

Milestone Film presents
Rolando Klein's

CHAA THE RAIN GOD



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THE RAIN GOD

1974. Mexico. In Tzeltal and Mayan dialects with English subtitles.
Running Time: 95 minutes. Aspect ratio: 1:1.66.

Crew:

Produced, Written and Directed by Rolando Klein
Production Company Cientifilm Aurora S.A.
Music Victor Fozado, Elisabeth Waldo
Camera Alex Phillips, Jr. and William Kaplan, Jr.
Camera Operators Leon Sanchez, Teodoro García, Bob Jahnke
Editor Harry Keramidas
Assistant Editor Mary McClone
Assistant Director Mario Cisneros
Art Director Jesus Duran
Executive Producer Luis Garcia de Leon
Sound William Kaplan, Jr.
Sound Recordists William Kaplan, Jr., Earl Sampson
Sound Effects Sam Shaw
Staff Coordinator Rafael De Long
Script Luis Gaytán
Special Effects Laurencio Cordero
Special Optical Pat O'Neill
Props Francisco López
Make-Up Margarita Ortega, Janet Carmichael
Advanced Locations Hank Dorn
Gaffers Felipe Arenas, Manuel Pimentel
Grips Salvador Vásquez, Antonio Jara
Production Staff David Prieto, William Montgomery, Yolanda Sobarzo
Production Consultant Don Heitzer
Opticals and Titles Cinema Research
Sound Todd A-O

Cast:

Diviner Pablo Canché Balam
Cacique Alonzo Méndez Ton
Mute Boy Sebastián Santis
Father Pedro Tiez
First Captain Antonio Castellanos

With:

Antonio Osil
Alonso Puj
Antonio Ton
and the Tzeltal villagers of Tenejapa in Chiapas, Mexico.

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Restoration by Milestone and Cinema Arts Lab, Angels, Pennsylvania

Background

Rolando Klein was born on July 16, 1942, to an upper-middle-class family in Santiago, Chile. While growing up, photography and cinema were his passions, yet he saw them only as hobbies. When entering college at the University of Chile, he studied Engineering instead. Upon graduating Klein worked for two years as an industrial mining engineer in his father's mines. But the "film bug" was hard to shake off. One day, from an article in *Time* magazine, he learned that in the United States cinema was being taught in universities.

"...Because of my academic background I thought that the only way you could learn a profession was through the University. Suddenly in the late 60s I found out that in U.S. colleges one could obtain a degree in cinema. For me, that fact somehow legitimized filmmaking as a viable profession. So I immediately applied for admission to UCLA, NYU and the few other schools that, at the time, had cinema in their curriculum."

Klein opted to go to UCLA "due to its proximity to Hollywood." Not the best of choices, he later found out, considering the kind of movie he was interested in making, which was very far from the traditional Hollywood genres. Immediately upon arrival, the town of Westwood looked to him unreal, very much like "Disneyland". Then the classes at UCLA proved to be dull and not very informative.

"I wasn't learning much. It was obvious that cinema did not have an academic tradition. Teachers were, for the most part, frustrated filmmakers. Besides, I soon realized that you learn filmmaking by making movies, not by sitting in a lecture hall. At least, in Film History, I got to watch a lot of the classics."

While at school, Klein also had the chance to realize a few film projects. They dealt with his first impressions of America. One, called *Happy Waste*, was an allegory about America's obsessive search for happiness through its insatiable appetite for the consumption of things. A second film, *The Green Bridge*, a bit more polished, was a documentary dealing with a black prisoner on an experimental work release program. During a summer, with friends, on a shoestring, he produced a 35mm black and white feature, *Snails*. That movie never saw distribution, but it taught Klein firsthand all the facets of filmmaking.

He graduated from UCLA in 1971, did a short stint at the American Film Institute and worked as an assistant director on a few projects, while trying to get his first script off the ground. It proved elusive and it fizzled. He then tried to apprentice with established directors he respected. That is how he met Jules Dassin, who told him to "go back to your own country and make your own mistakes". By then Klein was already researching material for the making of his first feature, *Chac*.

"It really started with an interest in Gurdieff and Eastern religion. It was the fad of the decade. Gurdieff, Krishnamurti, Babba Randas were household names at the time. So were the many stories regarding the lost continent of Atlantis. Some theorized that the Mayans, who supposedly emerged completely independent from any other culture, were the descendants of that vanished civilization."

Klein immediately took a keen interest in the Mayans. *“I guess it was my engineering background that made me gravitate towards a culture that had such a fascination with numbers and astronomy. From reading the Popul Vuh —their bible —I found out that, just like eastern and western religions, the concept of trinity is at the heart of their view of creation. It blew my mind: this isolated culture had exactly the same roots as ours!”*

In 1972 Rolando Klein took a leap of faith and moved with his family to the south of Mexico, first Yucatan, and finally settling in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas. There he began an in-depth study of the Tzeltal Indians of Tenejapa, the tribe he planned to engage in the making of his movie. He immersed himself for over a year with the indigenous people of the area. He talked with them, laughed, traded stories, learned about their customs and beliefs, and occasionally got very drunk.

“It’s hard on the liver. They drink lethal stuff in Chiapas, a derivative of sugar cane, I think. You never get anywhere with them if you don’t drink, and heavily. I almost killed myself blacking out driving down the mountain, but I was elated because I had made my first contact with Alonzo, the president of the village, and explained my idea. It looked as though the movie might work.”

Finally, after a few re-writes, Klein emerged with an original screenplay. The shooting script was a combination of ritual, legends from the *Popul Vuh*, as well as Tzeltal and Mayan stories and customs Klein learned while he lived there for two years. He slowly and methodically gathered a cast together among the people he had gotten to know in Tenejapa. “It wasn’t easy,” Klein recounts. “Many of the villagers refused to be photographed, because of the voodoo-like belief that it would give the photographer control of their souls.” However, the old superstitious ways were rapidly flagging and Klein was able to find many natives that were willing to act in his movie.

“The people were fascinated by all our equipment and were drawn towards it like moths to a light bulb. The children would stand by our jeep, fingering its mirror and say to me: Take me with you. I want to see other lands... We had an emergency first aid kit and, as hangovers were common, there was usually an Alka Seltzer at hand. It was soon considered an effervescent, magical potion that cured all the pains of the head and the body. Soon entire families lined up in front of the truck, alleging symptoms of every possible type. Soon Alka Seltzer had developed into a major necessity.”

The cast of non-actors only added to the realism of *Chac*. The locals had no idea what film or filmmaking were, and no concept of what their image looked like on film, so it freed them to give a very natural and convincing performance. Next, Klein hired a Mexican crew, consisting of twenty-three Union technicians (Klein was lucky; although he only wanted eight, the Mexican Union at first insisted on sixty). Now he was ready to begin the laborious undertaking of putting *Chac* into production.

Production Details

“I made the film with a lot of love. I came out of it with a lot of guilt.”

Production began in January of 1974 (two years after Klein and his family arrived), in the village of Tenejapa during the dry season. The shooting commenced with Alex Phillips Jr. as Director of

Photography, shooting for eight weeks on principal photography, and ended with four extra weeks of shooting in faraway inaccessible locations by soundman Bill Kaplan serving as a very competent Director of Photography (Phillips had left to shoot another film). Due to the obviously difficult surroundings, the film was a logistical nightmare, but Klein was determined to shoot the scenes in a very traditional way.

“I wanted to create the feeling of timelessness, and for that the photography had to have a classic quality to it. We avoided hand-held shots or improvised set-ups. The actors hit their marks and their movements had to be timed to facilitate a classic editing style.”

Klein soon began to discover that the amateurs would give their best performances during their fourth or fifth take, after which they would fall into a robotic manner of acting. He counteracted this problem by either going to another set-up and getting back to the scene later, or by using rather extreme and unorthodox measures. For instance, Klein says *“If I needed an element of surprise, at times the special effects man would prepare blasts of dynamite that would explode unannounced.”*

There were further complications when it came time for the actors to do the scene over again from different angles. *“It was difficult to keep the freshness of the take intact”*, Klein said. But he refused to use two different cameras, especially inside the hut. It would have created too much noise. As it was, the one camera they did use was covered with a heavy blanket that nearly suffocated the poor cameraman. The reason they needed to have perfect sound on every take was because they were dealing with an ancient dialect. Any dubbing later would have been impossible. Furthermore the dialect is so exotic and musical in its own right, that it became a key mood element within the film.

“Mexicans were not used to recording direct sound on location, so the soundman Bill Kaplan Jr. and the boom operator were the only two crew members that I brought down from the United States. They came down with their Nagra, fought for quality and they got it to such a degree that afterwards the mixers at Todd-AO thought that the whole show had been shot on a sound stage.”

While working with the Mexican cinematographer Alex Phillips Jr., Klein was a little apprehensive because he felt that Phillips wasn't into the background of the story in the same way that he was. Soon, however, Klein realized that Phillips was not only very intuitive, but also found that the cinematographer did indeed grasp the feeling he was trying to achieve. Klein goes further and states just how inventive Phillips was with the limited equipment they had.

“He lit those exterior night sequences with 300 extras, using only a few 10ks. Then in the interiors, using small units, he re-created the natural feeling of the dark windowless huts. Using little fill, he brought out the rough skins and expressive features of the Indian actors.”

It took the rushes about a week to come back from Mexico City. Needless to say Klein and crew were a bit anxious. But there was nothing to fear. When they screened the rushes the photography was absolutely stunning. When the villagers saw themselves on film for the first time, they laughed and joked like a bunch of kids watching their own home movies. The man who played the village chief, however, developed a bit of an ego, playing up to the role of “movie star”. Klein said the chief started to get increasingly arrogant and made demands like an

egomaniacal actor. Klein stopped showing the rushes to them, since it made certain villagers more self-conscious, and the chief more haughty.

The shoot was no fun for the villagers. Klein put them under some strenuous work at a forced pace, which was very different from their timeless lifestyle. The problem was that he was using a professional crew at professional costs under very non-professional circumstances. Some of the people in the film came from far-off hamlets and had to walk for three or four hours for the morning call, so they concentrated the principal actors in the town of Tenejapa. Earning good wages, some of the villagers took to drinking; others just could not handle the stress of the shoot, and returned to their hamlets for the rest of the time, leaving Klein with some continuity problems. Another incident occurred when, upon receiving their first paycheck, the natives went and got haircuts, delaying production for some time.

The production's first serious problem happened early in the shooting, when Pablo Canche Balam (the Diviner) fell one hundred feet into a cavern, twisting his ankle. The Indians were convinced that it happened because the caves were holy places where one should not enter without asking the gods' permission. The natives requested nineteen candles to pray at the mouth of the cave to ask the gods for acceptance inside. The prop man on the set had eleven large candles which he proposed cutting in halves to obtain the required nineteen. The natives were outraged. They felt this was as indignant an action as cutting the gods' heads off, an offensive sacrilege. So someone was sent to town to buy more candles. More delays.

Another occasion had a group of actors taken by bus three hours from Tenejapa to the village of Comitán, in order to film a trek through the jungles. On that weekend there was to be a fiesta in Tenejapa. Klein made the actors promise that they would not go, because he feared that they had earned so much money that they would begin drinking and never come back. On Thursday the village chief, Alonso Mendez Ton, stepped on a deadly "Four Noses" snake. Fortunately for the actor — and the production — it was early in the morning when the snake was still dormant. If it had been awake the actor would have died within a half-hour. Klein says it was at this point, that morale started to decline, and everyone in the cast became very frightened.

The next day was the shooting of the scene in the canoes crossing the lake. The Tzeltals did not know how to swim and so were very frightened of water. While shooting the scene they became panicky, in spite of the life vests that they wore beneath their chamarras. When the oarsmen stood up to begin the crossing the actors got so frightened that they started shaking the boats and one of them overturned, fortunately close to the water's edge. This was the final straw for the natives who decided to leave Comitán. They themselves hired a bus back to Tenejapa and wouldn't pay any attention when Klein reminded them of their promise that they would remain over the weekend. It finally took him over a week after the fiesta to get the entire cast back again, and still some never came back. More delays.

By the end of the shoot, filming had become a technical nightmare. The last scene shot was the one in which the actors walked "Christ-like" across the water. The scene presented numerous problems for both cast and crew. Firstly, the area had been plagued by an ironic *Chac*-induced rainfall, which brought the water levels up, flooding the small footbridge that was built just below the surface to give the appearance of "walking on water". The technicians had to re-build another "invisible bridge" to replace the damaged one. They also had to place the camera at very low angles to avoid showing these supports on film. While setting up for the shot a cameraman

jumped onto the slippery rocks, holding the support ropes but slipped, plunging into the water holding an Arri, which nearly destroyed the expensive piece of equipment. This last scene proved so grueling that when they finally had it in the can, only five actors remained from the original cast of fifteen.

“I realized how life here would change with a fast, instantaneous, painful blow, like birth. The technical evolution that took Europe 3,000 years and the urban parts of Latin America four centuries, would be accomplished here in the course of a generation...The Indian will shed his skin and sensibility to nature, and be transformed into a frustrated hungry worker. He will be lowered into the mines to dig tunnels and lose the rhythm of the cycle of the seasons. If I could only have made the film following the Indians’ rhythm of life! Unfortunately, to make a film is so expensive that we had to do the exact opposite, always trying to speed things as much as possible.”

Klein says that by the end he felt guilty about filming in this small isolated town. The villagers there knew nothing of anything western. He admits that his production moved them quickly from primitive, spiritual Indians to totally westernized consumers. But felt the changes were inevitable, as he saw the whole area transforming before he intruded. It did not however stop him from feeling guilty that he intruded all together. *“I could justify the fact that they were making money, but I really invaded. It was a micro-experiment on something that is changing very fast anyway. My argument was I was recording for posterity. One can argue, rightly, ‘Why disturb them?’ ”*

No one, however, can argue with the fact that Rolando Klein has produced an amazing first film, one that is both visually beautiful and spiritually fulfilling. The movie is mythic and symbolic yet simple; never pretentious or heavy handed, but not lacking in depth. Klein shows his talent in the direction of the natives’ performances and his skill at producing an aesthetically elegant feast for the eyes and ears.

Chac is a movie that touches you on a primal level, working on you in a very primitive and emotional way. Rolando Klein has said he wanted to make this film so that even his youngest children (who, at the time, could not read subtitles) would be able to watch it and understand, and he has indeed succeeded.

“Then we had the rain. It was the dry season, but Chac, the Rain God, kept on haunting us throughout the shooting. The region had the biggest flood in eighty years, they said. Perhaps that is why I always felt that the theme of the story, with its pleas for rain, was mystically correct.”

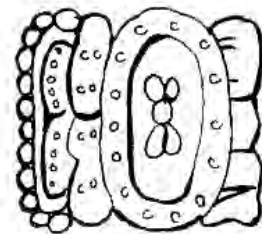
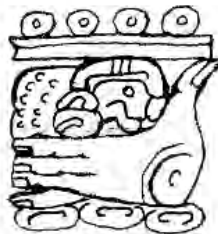
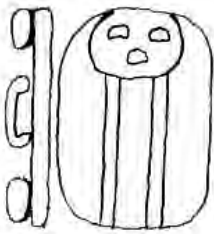
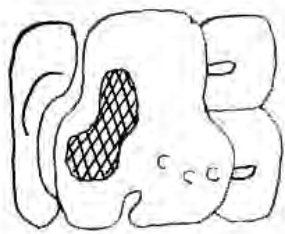
A Guide to viewing *Chac*

CHAC: Chac is the God of Rain in Mayan mythology. He is the fearsome god who rides the four paths of heaven on a white horse. His slashing sword creates the lightning; his voice, the thunder. Bearing gourds overflowing with water, Chac travels the heavens to spread rain over the cornfields below. He is one and many. People call him both Chac and Chacs. The Mayans always relate to directions in the sky...so there is one Chac and there are also four Chacs.

MAYAN CONCEPT OF CREATION: At the beginning, there was nothing. Then came the creator, Tepeu and Gucumatx, one but at the same time, two. They are surrounded by clarity,

which represents the Holy Spirit, therefore, the Trinity. In scientific terms these three forces could be called positive, negative, and neutral. In other words: Ying, Yang, and Tao. Every culture, at a certain stage of development, seems to describe the creation of the universe in similar terminology. There seems to be a basic truth, a unified principle, which somehow evolved in more than one culture around the world.

THE NINE SYMBOLS IN THE UPPER LEFT CORNER OF THE SCREEN: These symbols represent the nine Bolontiku or nine Lords of the Underworld. In the Dark Ages of the Mayan Empire these nine false gods ruled over all, each one for a day and rotating their power in succession in the same way the planets succeed each other in our week of seven days. The film, *Chac*, evolves in a week of nine days.



THE DWARF: There exists the belief that witches have instruments of evil called Ikal that come out at night to harm people, in some cases even causing death. The Ikal is sometimes depicted as a hunchbacked dwarf dressed as a priest. Presumably this symbolizes the fear of the white man who conquered the Mayans five hundred years ago.

THE FROGS: According to Mayan mythology, when a frog croaks it is calling for rain. Thus, four frogs are used in the ancient rain ceremony depicted in the film, each one summoning the god, Chac from a different direction of the sky.

THE TURTLE: In Mayan mythology, it is said that if a turtle appears in your path during a drought it is a sign of impending rain because the turtle is also seeking water. It is also believed that the shell of the turtle is a map of the universe.

THE ACTORS: Except for the midget, who is a professional actor from Mexico City, not one of the performers in the film, *Chac*, has ever had any professional acting experience or training. As a matter of fact, most of them had never seen a movie before. The chief in the story had been President of the village of Tenejapa for several years when filming began. The Diviner is a hunter and fisherman from Tulum, Quintana Roo. The men and women wearing the black mantas are villagers of the Tenejapa. The Indians with the long hair and the white flowing robes seen in the jungle are the Lacadons, the last remnants of the ancient Mayan Empire who fled to the jungle when the Spanish conquerors arrived. They had yet to be assimilated into modern society.

THE DIALECTS: The Lacadones, the men in the white robes, speak a dialect called Carebbean, which is similar to the Mayan tongue spoken by the Diviner in the film. The men and women wearing the black mantas are speaking Tzeltal. All three dialects have their roots in the ancient Mayan language.

NUMBERS: Underlying the whole plot, Klein structured a game of cabalistic numbers that become the moving force of the events: the 7 old men; the 12 captains; the Cacique or the Diviner as the 13th, depending on who has the power; the 13 corn grains of divination; the enchanting story of Unaphu and Ixbalamque, the twins, the sun and the moon, the male and the female that are one, the force of light at that point in the story overpowering the 9 Lords of Darkness; etc. At each moment, the resulting force of all these magic numbers interacting, moves the story along.

Prologue to the film Chac

There was nothing. The expanse of the sky was empty. All motionless silence in the darkness, in the night. Only the creator Tepeu, Gucomatz, the Progenitors were there in the water surrounded with clarity.

Then there was the word. Tepeu and Gucomatz came together in the darkness, in the night, and talked to one another. It became clear, as they meditated, that when the dawn came man should appear.

Thus it was disposed among the shadows and in the night by the Heart of Heaven who is called Huracan.

The first account of the Popul Vuh

Synopsis

An isolated village in the highlands of Mexico is suffering a severe drought. The local Shaman, consults his oracle, drinks the villagers' *posh* and predicts rain. He proceeds to pass out drunk. The villagers plant their crops, but the rain does not come. A comet traverses the sky and the villagers fear it to be a bad omen. That night the Cacique (village chief) meets with the village council. They all agree that their Shaman has lost his powers and has forgotten how to talk to the Gods. Some mention another man who could help them, a solitary Diviner who lives in the mountains and still knows the ways of the Ancients. The Cacique believes he's a witch and won't allow a witch roaming his village while he's in charge. He boasts of his contact with the white man, an engineer he once met. He insists that the old ways no longer work, that they should consult the white man's methods instead. He produces a flashlight from under his chamarra and shines his flashlight in the group's face, as if to prove his point; then he leaves.

The next day a startled Cacique is awakened by the blare of a horn, signaling a summons to a meeting with the village elders. He dresses in a rush, as his two wives and an old woman watch him with vacuous eyes. As he leaves he see the comet again traversing the morning sky. At the reunion with the grandfathers, again he is told of the Diviner. The elders believe that only the Diviner can summon Chac, the Rain God. They instruct him to round up his twelve captains and go find the wise man. This time the Cacique does not argue. He leads his group of captains up a steep mountain, while a mute boy, the son of one of the captains, spies their departure from behind a wall.

After an arduous climb they reach the Diviner's dwelling. The Diviner seems to be waiting for them and invites them in. He then surprises everyone by asking the mute boy, who had been following all along, to emerge from behind the bushes. He instructs the boy to go prepare *pozale*, the local meal. From a large gourd the mute boy distributes *pozale* among the men under the watchful eye of the Diviner. When it is his turn, the Cacique greedily gulps down three large servings, while the Diviner studies him intently. The Diviner knows that the Cacique is skeptical, yet he agrees to help them.

They set out on a strange journey, which takes them far away from their own land into the deep jungle. There the Diviner recruits the help of some very strange men (the Lacandons) who carry the group in canoes across a lake. At every turn the Chief and two of his captains grow more suspicious, fearful and rebellious. At night, around the fire, the Diviner tells a haunting story, the myth of the Twins, the Lords of Light who, through the use of magic and deception, destroy forever the Lords of Darkness. By the end of the long, hypnotic tale, only the mute boy remains awake. As the Diviner meditates his spirit enters a hawk that transports him through the night to ancient temples. There he connects with the knowledge of his ancestors.

The next day they come to a rushing torrent. Without hesitation the Diviner walks into the water and proceeds to cross over the top of a treacherous waterfall. To everyone's amazement he does not sink, nor is he swept away. Immediately the mute boy follows. Most of the men fearfully go along too. But the Cacique and his two loyal captains, who have no faith in the Diviner, have had enough and refuse to cross the water. Instead they turn back and run away. The remaining men follow the Diviner into a deep cave where they find "the Mother of Waters", the original Spring, whose water they will use to invoke the Chac in their ceremony.

They return to the village without the Cacique and begin elaborate preparations for the ceremony. The Diviner assigns tasks. He asks an old woman to make sacred mead, a young one to gather the choicest ears of corn, another to collect the purest honey and the mute boy to care for the ceremonial fire. Men make masks, cut wood and build four high platforms, one for each corner of the sky, where four dancers will enact the four Chacs. The Cacique returns and spies the proceedings from a hilltop above the village. He then slips to his hut, grabs his rifle and runs to the Shaman to ask for help. The Shaman says that he's come to late, that there is nothing he can do. That night in the wild the Cacique encounters his *Ikal* in the form of a midget priest who apparently terrifies him to death.

At night in the village all are gathered around a giant bonfire. The Diviner commences a chant of invocation to summon the Gods of Rain. Soon the whole village is chanting in unison. All night long the power of their voices flows like a river over hilltops and through valleys. At dawn, clouds move towards the village and fog envelops the crowd. The villagers believe that the rain has finally arrived. They jump up, embrace one another and cheer. But a gust of wind whistles through and skies clear again. An exhausted Diviner announces to the stunned crowd that Chac will not come until three days have passed. Then he departs in the direction of the mountains. The mute boy tries to follow him, but the Cacique reappears and bars his way with his rifle.

The following day, while working the cornfield, the mute boy passes out and becomes ill. The Shaman examines him and announces that the boy has been possessed by the Diviner's witchcraft. The boy's mother talks to those comforting her about how a Shaman once said her son was born mute so he would keep God's secrets. The boy utters "the fire" before he dies. The village council hastily meets. The Cacique rants that the Diviner has tricked them, that he has only brought evil to the village, but no rain. The boy's father demands vengeance. Another member fears that more evil will come to them if they harm the Diviner. But the Cacique explains that their Shaman said to drop the Diviner's body down a deep well to drown his evil spirit. An older captain reminds everyone that the Diviner said that rain was to come in three days and only two days had passed. The Cacique allows one more day for the rain to come. After that, they will go kill him.

Next morning, the rain still has not arrived. As the group departs towards the mountain the three older captains again try to dissuade the others from committing murder. But the Cacique and the rest of the men ignore their pleas. Meanwhile, on top of the mountain, the Diviner, while cleansing his body inside a sweat lodge, has a vision. When the villagers arrive at the Diviner's dwelling the Cacique silently sneaks in with his rifle. He spots a hammock with someone in it and shoots. The rest of the men rush in to see. Blood drips onto the Cacique's feet. He opens the hammock and they are shocked to see that the Diviner has cut out his own heart as a sacrifice. They bundle up his body in a hurry and throw it off a deep cliff into the well. The body hits the water and a moment later drops of rain begin to fall, lightly at first, then torrential. The men scatter away while the Cacique remains alone by the edge of the well screaming madly in the pouring rain.

Milestone Film & Video

Milestone enters its 21st year of operations with a reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, new foreign films, groundbreaking documentaries and American independent features. Thanks to the company's work in rediscovering and releasing important films such as Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, Kent Mackenzie's, *The Exiles*, Mikhail Kalatozov's *I Am Cuba*, Marcel Ophuls's *The Sorrow and the Pity*, the Mariposa Film Group's *Word is Out* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, Milestone has long occupied a position as one of the country's most influential independent distributors.

In 1995, Milestone received the first Special Archival Award from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I Am Cuba*. Manohla Dargis, then at the *LA Weekly*, chose Milestone as the 1999 "Indie Distributor of the Year." In 2004, the National Society of Film Critics again awarded Milestone with a Film Heritage award. That same year the International Film Seminars presented the company its prestigious Leo Award and the New York Film Critics Circle voted a Special Award "in honor of 15 years of restoring classic films." Milestone/Milliarium won Best Rediscovery from the Il Cinema Ritrovato DVD Awards for its release of *Winter Soldier* in 2006 and again in 2010 for *The Exiles*.

In November 2007, Milestone was awarded the Fort Lee Film Commission's first Lewis Selznick Award for contributions to film history. In January 2008, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association chose to give its first Legacy of Cinema Award "to Dennis Doros and Amy Heller of Milestone Film & Video for their tireless efforts on behalf of film restoration and preservation." And in March 2008, Milestone became an Anthology Film Archive's Film Preservation honoree. In 2009, Dennis Doros was elected as one of the Directors of the Board of the Association of the Moving Image Archivists and established the organization's press office in 2010.

In 2011, Milestone was the first distributor ever chosen for two Film Heritage Awards in the same year by the National Society of Film Critics — this time for the release of *ON THE BOWERY* and *WORD IS OUT*. The American Library Association also selected *WORD IS OUT* for their Notable Videos for Adult, the first classic film ever so chosen. In 2012, Milestone will be releasing Lionel Rogosin's *COME BACK*, *AFRICA* and The Shirley Clarke Project encompassing most of the legendary director's career.

Important contemporary filmmakers have co-presented Milestone restorations including Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Barbara Kopple, Woody Allen, Steven Soderbergh, Thelma Schoonmaker, Jonathan Demme and Dustin Hoffman.

"They care and they love movies." — Martin Scorsese

"Milestone Film & Video is an art-film distributor that has released some of the most distinguished new movies (along with seldom-seen vintage movie classics) of the past decade"
— Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

"One of the most reliable brand names in film distribution, Milestone Films has a track record of bringing unearthened gems to light." — Jim Ridley,
Nashville Scene

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**Film Notes by Carl Pidhajny, Synopsis by Megan Powers, Milestone Film & Video
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