



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

POINT BLANK (15)

Director: John Boorman

Starring: Lee Marvin, Angie Dickinson, Keenan Wynn

US, 1967, 1 hour 32 minutes, English

Following the release of his debut film in the U.K. (*Catch Us If You Can*, 1965), which garnered critical acclaim, John Boorman wanted to transition to Hollywood. Luckily for him, producer Irvin Winkler, who knew him from earlier projects, contacted him about a script that he had bought the rights for. The script was adapted from the hard-boiled crime book *The Hunter* (1962). Winkler wanted Lee Marvin for the lead role but couldn't get in contact with him. Marvin was in London filming *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), so Boorman tracked him down and arranged lunch with the star. Both agreed that the Walker character was interesting, but the original script was "lousy" (in Boorman's words). A couple of meetings later, Marvin said that he'd do the film "on one condition", according to Boorman, "[then] he threw the script out the window."

Marvin called upon his time in World War Two to influence the film's tone, "[we] saw this was a parallel to his experience... he was completely brutalised [by it]." After punching up the script together, Lee Marvin deferred his script, cast, and final cut approval powers to Boorman, which was unheard of for a director's first Hollywood production.

A man is betrayed by his partner in crime for financial gain, the man wants his money back. Quite a simple plot, but this is heightened by Boorman's approach to the material. A crime film, seen through a lens of memories and psychedelia. Boorman has fun with the traditional revenge narrative by playing with chronology, making for a film that feels like we're reliving events in someone's recollection of them. With his minimalist dialogue and unstoppable nature, Lee Marvin's 'Walker' feels less like a human, and more like a spirit of vengeance. I've always felt the film plays out like a tall tale, or a ghost story being retold.

Quotes from *John Boorman and Geoff Dyer: Point Blank*.

Notes compiled By Stuart Newnham (The Courtyard/Radix Film Club)

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