in Charles Flynn and Todd McCarthy's 1975 book 'Kings of the Bs: Working within the Hollywood system' Zugsmith did all he could, and Welles efficiently eluded any possible meddling by shooting much of the picture on location and at night, but his vision was disrupted as soon as the studio took over the editing.

Welles called the 1958 version "an odious thing," and was enraged when the studio completely ignored his 58-page memo suggesting necessary changes. In 1976 Universal found a 108-minute print of *Touch of Evil* that predated the original release version, but this was still not Welles' picture as he envisioned it both during production and in the subsequent detailed memo. But two decades later, the great Walter Murch gathered all the available material, including Welles' instructions from the memo, consulted film critic and Welles scholar Jonathan Rosenbaum and re-edited *Touch of Evil* in a Rick

Schmidlin-produced latest version that came closest to Welles' original intentions.

Written by Orson Welles loosely based on Whit Masterson's *Badge of Evil*, shot by Russell Metty with Henry Mancini's score, and featuring Charlton Heston, Janet Leigh, Joseph Calleia, Marlene Dietrich, Akim Tamiroff, Dennis Weaver and Welles himself, *Touch of Evil* is one of the best film noirs ever made. It might be another step in the filmmaker's traumatic and tragic battle with the studio system, and it definitely didn't open any Hollywood doors for him at that time, but it's nevertheless an undisputed, grandiose, innovative and influential piece of filmmaking that crowned the golden era of film noir.

Charlton Heston on the making of *Touch of Evil*, from his autobiography, in *Cinephilia and Beyond*

The post office in St. Helen, Michigan, was still in the back of the cobblestone general store I remember from when I was a kid and you remember from the movies. There was nothing in the box one day but another script, from Universal. It was called *Badge of Evil*. I started to read it that evening, and finished it the next morning—an okay police story. As I'd promised, I phoned the studio. "It's not a bad script," I said. "But police stories are like westerns: you guys've been making them for more than fifty years—all the great ideas are used up. It really depends on who's directing. Have you set anyone?" "Well… no, actually. [Pause, then brightly:] We've got Orson Welles to play the heavy, though."

Now I paused. Could they really not have thought of the obvious? "Why don't you ask him to direct, too? He's a pretty good director, you know." Well… you'd have thought I'd suggested that my mother direct the film. "Oh! Ahh, yes, *Citizen Kane* and… umm… yes. Interesting. It would be, that is. To direct. For him… ah, to direct. The film. We'll, ahh, get back to you. On that." Whereupon I hung up, bemused. They did get back, a few days later. Yes, Orson would direct the film. I have no idea how intense the debate was, but I doubt anyone at Universal slapped the back of his head and said, "Of course he should direct! How come we didn't think of it? What a smart guy that Chuck Heston is." More likely it was, "Ahh, let him direct it. How bad can it be? Heston'll just get sore if we don't. F—in' actors."

I was delighted. It seemed to me, remembering *Kane*, that we had a chance at a great film. That's a chance you don't get very often. Getting the great film is even rarer. (But you sometimes get to try, pal. You get to try.) I talked to Orson at length on the phone, before we left Michigan, and then met with him after we got back to L.A. He swung open the door of the house he was renting, a looming figure in a flowing black Moorish robe from his Othello. I was taller than he, but he filled the room, with his voice, his energy—with himself. His "Hello, Chuck!" rolled twice around the entry hall. He gave me a very large single-malt whisky splashed with water and mesmerized me for an afternoon.

He was three days into a rewrite of the entire script, which he finished a day and a half later. It was a vast improvement, most interesting to me in that he'd turned my character into a Mexican attorney. I'd played several Brits, but this was my first non-Anglo (though God knows not my last). His name was Vargas, we decided; the very bright first son of a wealthy Mexican family, educated at USC and Harvard Law, on the fast track for high office in his country. None of this was in either the script or the picture, but, inventing his background, we could begin to invent the man. The next day I began growing a moustache, to be dyed black, along with my hair. The makeup department darkened my skin to suggest Hispanic genes. Orson ordered a suit (the action in the film is almost continuous; there are no wardrobe changes) made by the best Mexican tailor in Los Angeles. A first-class Mexican tailor cuts a coat a

little differently from his counterpart in London, or New York.

All this gave me how Vargas looked. What about an accent? I took the easy answer: "He's very well educated, mostly in the U.S., he comes from a bilingual family; he speaks perfect English." That was lazy of me, and wrong. No one speaks perfect English, and no one not raised speaking it is totally without an accent. Henry Higgins was right; a speech expert can tell within miles where a man was born. If I had the part to do over, I'd try for the faintest stroke of emphasis and rhythm you might hear from an internationally educated Mexican, instead of my native Midwestern Yankee. It would've been a good creative challenge, and right for the part.

I don't recall that I shared this internal debate with Orson. Had I undertaken the accent, I've no doubt he would have supported me; that I was considering it may never have crossed his mind. He was buried in the prep for his film. It had become his film, of course, as I had expected and Universal had perhaps feared. He planned to shoot on both sides of the Mexican border, where the story was laid. Universal pulled the plug on that; they were probably wise to do so, though it did them no good in the end. Thwarted, Orson responded with his usual resourcefulness in adversity; he shot all his border-town exteriors in Venice, California, an hour from the studio. It looks marvelous, better than anything we could have found on the border, and logistically far easier.

The casting went well and easily, though our budget of less than a million dollars for the whole film left little money for the actors. Nevertheless, they all wanted to work for Orson, in the first film he'd directed in Hollywood in ten years. Several of his old Mercury players came on board: Ray Collins, Joe Calleia, and Joe Cotton in a cameo. Marlene Dietrich played a very spooky gypsy, wearing one of Elizabeth Taylor's black wigs, and I was responsible for a key casting. Dennis Weaver was just finding fame in *Gunsmoke*; I called him up and persuaded him to play a crazy motel-keeper for us. He was wonderfully eccentric. Janet Leigh was set as my new bride; very good, even with a broken arm. She wore the lightest possible cast for filming, discarding the sling during takes. A gutsy lady.

Orson came on the picture with a reputation for extravagance dragging after him like the chains clanking behind Marley's ghost. He didn't deserve it. He had his flaws as a filmmaker, but waste and inefficiency were not among them. Still, he knew he had to make the studio believe in him. He did this very resourcefully. The Sunday before shooting started, Orson called some of the actors to his house for an undercover rehearsal of the first day's work, a sound-stage interior of a tiny apartment. The next day, Orson began laying out a master shot that covered the whole scene, including two-shots, close-ups, over shoulders, and insert shots. It was a very complicated set-up, with walls pulling out of the way as the camera moved from room to room, and four principal actors, plus three or four bit players working through the scene.

On any movie set, the production department gets a call from one of the ADs, reporting when rehearsals on the first shot begin, when the first take is made, and when the first print is recorded. Lunch came and went and we were still rehearsing the shot; no camera had yet turned. Studio executives began to gather in uneasy little knots in corners, a bit daunted about approaching Orson while he was cuing an extra's move just as the tracking camera picked him up. They were also very worried. Most of the first day gone, and no film exposed yet.

About four o'clock, Orson called for a take, the first of a good many. Just after six, he said silkily, "Cut! Print the last three takes. That's a wrap on this set; we're two days ahead of schedule." He had designed his master to include all the coverage he needed in the 12-page scene, scheduled for three shooting days. All this was planned,

of course, to astound Universal, which it surely did. It was also a fine way to shoot the scene. The front-office people never came near the set again. They kept hoping for another miraculous 12-page day. The never got one, but Orson had persuaded them: even if he did get into trouble, he could get out of it. Looking back, I think he relished it. There was a little of Wellington after Waterloo: "A close-run thing, sir-a damn close-run thing." I won't say he deliberately painted himself into corners, but he did love leaping out of them. I remember a scene driving an open convertible down an alley in Venice, doing several pages of dialogue.

In 1957, they still shot moving-car scenes in a break-way car with the front off, the camera shooting past the actors at a process screen of traffic footage. Orson decided to shoot it in a real car, driving down a real alley. Nowadays, of course, that's a piece of cake. The film's faster, the lights are half the size, so are the mikes and cables. When Orson's cameraman had the shot rigged, the back of the car was crammed with batteries and the recording unit, with cables twisting around the seats to mikes taped on the dashboard, and the camera was strapped to a wooden platform on the hood, with no room for even the camera operator and the sound mixer. Someone suggested cutting the front off the car and towing the rear half behind a truck large enough to carry a crew. Orson snorted. "Nonsense! These boys can shoot it without a crew."

And so we did. With a crash course in switching on both camera and sound, I drove down the alley half a mile to our start mark and said, "Turn over." Mort Mills, my partner in the scene, flipped the right switches, checked the appropriate dials and said, "Speed." (Technical note: Nobody ever says "Lights, camera, action!" on a movie set.) I gunned the car and yelled, "Action!" as we tore off, acting away. We had a marvelous time. We'd get down to the end of the alley and Orson would say, "How was it?" "Perfect!" I'd say. "I'd like one more." It was my first experience of the heady bliss of directing a film. By the time I'd done three takes, I felt like D. W. Griffith. As a matter of record, this was the first time a dialogue scene was shot in a moving car.

The opening shot of the film was an even more spectacular example of Orson's alchemist ability to transmute adversity into art. He took the introductory montage written to establish Janet and me in the border-town setting, and made what's been called the greatest boom shot in the history of the movies. Here's how it goes: Close-up on hands holding a bomb, setting timer; ticking starts on soundtrack, continuing behind as the camera booms up over building, follows a scurrying figure down alley, dropping closer as man opens trunk of parked car, drops bomb inside, runs off as laughing couple comes from bar, climbs in, and drives off. Camera follows, holding car in full shot, picking up Heston and Leigh walking arm in arm, dialogue establishing their recent marriage. We pick up car going through border checkpoint, drunken girl complaining of ticking in her head. Car drives off, Heston and Leigh pass checkpoint, dialogue with guard conveys Heston's Mexican-government status. Newlywed banter, Heston kisses Leigh, as bomb explodes offscreen.

It was technically an all but impossible shot, depending on precise timing, not only from Janet and me, the couple in the car and the passing extras, but most critically of all, from the boom grip (the man running the boom) and of course the camera operator. Today, a remote-controlled camera on the end of a Python boom would make the shot far easier to prepare and not nearly as hard to shoot. Then, it was a wonder. They started lighting in mid afternoon and had it ready to rehearse when darkness came. We shot on it all night, with various things going wrong, most often the actor playing the IRS guard at the border crossing. He had only a line or two, but it must have been terrifying for him to see

the whole company bearing down on him from a block away. When we'd get to him, he'd flub his lines. At last, as dawn began to lighten in the east, Orson said to him patiently, All right, let's do it once more. This time, if you aren't sure of your line, just move your lips-we can dub it in later. But whatever you do, please God don't say, 'I'm sorry, Mr. Welles." That's the take that's in the movie.

More than half the picture was shot at night in the alleys, canals, and crumbling corners of Venice, a curious homage to the Italian original. Parts of it look like a Salvador Dali landscape. One night, preparing a showdown scene in a hotel lobby between my crusading Mexican prosecutor and Orson's corrupt cop, he was fuming at the slowness of the lumbering elevator. Suddenly, he stopped, transfixed. You could almost see the cartoon light bulb glow over his head. Chuck," he said, as the elevator finally sank to lobby level, "would you see if you can run up the stairs to the third floor before this thing gets up there?" I did. (It was a really slow elevator.)

Orson then laid out the scene with me arguing with him in the lobby, he bundling his cronies into the elevator and starting up, talking all the way, only to open the door and find me waiting at the top. Again, not tough to do today, but a real killer shot in 1957, with light and sound cables hanging three stories down the elevator shaft. Later that same night, Orson and I were peeing into a drain down in the basement of the hotel. He looked at the dank cellar clutter around us and said, "Wouldn't this be a great place to do that scene in the file room with you and Joe Calleia?" "It sure would," I said, zipping up. "But isn't that scheduled for Friday, back in the studio? They'll have the set built by now. Besides, Joe isn't even called tonight. It's 2 A.M.; he'll be dead asleep. We've got three more pages to shoot up on the third floor anyway. That'll take the rest of the night." "Nonsense!" said Orson, his eyes gleaming. "I can wrap that scene in two set-ups. It'll take them that long to get Joe down here anyway. He'll be better if he's confused-that's what the scene's about." He was right. He finished the upstairs scene before Joe got down to Venice, muzzy with sleep. He stumbled through the scene, Orson harrying him-it played wonderfully well. So did the cellar.

He was also very good about sharpening your focus on the scene you were doing that day. Even with a great part, you're not likely to have more than three or four really great scenes, which you get to work on for maybe a week of the whole shoot. A lot of the time you're getting on and off horses, or in and out of cars, or someone else's good scenes. Orson could somehow persuade you that this next set-up happened to be one of the key shots in the whole movie. Though I don't think he was a great actor, he could give you an actor's insight into the process. He told me something very casually once that's been permanently valuable to me. You know, Chuck," he said as we finished looking at several reels of dailies, "you should work on your tenor range. All of us with these deep bass voices tend to rumble along like organs. You've got to use the high end, too. The tenor range has a knife edge; your bass is a velvet hammer. Use them both." I've tried to do that ever since.

We finished the film early on April Fool's Day, killing Orson on the junk-littered bank of Venice's solitary canal, just before the sun rose. We were one night over our thirty-day schedule and $31,000 over our $900,000 budget. We celebrated over ham and eggs in an all-night coffee shop, with a bottle of Lanson champagne Orson had in his trailer. I lifted my glass to him. "I think it'll be a hell of a picture, Orson. You did waste some time, and a little film, trying to conceal the fact that you had the best part. I knew that. The movie is about the fall of Captain Quinlan." He looked at me quizzically for a moment, then rumbled with laughter. "You're quite right, my boy-that was stupid of me." He burst out in a happy roar: "Well, now I don't have to worry about it in the cutting room."

Touch of Evil, as it was eventually titled, was released in 1958, to only fair business but excellent notices and a couple of festival prizes. Over the years *Evil* has become a cult film, much admired, as it should be. It's certainly not a great film, like *Citizen*

Kane, but it is immensely imaginative and provocative—among the finest few films of a hugely gifted filmmaker. *Cahier du Cinema* probably got it right when they called it "the best B movie ever made." I'm very proud of the film and of working for Orson. I'm also proud I was responsible for his directing the last film he made in this country, or for a major studio. I'd have worked for him again, given a chance. What do I think of Orson Welles? I think he was the most talented man I ever met, which doesn't mean I think he was the best actor or the best director. I don't. But whatever we mean by "talent"—I suppose it's a label we put on the capacity to create art—Orson had, in spades.

Maybe he had too much of it. It often seemed so easy for him to come up with a marvelous solution for a scene-almost off the top of his head. Maybe he sometimes only used the top of his talent and then got bored with the endgame. It's been said that Hollywood owed Orson more than they gave him; perhaps he owed them more, too. He never lost his spirit, though. In the last year of his life, he was holding court in the Bistro, in Beverly Hills, when an intense young man approached him, almost genuflecting in awe at his work, particularly *Kane*. "There's one thing, though… I've always w-wondered about," the man stammered, abashed. "In the last scene, when Kane's dying and he… he drops the glass ball, you know, and he says 'R-Rosebud'? Ahh, there's no one else in the room. So how… how do they know those're his last w-words?" Orson looked at him a moment, then put a massive hand on the back of his neck and drew him close. You must never," he rumbled softly, "repeat one word of what you have just told me to a living soul."

Lawrence French: "Orson Welles Memo on *Touch of Evil"*. The text quoted here is followed by the entire 58-page memo.

In 1998, after 40 years, the world finally got to see Orson Welles TOUCH OF EVIL as the director intended it. And unlike some other Welles films that have been restored, rediscovered or re-edited, (i.e. DON QUIXOTE, OTHELLO and IT'S ALL TRUE), the changes in TOUCH OF EVIL were carried out with a scrupulous attention to detail, that is truly in the spirit of Orson Welles. Of course, no one can say for certain, just how Welles would have edited his movie, but as can be seen in reading Welles' long memo of detailed editing instructions, producer Rick Schmidlin and editor Walter Murch have come up with the closest approximation that we're ever likely to get.

Why TOUCH OF EVIL needed to be re-edited in the first place is a rather complex tale, that requires some background. In 1957, Universal took the film out of Welles hands, after he had spent about three months in the cutting room. As Welles was the first to admit, he worked very slowly while editing. "I could work forever on the editing of a film," Welles told Cahiers du Cinema in 1958. "I don't know why it takes me so much time, but that has the effect of arousing the ire of the producers, who then take the film out of my hands."

After completing a rough cut, in July of 1957, Welles left the editing of the film to Universal staff editor Aaron Stell. That fall, when Welles returned and was shown the results of the studio's re-cut, he wrote a heart-felt 58 page letter to Universal's head of production, Edward Muhl. Unfortunately, many of Welles suggested changes went unheeded, and TOUCH OF EVIL was eventually released in February, 1958 in an aborted version that ran only 93 minutes. The 93 minute version was all that was available for 18 years-until 1976, when Universal put a longer 108 minute version they accidentally uncovered in their archives into circulation.

Of course, back in 1976, Welles was still alive, and in retrospect, it seems rather unfortunate that Universal never bothered to consult him about making changes to TOUCH OF EVIL. However, at the time, the video and laserdisc market had yet to emerge, and the idea of a director's cut was virtually unheard of. Although, when Universal released the longer version of TOUCH OF EVIL on video, they mistakenly called it a "complete uncut and restored version." This, however was certainly not the case, because while the long

version had 15 minutes of additional footage, including three important scenes directed by Welles, it also contained more footage directed by Harry Keller. Universal hired Keller to shoot clarification scenes, after Welles had been removed from the picture. Why Universal executives would go to the expense of shooting these additional scenes and not include them in the released picture (the 93 minute version), has never been adequately explained. In any case, neither of the two versions of TOUCH OF EVIL that have been in circulation for the past 40 years are what Orson Welles intended. To correct that, the re-editing was undertaken.

Part of the impetus behind the re-edit seems to be a vast interest and re-discovery of Orson Welles work, which is somewhat ironic, since Welles had so much difficulty financing projects while he was alive. For instance, it seems rather strange that Welles' unfinished films and screenplays are still coming to light, (along with films that feature Welles as a character, like RKO 291 and THE CRADLE WILL ROCK) - while during his lifetime, he couldn't find any financing for making movies.

The possibility of re-editing TOUCH OF EVIL began in 1992, when Welles scholar Jonathan Rosenbaum published excerpts from Welles' memo in FILM QUARTERLY. Subsequently, the memo came to the attention of producer Rick Schmidlin, who had long been a fan of TOUCH OF EVIL. Schmidlin was initially interested in doing a laserdisc version of TOUCH OF EVIL that would include commentary by Charlton Heston and Janet Leigh, as well as documenting the different versions of the film. However, Universal executives were so sold on the merits of re-cutting the film, they deemed a theatrical re-release would be in order.

What should be specifically emphasized about the re-editing of TOUCH OF EVIL, is that when Welles wrote his memo in December of 1957, he had been completely barred from the editing of the film. Therefore, the intention of his memo was to get Universal executives to make the changes he wanted-even though Welles knew he would not be allowed to supervise those changes. That's why Welles' memo contained such detailed instructions-so Universal's staff editors could implement the editing changes without Welles actually being there. That is also why, even though Welles is no longer alive, the cutting could be carried out 40 years later, and still follow Welles wishes fairly closely. Welles wrote his memo so any experienced film editor could implement the changes, although he was fully aware that Universal might not make them as perfectly as if he where there guiding the cutting in person. He wrote to Charlton Heston, hoping to enlist his aid in getting the changes made, telling him, "that memo represented my notion of the minimum number of improvements necessary. It's my fear that (Universal's) execution of these changes will leave something to be desired, since they may be acting without much enthusiasm, but most importantly, because they will be working in great haste." In 1958 Universal elected to ignore most of Welles requests. But in 1998, Walter Murch-one of the finest editors in the business-was able to implement them with the kind of enthusiasm that Welles felt might be lacking from those in charge at Universal.

The end results, are well worth the 40-year wait, although they are surprising subtle. There is no new footage on view, nor any attempt to convert the original mono soundtrack to stereo-so none of the changes jump out at a viewer familiar with the previous versions. However, there is little doubt that the film plays better than ever before.

Besides re-editing the film, the entire negative was beautifully restored, by Universal's in house preservation expert, Bob O'Neil. Welles originally shot most of the movie at night, on locations in Venice, California and (along with his cinematographer, Russell Metty), got the kind of rich black and white, high contrast look that has become such a Welles trademark. So even if the film hadn't been re-edited to Welles specifications, it would now be well worth seeing, solely for the pleasure of experiencing its images so gorgeously restored.

It's often been said that Welles was far ahead of his time, so it may be that only now-40 some years after it was made, that TOUCH OF EVIL can truly be appreciated. The complete text of Welles memo follows, along with notations (in bold) on the changes were made to the three different versions of the film.

THE SPRING 2022 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS #44:

All films in the series but two (*Notorious* and *The Power of the* Dog) are available from Criterion or Netflix: **c** after a title indicates it is available on Criterion, **p**=Amazon Prime, **p$**=Amazon Prime with an extra $4 fee. *The Power of the Dog* is available, for now, only on Netflix. *Notorious* is available on FlixFilm (low-resolution versions are free on YouTube and Tubi.). All four subscription services let you cancel at any time, so you should have access to all 24 films for well under $100. *The Gunfighter* is on Amazon Prime and, in low rez, free on Tubi. Nine of the films—all with "UB" after the title—are available free to anyone with a UB email account via the UB Library's Swank and Kanopy portals. Five films are available only on non-UB streaming services: *Le Corbeau, The Gunfighter, Naked, Salesman* and *The Power of the Dog*.(The Swank titles will be available at UB's Library for a year; the Kanopy titles for 3 years.)

Feb 1: 1921 Victor Sjostrom, ***The Phantom Carriage*** c UB-Kanopy
Feb 8: 1934 Frank Capra ***It Happened One Night*** c p$ UB-Swank
Feb 15: 1941 John Huston ***The Maltese Falcon*** p$ UB-Swank
Feb 22: 1943 Henri-Georges Clouzot ***Le Corbeau*** c
Mar 1: 1946 Alfred Hitchcock ***Notorious*** FlixFling, YouTube, UB-Swank, Tubi (free)
Mar 8: 1950 Henry King, ***The Gunfighter*** *p$,* Tubi (free), YouTube (free)
Mar 15: 1958 Orson Welles ***Touch of Evil*** p$ UB-Swank
Mar 29: 1962 Yasujiro Ozu ***An Autumn Afternoon*** *c p$b* UB Kanopy
Apr 5: 1973 Federico Fellini ***Amarcord*** *c p$* UB Kanopy
Apr 12: 1993 Mike Leigh ***Naked*** c
Apr 19: 2002 Phillip Noyce ***Rabbit-Proof Fence*** p$ UB-Kanopy
Apr 26: 2016 Asghar Farhadi ***Salesman*** *p*
May 3: 2021: Jane Campion ***The Power of the Dog*** *NETFLIX*
May 10: 2011 Martin Scorsese ***Hugo*** *p$* UB-Kanopy

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Janet