



## Film Review

### *Oakland, 1959*

16th of August, 2021

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Josh, Hi!

The theme of a particular time in a particular society (but which we recognised on our side of the pond as a common malaise) is quickly and well established. Setting, cars, costumes, music etc, all take us into your Barbie world.

**STRUCTURE:** But as we/Chuck start to move around it, I become a little disorientated: is it me or Chuck who displaces the icecream-man's leg/trouser-leg? Is it me or Chuck who displaces the red car as he crosses to the neighbor? And how about the arrival of a fleet of stationary cars as she bins the popsicle? If the cars were there, we needed either to establish them in the road rather than carports earlier, or lose that shot and have a wide carless front shot as she bins the popsicle and Chuck exits screen left.

**LIGHTING:** I find I have too many questions, but very few of them are answered in or by the film, because too often they are questions that take me away from what I believe now you wanted me to follow e.g. the lighting in the bedroom is impossible from every whichaway: when he cries out, there is no glimmer of light, yet he has found her body AND the pill bottle AND eaten 3 popsicles, keeping the sticks with the pill bottle which we then see because, when you pan up (some time later) there are no blinds/filters on the bright light from the window, although this is immediately followed by internal twilight in Chuck's profile scene.

I'm being harsh about the lighting here, because I really want to compliment you on your use of silhouette in several other scenes. Too often nowadays, directors and lightingcamerapeople believe they can create drama, horror and tension by shooting in the dark. It's a cheap trick. Your chiaroscuro works very well.

**SOUND:** There was a problem with sound. NOT in your film, but on the web. I downloaded to make sure and your sound was fine. Listen on FilmFreeway and see what you think.

I'm glad I watched your film couple of times and made a few notes before reading your bio and statement.

I would have liked a little more time to get to -if not KNOW these people, then to OBSERVE them a little more, when they are not being observed by anyone else. Chuck is not going to obey the neighbour, but his own programming... the neighbour is possibly on her own trip to hell... her husband has perhaps already been there...?

**ACTING:** I think Chuck's tap on his father's shoulder is just bad acting... In general, I had no sense of the contained emotional turmoil that surely would be there. Not a very convincing performance. The adult performances weren't too bad; but only the father seems to understand that "less is more" and therefore was more memorable. Face acting is or used to be for the (amateur) stage or filmed restoration comedy.

In the last Plague in London, the cry was: "Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!" So diametrically opposed to what we think of as the Mayflower buttoned-down puritan mentality. But 1959, Not only in Oakland, was right there on the brink: a decade after WWII where women were starting to wear the trousers and now had the Pill... I think you have projected that kind of ambivalent tension into your film.

It might not make a feature, but has the basis of an exciting 52 minutes, yes.

A friendly suggestion, if you are able to shoot with 2 cameras: shoot dialogues and edit one version ONLY of the listening actors. Watching people think can be very exciting. There is a lot to learn there. For you AND the actors.

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