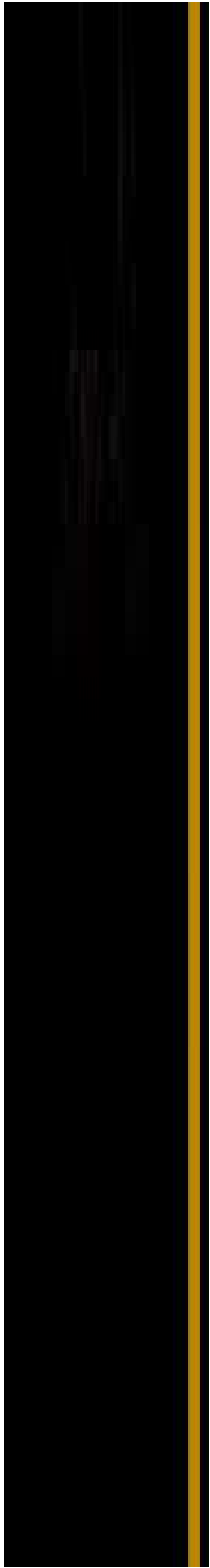


A vertical navigation menu on a black background. It features several icons and text links. From top to bottom: a book icon with the text 'Book Reviews by Author by Title'; a DVD disc icon with the text 'DVD Reviews by Title'; a CD/LP icon with the text 'CD/LP Reviews'; a DVD disc icon with the text 'DVD Film Music'; a film strip icon with the text 'Isolated Scores on DVD and Laserdisc'; a film strip icon with the text 'Related Links'; and a photo of a man in a suit with the text 'Exclusive Interviews &amp; Profiles'. A thin yellow vertical bar is on the right side of the menu.





## DVD: *Committee, The* (1968)

**Film:** Very Good

**DVD Transfer:** Good

**DVD Extras :** Good

**Label/Studio:** Eclectic DVD / MVD Visual

**Catalog #:** EDD-02056

**Region:** 0 (NTSC)

**Released:** September 13, 2005

**Genre:** Experimental / Short Film

**Synopsis:** After killing a man, a rebel is sent to a retreat where he awaits judgement by a murky committee of peers.



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**Directed by:** Peter Sykes  
**Screenplay by:** Max Steuer, Peter Sykes  
**Music by:** Pink Floyd (score), The Crazy World of Arthur Brown (song)  
**Produced by:** Max Steuer  
**Cast:** Paul Jones, Tom Kempinski, Robert Lloyd, Pauline Munroe, and Jimmy Gardner.

**Film Length:** 61 mins

**Process/Ratio:** 1.33:1

**Black & White**

**Anamorphic DVD:** No

**Languages:** English Mono

**Subtitles:**

#### **Special Features :**

Interviews with co-writer/ producer Max Steuer and co-writer/director Peter Sykes (51:07) / Bonus CD featuring "The Committee" song newly re-recorded by Paul Jones and Max Steuer

#### **Comments :**

Already headlined by Manfred Mann's Paul Jones and an original score by Pink Floyd, **The Committee** is a sometimes surreal, often abstract allegory on errant human behaviour being curtailed by a blandly named committee that's been secretly convened after a hitchhiker decapitated his ride, and stitched the head back on to bring the confused ex-cadaver back to life.

Max Steuer's bizarre short story, which he co-adapted with director Peter Sykes, uses the mechanics of the jury system where peers are selected by blind lot. The group later convene at a fancy retreat, where they await further details on why they've been summoned from their blah lives. The killer, simply billed as Central Figure (Paul Jones) has also been summoned from his job as a draftsman, and slowly begins to suspect his rebellious 'prank' in the glades is the reason he's been added to the group - which includes his Victim (Tom Kempinski), who may or may not recognized the man who severed his head using his Mercedes' bonnet.

[ENDING SPOILER]

Now, already one has suspicions as to where the story might progress, although the finale is far less graphic and disturbing than expected. When all is said and done, Central Figure is treated to a lengthy one-on-one discussion of his malfeasance with the Committee Director (Robert Lloyd), and while sections of their dialogue is very cryptic, it eventually settles into a stern warning to learn from the bad deed, and conform to the wishes of the committee. Central Figure is eventually released, but one quickly suspects he remains unrepentant, and harbors the same intolerance that had the Victim lose his head.

[END OF SPOILER ALERT]

Most of the short film's dialogue is rhetorical nonsense, with a few absurd statements thrown in to keep viewers amused, but Sykes' decision to film an hour-long script extends already slow and odd scenes into material quite ponderous, although editor Peter Elliott (**Scream and Scream Again**) establishes some momentum with striking cinematography by Ian Wilson (**Images, Fright, Backbeat**).

The whites are bleached out, the grays quite velvety, and the compositions very artful, and Sykes also makes good use of close-ups and minor details, and exploits the desolation of the partially destroyed clock tower where Central Figure and Committee Director have their tete a tete.

Pink Floyd's score is quite minimal (it probably amounts to less than 20 minutes of minimalist cues), although the cue that underscores the clock tower scene at the top recall the group's end credit music for Michelangelo Antonioni's **Zabriskie Point** (1970), a reworked version of "[Careful with That Ax, Eugene.](#)"

More interesting is the vocal performance of "Fire" by [The Crazy World of Arthur Brown](#) at the retreat, which has the singer emerge in a foil mask and a fiery headpiece before joining the small rock combo and beginning his head-shaking, screaming tune.

Further viewings bring out some nuances, but **The Committee** still feels like a padded short, although the film did help Sykes secure a few directorial assignments for **The Avengers** series before moving on to a handful of feature films like **Venom** (1971, [Demons of the Mind](#) (1972, also co-starring Paul Jones), **The House in Nightmare Park** (1973), and Hammer's final feature film, [To the Devil a Daughter](#) (1976).













Max Steuer never wrote another film, but the DVD's lengthy interview featurette provides some intriguing background on the project's genesis, and what the film means, according to director Sykes, and co-writer Steuer (today an economist). It's a shame neither delve into the minutia of the film's production nor the casting of Paul Jones and working with Pink Floyd, and while the subjects do go a bit like their rhetorical characters, their views help place the film in some context.

The transfer comes from a decent print, although there's some faint herringbone noise, perhaps carried over from the original master (likely a PAL source, albeit with accurate speed conversion to NTSC).

Unique to this release from MVD Visual is a bonus CD that features Paul Jones singing a chamber/jazz version of "Goodbye Committee" (written by Jones and Steuer), along with two bonus songs by Tim Whitehead and [The Homemade Orchestra](#).

A unique artifact and experimental film, and certainly an unofficial companion piece to Paul Jones' other ode to non-conformity, Peter Watkins' [Privilege](#) (1967).

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