



O my adored wife

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CAST

Klaus Kinski John Alexander

Annabella Incontrera Liz

Sydney Chaplin Mr. Brown (as Sidney Chaplin)

Christiane Krüger Christine (as Kristiane Kruger)

Günther Stoll Inspector Stevens

Barbara Nelli Alice

Gastone Pescucci Peter

Luciano Spadoni Inspector Gordon

Carlo Marcolino Servant (as Marcolini Carlo)

Claudio Trionfi

Ignazio Dolce (as Ignazio Dolci)

And with the participation of

Margaret Lee Helen Brown / Helen Alexander

CREW

Directed by **Riccardo Freda** (as Robert Hampton)

Produced by **Oreste Coltellacci** and **Horst Wendlandt** (uncredited)

Story by **Romano Migliorini**, **Giovanbattista Mussetto** and **Lucio Fulci**

Screenplay by **Riccardo Freda** (as Robert Hampton) and **Paul Hengge**

Director of Photography **Gábor Pogány**

Film Editors **Anna Amedei** and **Jutta Hering**

Music by **Nora Orlandi** (as Joan Cristian)

Conducted by **Robby Poitevin** (as Roby Poitevin)

Production Design and Costumes **Luciano Spadoni**



A BASTARD CHILD: DOUBLE FACE

by Neil Mitchell

Equal parts krimi and giallo, Italian writer-director Riccardo Freda's 1969 psychological thriller, *Double Face*, may not be the prime example of either sub-genre it emerged from but it is an engrossing watch, as notable for its production as its onscreen action. Released at the time under a number of different titles – *A Doppia Faccia* ('double face') in Italy, *Das Gesicht im Dunkeln* ('the face in the dark') in Germany, *Liz et Helen* ('Liz and Helen') in France and *Puzzle of Horrors* in the US – this late entry onto Freda's film-making CV would also subsequently re-appear in France in 1976 under the title *Chaleur et jouissance* ('heat and pleasure'), with added hardcore sex scenes featuring the French sexploitation and horror film actress, Alice Arno. *Double Face's* rather tangled and convoluted release history is unintentionally fitting for a film straddling the line between two distinct but spiritually linked sub-genres whose respective stylistic traits both included labyrinthine plotting, stock characters and narrative twists that often required a healthy suspension of disbelief on the part of the viewer.

For Freda, *Double Face* came towards the end of a lengthy directorial career that began in 1942 with the historical drama, *Don Cesare di Bazan*, and would come to a conclusion almost forty years later with the entertaining mystery/horror, *Murder Obsession* (1981). With over a dozen screenwriting credits to his name before *Don Cesare di Bazan*, the multi-talented former sculptor and art critic would write, direct and occasionally edit over sixty features during a working life that lasted well over fifty years. Freda's output would take in sword & sandal, horror, giallo, thriller and spy films, with the eclecticism of *Sins of Rome* (*Spartaco*, 1953), based on the life story of Spartacus, the Barbara Steele starring Gothic shocker, *The Ghost* (*Lo spettrò*, 1963), and the Eurospy romp, *Mexican Slayride* (*Coplan ouvre le feu à Mexico*, 1967), indicative of Freda's genre-hopping tendencies. Having directed the Spaghetti Western *Death Does Not Count the Dollars* (*La morte non conta i dollari*) in 1967, Freda's next project came about as the direct result of financial decisions made by the West Germany-based subsidiary of the Danish company Rialto Films. At that time, Rialto Films were looking to reduce production costs on their krimi series of films adapted from or inspired by the works of British writer Edgar Wallace. With box office interest, perhaps unsurprisingly, beginning to wane after more than twenty-five entries into their krimi series, the decision was made by Rialto Films to enter into co-productions with



Italian producers to share the financial outlay and (hopefully) revive audience interest by expanding the target market to attract fans of giallo movies.

The first of these joint Italian/West German efforts – which subsequently included Massimo Dallamano's *What Have You Done to Solange?* (*Cosa avete fatto a Solange?*, 1972) and Umberto Lenzi's *Seven Blood-Stained Orchids* (*Sette orchidee macchiate di rosso*, 1972) – *Double Face* was produced by Rialto's Horst Wendlandt and Oreste Coltellacci, whose relatively meagre credits in the Italian film industry were dwarfed by those of his prolific German counterpart. Expanding an original treatment drafted by Romano Migliorini, Gianbattista Mussetto and Lucio Fulci, Freda co-wrote *Double Face*'s screenplay with Austrian screenwriter Paul Hengge. Hengge's decidedly mixed bag of writing credits would include the screenplay for the German comedy *Spanking at School* (*Klassenkeule*, Franz Josef Gottlieb, 1969), the original story for the thriller *The Spy Who Never Was* (*Tod eines Fremden*, Reza Badiya'Uri Massad, 1976) and the provision of additional material for Agnieszka Holland's superior war drama *Europa Europa* (1990). In an interview in 1994, Fulci stated that he disliked Freda and Hengge's finished version of the original treatment, claiming, somewhat harshly, that the director had 'completely crushed it down to a pulp' before adding that by that time Freda 'just didn't care anymore'. In the same year that *Double Face* was released, Fulci, along with Roberto Gianviti and Jose Luis Martinez Molla, also expanded the original treatment into what became Fulci's first giallo movie, *Una Sull'altra* (*One on top of The Other*), aka *Perversion Story*. Garnering more attention both at the time and subsequently, *Una Sull'altra* has been cited as a precursor to erotic thrillers such as *Basic Instinct* (Paul Verhoeven, 1992) and *Body of Evidence* (Uli Edel, 1993). With the same narrative framework, *Double Face* can also be seen as a precursor to those and other subsequent 'erotic thrillers' such as Nic Roeg's *Bad Timing* (1980) and *Body Heat* (Lawrence Kasdan, 1981), despite the film not having the same box office or cultural impact of any of its spiritual and thematic siblings.

The production team for *Double Face*, which was shot between 20th January and 15th March 1969, included Jutta Hering – who worked on several krimis, including *Room 13* (*Zimmer 13*, Harald Reinl, 1964) – as co-editor with Anna Amedei, and the multi-tasking Luciano Spadoni, production designer on *Phenomena* (Dario Argento, 1985) and *King Solomon's Mines* (J. Lee Thompson, 1985), handling those same duties and the film's costume design as well as portraying the role of Inspector Gordon onscreen. Italian singer, composer and pianist, Nora Orlandi (under the pseudonym Joan Christian), provided *Double Face*'s evocative, giallo-esque score and the film was shot by the prolific Hungarian-born Italian cinematographer Gábor Pogány. A regular collaborator with Freda, the award winning Pogány worked on more than one hundred films as cinematographer, including Roberto Rossellini's *Joan of Arc at the Stake* (*Giovanna d'Arco al rogo*, 1954), Franco Zeffirelli's

Camping (1958), and Vittorio De Sica's *The Last Judgement* (*Il giudizio universale*, 1961). Shot at Cinecittà in Rome and on the streets of London, *Double Face* featured an international cast with leading roles going to British actress Margaret Lee, the German film and television stars Günther Stoll and Christiane Krüger and Italian actress Annabella Incontrera. *Double Face*'s onscreen trump card but off-screen poisoned chalice was, however, Klaus Kinski, who took on the lead role of John Alexander, an unhappily married millionaire unwittingly drawn into a web of murder, paranoia and betrayal. Much has been written over the years regarding Kinski's magnetic onscreen presence, 'difficult' on-set demeanour and private life dogged by disturbing familial allegations and erratic behaviour. Acting in the last of the sixteen career-establishing krimis he appeared in, the gifted but volatile Kinski proved, as he repeatedly did, to be a disruptive influence to the director. Dubbed 'the crown prince of assholes' by Freda, Kinski only settled his 'creative differences' with the Italian film-maker and returned to the production he had walked off upon learning that Freda was ploughing ahead regardless and shooting Kinski's scenes with a double.

Predominantly cast as a wild-eyed villain, psychotic killer or some other shady type in Rialto's krimis, Kinski's character in *Double Face* is ostensibly calmer and more ambiguous in nature due to Freda and Hengge's audience-teasing narrative. Aloof, at times cruel and possibly mad, John Alexander is cannily written and played in such a way as to keep the viewer guessing as to whether the character that is their eyes and ears to the events playing out is in fact its main antagonist. As well as offering the actor the chance to play (relatively) against type, his casting also reunited Kinski onscreen with Lee, in one of eleven films the pair appeared in together from the mid-sixties to the early seventies. With their onscreen partnership starting with the Edgar Wallace-inspired Anglo-West German coproduction, *Circus of Fear* (John Llewellyn Moxey, 1966), and coming to an end with the giallo *Slaughter Hotel* (*La bestia uccide a sangue freddo*, Fernando Di Leo, 1971), Kinski and Lee would forge an off-screen friendship that lasted for a number of years. Cast as John Alexander's wife, Helen, Lee later stated that she didn't have huge recollections of the shoot for Freda's film. The actress, popular in Italian movies of the '60s and '70s, did state in the same interview, however, that Kinski's assertion in his autobiography that the pair had sex was a complete fabrication and had left her feeling disappointed. Whatever the off-screen ups and downs Kinski and Lee's friendship went through, they pale into comparison to those experienced by their respective characters in *Double Face*. For John and Helen Alexander, their rapidly disintegrating marriage is just the starting point that leads the couple, John especially, down a rabbit hole of deceit, mystery and death.

Mis-sold to the German market as being based on Edgar Wallace's novel *A Face in the Night*, in actuality *Double Face* bears no resemblance to its supposed source material. A pacy eighty-minute tale, shot through with a delirious quality that reflects John Alexander's





deteriorating state of mind, *Double Face* overcomes its clear budgetary constraints thanks to its solid cast and the story's engrossing guessing-game premise. The film's tight budget is most overtly felt during the Alexanders' early, superimposed, honeymoon scene and the car crash sequence that follows relatively soon after and acts as the main catalyst for the narrative. The superimposition of the Alexanders into a wintry skiing resort and the cut from an actual car to a scale model are, to put it politely, noticeably shoddy by any standards. However, if you can overlook Eros Baccicchi's decidedly un-special effects, there's a lot else going on to enjoy in *Double Face*. Recounted in flashback, the narrative revolves around whether or not John is responsible for the aforementioned car crash that results in Helen dying in a ball of fire just two years into their marriage. Described by her disapproving father as being 'like her mother... rich, moody and wicked', Helen's unconcealed lesbian relationship with her friend Liz (Incontrera) would possibly be motive enough for the cuckolded John to commit murder. That John stands to inherit both a fortune and control of Helen's father's company compounds the police's suspicions and marks him out as the prime suspect once it is ascertained that the crash may not have been just an accident.

Within a few weeks of Helen's funeral, John's life takes on a *Vertigo*-esque quality involving Krüger's free-spirited, sexually provocative Christine, discovered by the grieving widower taking a shower in the Alexanders' palatial residence. Disconcerted but intrigued, John follows the mysterious interloper into the heart of London, with the city moodily shot to appear dark, debauched and dangerous. *Double Face's* wildest sequence follows, with John tracking Christine down to an abandoned warehouse that is the location for a party that recalls the era's art Happenings. Amid jousting motorcyclists, pot-smoking scenesters and half-naked females, John is exposed to *Double Face's* other major narrative catalyst: a pornographic short film featuring Christine and what appears to be his wife, Helen, wearing a full-face veil. The pornographic film-within-a-film in *Double Face* is – either by chance or design – more than just a plot device. With several characters commenting on the 'disgusting' nature of the material shown it becomes a reflexive comment on the krimi and giallo sub-genres, which both contained titillating or blatantly erotic scenes and prurient sequences involving sex, violence and/or sexual violence. Apparently shot only a few days previously, the pornographic film throws John's already delicate psychological state into further turmoil. Is Helen alive? Whose body was in the car if she is? Is Christine involved in some nefarious plan to drive John over the edge for reasons unbeknownst to him? These questions consume John as he falls deeper into a swamp-like mystery that threatens to either permanently damage his psychological make-up or end with him imprisoned for murder.

With its dogged police officers, masked villains and tape/video recorders rubbing shoulders with era-establishing fashions, unsympathetic characters and narrative obsession with sex,

death and criminal gain, *Double Face* succeeds in the tricky act of melding the krimi and the giallo. The differences between the respective sub-genres highlighted in *Double Face* are assimilated elements within it rather than jarring ones, with the representation of women being the clearest example. Where the female characters in krimis were largely 'damsels-in-distress', in *Double Face* they are much more in keeping with the complex and devious 'femme fatales' that crop up in gialli. Alternately, the explicit violence and nudity often seen in giallo movies wasn't anywhere near as pronounced in krimis and is largely absent in *Double Face*, but would be noticeable by the time of Lenzi's *Seven Blood-Stained Orchids* a few years later. *Double Face's* assimilation or jettisoning of the sub-genre traits that came to define the krimi and the giallo place it, like Fulci's *Perversion Story*, as the bastard child of both. The stylistic traits associated with the krimi and giallo would continue to bleed into each other over the decades before blossoming into the aforementioned 'erotic thriller' sub-genre of the '80s and '90s. For admirers of Brian De Palma's *Body Double* (1984), Wolfgang Petersen's *Shattered* (1991) and, more recently, David Fincher's *Gone Girl* (2014) among many others, *Double Face* will hit all the right thematic notes.

Neil Mitchell is a writer and editor based in Brighton, East Sussex. He is the author of Devil's Advocates: Carrie for Auteur Publishing and the editor of the London, Melbourne and Sydney editions of Intellect Books' World Film Locations series.



ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Double Face / A doppia faccia is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with Italian and English mono audio. Scanning and restoration work was completed at L'Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna. The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan. Thousands of instances of dirt, debris, scratches, picture instability and other instances of film wear were repaired or removed through a combination of digital restoration tools and techniques. The mono Italian and English language tracks were remastered from the optical sound negatives. The audio synch will appear slightly loose against the picture, due to the fact that the dialogue was recorded entirely in post-production, as per the production standards of the period.

The film was graded on Digital Vision's Nucoda Film Master at R3Store Studios, London.

All original materials used in this restoration were accessed from Surf Film.

Restoration supervised by James White, Arrow Films

L'Immagine Ritrovata:

Simone Arminio, Gilles Barberis, Valeria Bigongiali, Julia Mettenleiter, Alessia Navantieri, Charlotte Oddo, Caterina Palpacelli, Davide Pozzi, Elena Tammaccaro, Giandomenico Zeppa

R3Store Studios:

Gerry Gedge, Jo Griffin, Nathan Leaman-Hill, Rich Watson, Jenny Collins



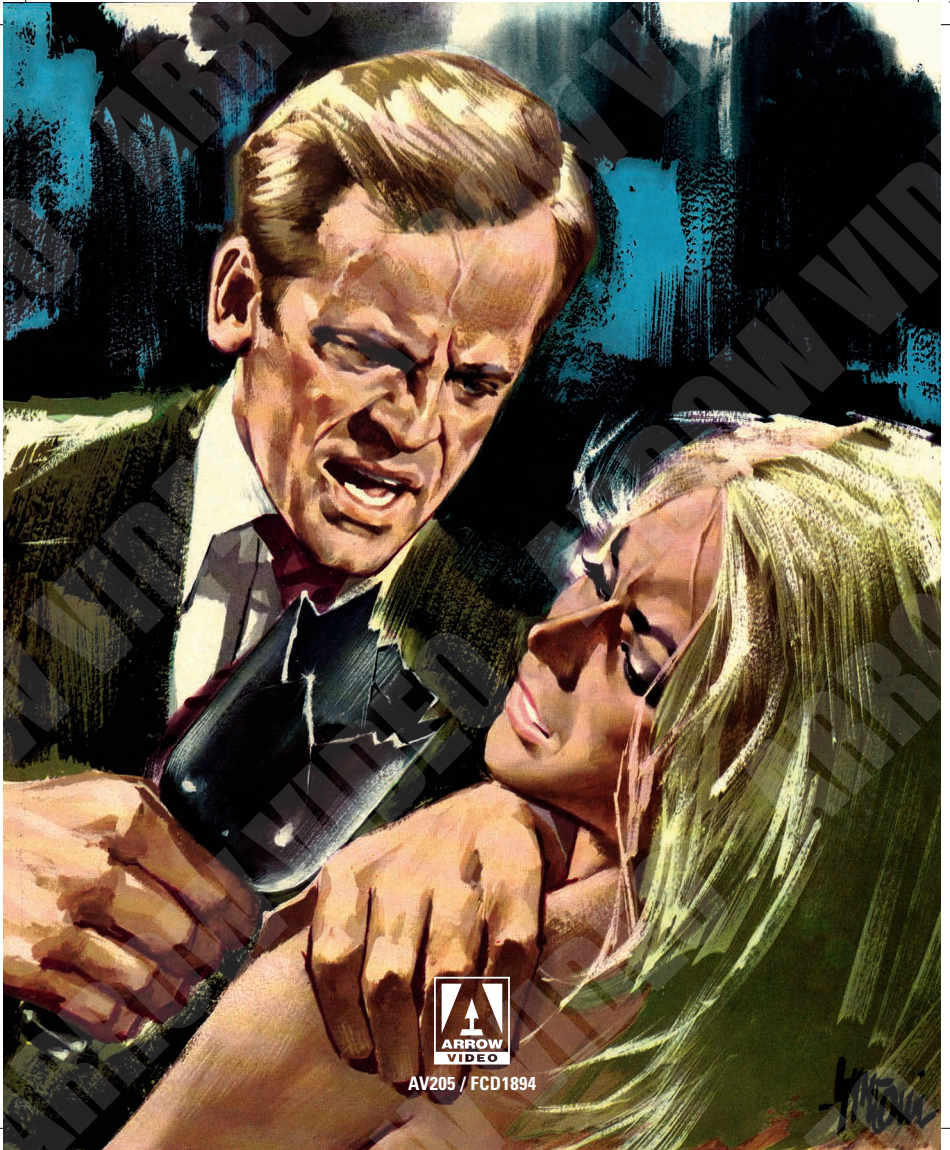


PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **Michael Mackenzie**
Executive Producers **Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni**
Technical Producer **James White**
QC Manager **Nora Mehenni**
Production Assistant **Nick Mastrini**
Blu-ray Mastering and Subtitling **The Engine House Media Services**
Artist **Graham Humphreys**
Design **Obviously Creative**

SPECIAL THANKS

**Alex Agran, Jon Casbard, Mantio Gomasasca, Graham Humphreys,
David James, Tim Lucas, Neil Mitchell, Marc Morris, Nora Orlandi,
Christian Ostermeier, Amy Simmons**



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