



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Please refer to our renewal of membership message. Many of us have renewed with no pain or suffering and everyone else will succeed, too. Please be patient!

****Please also note that it is your responsibility to change/up-date your details on the web site, be it email address or any banking changes.**

As we announced before both screenings, we have had to push back to mid May the renewal date for those who were new members in June 2024. This is simply because we need to know our final membership numbers so that we can invite those who are very keen to join our group. At this stage we have very few vacancies.

Thank you for your views on *Citizen Kane*; a resounding majority enjoyed it. Our latest film *Black Dog* has caused much discussion and analysis. Aren't we blessed to live here?

With best wishes from your committee,

Roz Garwen



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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Membership is closed

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ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 18th May 2025

8.15 pm Tuesday 20th May 2025

Further reminder of Membership Renewal process

Almost all of us are recurring members. Only 20 or so out of almost 400 people opted not to subscribe.

If you are in the majority, do nothing. You will receive an email a week before your membership payment is due, and then an email to say it has gone through. Do nothing.

If you want to unsubscribe you must follow the prompts on the email. You will still be a member until June 2025.

If you are one of the 20 or so who are not recurring members, you will receive an email two weeks before payment is due and you will have to enter your payment details. If you don't wish to re-join, do nothing.

If you were a new member last year, we have had to push your payment date to mid May so that we will know how many vacancies we have before publishing that number in mid May.

New membership: we have very few vacancies so far. If you have a friend who wishes to join, please advise them to look on the website fish.org.au from mid May where we will invite new membership applications. This will be taken down once our maximum membership has been reached.

We do not accept eftpos, cash, cheques, email or SMS renewals.

COMING UP

June	<i>My Favourite Cake</i> [Iran]	Sunday 15 th & Tuesday 17 th
July	<i>All We Imagine as Light</i> [India]	Sunday 20 th & Tuesday 22 nd

Hammar skjold – Fight for Peace [Sweden 2024]

Spoiler alert : You may prefer to read this review after the screening

DIRECTOR : Per Fly

RUNNING TIME : 114mins

RATING : M

Synopsis:

An exploration of the extent of Cold War politics, betrayals and vested interests operating during Dag Hammar skjold's tenure as the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Review: Alan Hunter

Superstar diplomat Dag Hammar skjold's fame rests on his tenure as the second Secretary General of The United Nations and his controversial death in a plane crash in 1961. Per Fly's biopic largely focuses on his final weeks, emphasising the ideals that drove Hammar skjold and the forces that gathered against him. This measured, respectful drama should connect with an older demographic and secured seven Swedish Guldbagge nominations including Best Film and Best Actor for lead Mikael Persbrandt.

Director and co-writer Fly quickly conveys a sense of Hammar skjold's importance on the world stage throughout the 1950s. Black and white newsreel footage paints him as fearless in negotiating the release of American soldiers captured by China during the Korean War, averting a war over the Suez Canal and revealing a steely determination to champion decolonisation in Africa. 'Just leave it to Dag!' became a mantra for some world leaders.

There is a crisp elegance to the storytelling that seeks to match Hammar skjold's personality. The production design from Niels Sejer conjures a world of gleaming limousines and shadowy, wood-panelled rooms where men determined the affairs of the world. Hammar skjold is often seen working into the night with only a table lamp and his thoughts for company.

Hammar skjold himself is a figure from an age when diplomats wore bow-ties and dapper suits, and might still hope to make the world a better place. Mikael Persbrandt portrays him as a precise, orderly man who has created a confident, unflappable public persona. The mask covers the passion and righteousness that fuels his diplomacy, but also conceals his inner life. Hammar skjold lives in a plush New York apartment that he shares with his pet monkey Greenback and is attended by a loyal butler, further encouraging the echoes of a bygone era. It is the life of an aesthete completely dedicated to his work.

The film honours that life but also attempts to dig a little deeper into Hammar skjold's isolation, loneliness and the sacrifices he made. Fly makes use of the journals Hammar skjold kept that were only made public after his death; here, we find a man who wrote poetry and carefully examined his achievements and failings.

Cont.

Fly also introduces the figure of Peter Levin (Thure Lindhardt), a friend from Hammarskjöld's past who attempts to rekindle their acquaintance and offer him a love he has denied himself. Hammarskjöld asserts he is not gay but there is a sense of him as a Gatsby and Peter as the one who got away.

Fly makes accessible the world in which Hammarskjöld was operating. He spotlights the way Belgium plotted to retain its financial interests in the Congo, and how even seemingly natural allies failed Hammarskjöld in his hour of need. The actions of Belgian-backed Congolese politician Thshombe (Hakeem Kae-Kazim) and the UN response masterminded by Hammarskjöld became a battleground in which the politician was willing to stake his life.

The last 30 minutes of the film have the intrigue and pace of a political thriller, even though we already know the outcome. Fly and co-writer Elf Ryberg have no hesitation in depicting Hammarskjöld's death as a political assassination, refuting the official version of the time. While the film is a sometimes sentimental, celebration of a heroic figure, the decision to delve deeper into his personality makes him a more rounded, human figure and his loss all the more moving.

Source: www.screendaily.com ~ Alan Hunter 27/1/2024 Edited extracts accessed 10/3/25

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Some Thoughts on: *Black Dog*

When I was first asked for a review of this film, I felt like Tom Cruise receiving his next assignment in Mission Impossible. "Should you choose to accept this mission...etc, etc.....". Since then, there has been much thought and talk with fellow FISHERs on the question, 'Just what, exactly, was that all about??'

My initial reaction to the film was tending very much towards the negative. After an extraordinarily powerful opening sequence of a dog stampede across a barren, but beautiful landscape, I had trouble piecing together a coherent narrative about the 'dog problem', and Lang's return from gaol, with his prolonged silence. The abrupt scene cuts and editing in general were difficult to understand at times and the incessant barking at full volume, drove me to distraction.

Having said that, there were many scenes of humour, great landscape shots of harsh, windblown terrain and stormy skies. There were lovely scenes too, of great warmth and kindness in a very unforgiving space for young and old alike.

I came to realise that my expectations about this film were coming from a very different cultural perspective indeed. I found much more pleasure and appreciation of it after a great deal of contemplation, reflection and discussion with others.

Was it about change, with China preparing for the approaching Olympics and on a path of 'westernisation'? Unusual scenes of circuses and typical housing and customary occupations were all having to bend with the times, becoming things of the past and redevelopment? Lang himself was in a period of great personal change and adaptation following his release.

Was it purely about redemption?

A young man who has served time for murder, returns a puppy, (against the rules), to a desperately upset young girl. Who saves, comforts and protects the detested and rabies suspected 'black dog', struggling for a better life together. Who helps a former adversary by providing him with life-saving antidote after a potentially deadly snake bite.

Some cinema buffs speak of the many scenes and physical surroundings that are all celebrating and referencing classic films of the past. Is this the major theme?

Despite the many positive and negative comments I picked up on post screening, this FISH film is really what our membership is all about. It has challenged us to think and to discuss. It is from a diverse culture, exposing us to different ideas and practices. Educating us??

Viva la difference??

I feel very different now about *Black Dog*, than I did last Sunday morning, but not about that bloody barking!!

Thanks FISH.

Ross Armfield.

Thank you, Ross! [Ed.]