



The Assistant (Green, 2019):USA

Description

Posted by [Larry Gleeson](#)

Viewed as part of the 46th Telluride Film Festival at the Werner Herzog Theatre.

Written and directed by Kitty Green ([Casting JonBenet](#), [The Face of Ukraine: Casting Oksana Baiul](#)), [The Assistant](#) from Cinereach and Forensic Films, tells the story of Jane, a talented young production office assistant for a powerful corporate studio head. Actress Julia Garner ([Ozark](#)) portrays the young assistant freshly out of college and new to the industry. Other cast members included stars Matthew Macfadyen, Juliana Canfield, Kristine Froseth, Jon Orsini, Dagmara Domińczyk, Makenzie Leigh, Noah Robbins, and Purva Bedi.

The film follows a day in the life of an office assistant as Director Green allows the camera to capture the mundane tasks undertaken from preparing the coffee maker to ensuring the correct number of designer water bottles are readied for an upcoming visit. As the day progresses, an angry wife calls in and the assistant is passed the call. Despite suggestions from her co-workers to assuage the wife with a plausible meeting occupying the executives time, the assistant goes her own way offering no excuse for the executives absence leading to a blistering rebuke from the executive over the telephone. This happens again later in the day and the executive takes an interest in the assistant telling her he will make her great.

A visit to the human resource office to explain the executive's actions including flying a beautiful young waitress in from Idaho and putting the waitress up at a posh New York City hotel and handing her a production office assistant position for which the waitress has no clue in how to do. The human resource director stonewalls the assistant's efforts and reminds her that she is new and needs to learn from the experience if she wants a career in the industry. A supermodel shows up to retrieve an ear ring lost inside a hotel room couch under the executive's name. All this happens on the assistant's father's birthday who she eventually calls from a dingy coffee shop near the office. All in a day's work.

Undoubtedly, Green was inspired by the media frenzy surrounding the Weinstein Company and the Harvey Weinstein meltdown as the studio executive's past actions were brought into the public eye. Interestingly, Green tangentially allows the viewer to experience the uncomfortableness from an office assistant's point of view who has aspirations of being a film producer. Shot in darker tones and at times in a chiaroscuro palette, Cinematographer Michael Latham captures the claustrophobic and stifling atmosphere of the work space. Fletcher Chancey handled the production design with John Arnos steering the art direction. In addition, Tamar-kali composed an original score for the film.

The Assistant, with a short run time of 85 minutes, is an underscoring character study that speaks volumes of the degradation and abuse that occurred inside and outside the studio executive's workplace. Green makes a statement providing the viewer with an introspective experience of the clammy and dank office atmosphere of a powerful studio executive driving a runaway locomotive. Warmly recommended.

Category

1. Telluride
2. Telluride Film Festival

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