

## Get Out, 2017 Directed by Jordan Peele

Get Out is a mash-up of a Horror movie, a dramady, SciFi, a psychological thriller with Hitchcockian overtones, and a family drama. It borrows troupes from all of these Hollywood clichés and turns them back on themselves because the subtext to all of this is a very clever way of looking at micro-aggressions within a context of middle class/liberal racism. It brings to mind for me Tom Wolfe's short story called *Radical Chic*, which was about how Leonard Bernstein and his family fell into this trap.

This is primarily, though, a Monster movie which uses the tropes of that genre plus tropes of SciFi and zombie films. The English word monster comes from the Latin *Monstrum*, which was originally understood as a **divine messenger** and is originally derived from the Latin *monstrare*, which means to “**show**,” or to “**reveal**.”

In interviews, Jordan Peele who has stated that he loves Monster movies has said that the motivation for this movie came from his perception that no one has used a Monster movie as a subtext for racism before and he specifically wanted to do that.

- **Nosferatu**, 1922 FW Murnau – vampire made to look like a stereotypical Jew and was a dog whistle to the “blame everything on Jews” Nationalists in Germany at the time.
- **Metropolis**, 1927 Fritz Lang – The female robot represented a liberated female that went against the idealized mother/wife of the time.
- **King Kong**, 1933 Marian C. Cooper – Fear of The Other, specifically African Americans
- **The Day The Earth Stood Still**, 1951, Robert Wise – Fear of The Other, science
- **Gojira**, 1954 Ishiro Honda – Gojira was the first Godzilla movie and represents an embodiment and fear of nuclear power & unbridled science
- **Invasion of the Body Snatchers**, 1956 Don Siegel – Fear of communism
- **Attack of the 50 Foot Woman**, 1958 Nathan Juran – Fear of feminism
- **Wasp Woman**, 1959 Roger Corman – Fear of feminism & science
- **Night of the Living Dead**, 1968 George Romero – zombie movie where nuclear power is “let lose unabated” The hero is an African American who is, ironically, shot by police as he emerges from the house where he saved some folks from the zombie attack. The police shoot him without much regard, thinking he was a zombie. This is eerily prescient of what is going on now.
- **Alien**, 1979 Ridley Scott – Fear of The Other

Horror movies always have a subtext and are metaphors for something else. The monster tropes are what carries the story along, but they are simply metaphors for typically a fear of feminism, communism, unchecked science in the form of nuclear radiation gone wild, The Other, other nationalities or cultures. **Get Out** depicts the perniciousness of racism, but a particular form of “liberal” racism where African

Americans are accepted but at arm's length and where they "fit in" only if they conform to the majority white culture's depiction of them that makes them "safe" to be around whites.

One of the observations I had with this movie is how well this movie focused on what African-Americans feel like when they are in the minority – not just at parties, but also in society in general. Note Rod's comment about "White people love to have sex slaves and shit." Compare this comment to "grandma's" comment to Chris that "they treat us like family," which is the epitome of white liberalism but is also extremely paternalistic.

#### **Jordan Peele Commentary that came with the DVD**

- ❖ The first scene is a direct tip to **Halloween** & it is Andre that is in this scene.
- ❖ Overt references to **Halloween** and **The Shining**.
- ❖ Rose is woke enough to know that her father is racially clumsy which allows the audience to side with her.
- ❖ Additionally, Rose defends her man with the cop in the deer scene which is another way she gets the audience to side with her WHEN in fact, she is keeping the ID from the cop so that there is no record of him being there.
- ❖ Rose is woke, but she uses her wokeness as a cover for racism.
- ❖ Peele describes liberal elite hipness as the focus of racism that was called out by Tom Wolfe in **Radical Chic**.
- ❖ Peele pointed out that micro aggressions are a "victory" compared to more overt kinds of racism.
- ❖ Reference the "black mold in the basement," line.
- ❖ The motive for having it in for African-Americans is referenced when the father describes how his father lost out to going to the Olympics when he went up against Jesse Owens.
- ❖ Hats are there to hide the surgical scares.
- ❖ Chris cannot connect with "a brother" because he's now brainwashed and white.
- ❖ Peele pointed out that African-Americans lack representation in film or their experiences on film, and "the sunken place" is a metaphor for the marginalization of African-Americans.
- ❖ Note how Chris' perception that something strange is going on is brushed aside and he is asked to disregard his intuition as not valid, when in fact it is.
- ❖ Chris risks the abandonment of yet another family, which makes his leaving the way he did even more powerful and harrowing.
- ❖ All African-American people "know" each other – Peele admits he inserted this troupe on purpose.
- ❖ The African-American experience is Peele's take on the Frankenstein movie and is a subtext for a modern form of slavery.
- ❖ Peele used the movie's metaphor as a way of saying that African-Americans are valued for their skin, culture and what you can do for

the mainstream white culture, but not for their individual personhood.

- ❖ Note the metaphor for Chris' picking of the chair cotton is what saves him from slavery rather than what keeps him in slavery.
- ❖ In the deleted scenes section, Rod (Lil Rel Howery) who was the TSA guy who is a stand-up comic in real life gave some various different comments when Chris gets in the car at the very end. Along with "We are T S fucking A," two of the endings that weren't used were:
  - "All right, no more white girls for you!!"
  - "Think she voted for Trump?"