



Taxi Driver

Paul Schrader

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1970s New York, and young Vietnam veteran Travis Bickle takes to driving a taxi in search of an escape from his insomnia, his barren apartment and his gnawing sense of self-disgust, which threatens to erupt in revenge against the sordid, unlovely world through which he travels. When his tentative efforts at a relationship with elegant political campaign worker Betsy come to naught, Travis conceives of an assassination attempt upon her boss, Senator Charles Palantine. But as he cruises the streets at night, Travis encounters a hapless child prostitute, Iris, and her sinister pimp, sport. Travis's mounting psychosis acquires a new focus, and violence erupts . . .

One of the key films of the 1970s and winner of the Palme d'Or at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival, **Taxi Driver** was the first of several potent collaborations between Paul Schrader and director Martin Scorsese. Inspired by Ford's **The Searchers**, Bresson's **Diary of a Country Priest**, the diaries of real-life gunman Arthur Bremer, and an especially tormented period in Schrader's own life, **Taxi Driver** remains a devastating portrait of a man in urban purgatory.

Taxi Driver Details

Date : Published February 21st 2000 by Faber Faber (first published 1975)

ISBN : 9780571203154

Author : Paul Schrader

Format : Paperback 116 pages

Genre : Fiction, Culture, Film, Media Tie In, Movies, Plays, Mystery, Crime

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Mark says

Schrader once said, "[S]creenplays are not works of art. They are invitations to others to collaborate on a work of art, but they are not in themselves works of art." I'd be tempted to disagree on the basis of a number of his works, but especially *Taxi Driver*, which in its stage directions and characterizations of Travis Bickle gives him a novelistic depth, which makes sense as Schrader said he intentionally produced a screenplay hewing closer to a chapter-segmented novel than typical screenwriting standards would prescribe, in order to make the script look less like typical Hollywood product. Paradoxically, Schrader's words come closest to reflecting the truth in the way that the screenplay is necessarily overshadowed by the finished film in a way that it wouldn't have a chance to be were it an unfilmed screenplay, or an unfilmable one, like Nabokov's *Lolita* script. Much like the film, the script is laser-focused on being an in-depth character study of Bickle, so the script wouldn't quite be able to stand alone, reading more like a character bible than any recognizable story of any kind; this makes sense, as Schrader strictly compartmentalizes what he brings to a filmmaking project (theme, character, and structure), so this is less complete a screenplay than some, though there are some specific indications of camera movements and their purposes. Novelistic as Schrader may have aimed to be, the *Taxi Driver* screenplay is best appreciated as such a character bible, expanding on motivations and background just a little bit more, in very satisfactory ways that suggest how De Niro transformed Schrader's creation into a performance. Virtually all of what appears here that ended up eliminated from the final cut (mostly fatty, chattier bits with less apparent purpose, mostly involving peripheral characters) deserved that fate, in order to hone an even more exact and spare portrait of the film's unforgettable central character.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Taxi Driver, Paul Schrader

Taxi Driver is a 1976 American neo-noir psychological thriller film directed by Martin Scorsese, written by Paul Schrader, and starring Robert De Niro, Jodie Foster, Cybill Shepherd, Harvey Keitel, Peter Boyle, Albert Brooks and Leonard Harris. Set in a decaying New York City following the Vietnam War, the film tells the story of a lonely veteran (De Niro) working as a taxi driver, who descends into insanity as he plots to assassinate a presidential candidate (Harris) and then the pimp (Keitel) of an underage prostitute (Foster) whom he befriends.

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Willem van den Oever says

During the 1970's, a whole series of brilliant films was produced --- with one of its absolute highlights being "*Taxi Driver*", by a young film maker called Martin Scorsese. It showed Hollywood and the rest of the world that a new generation was taking over the movie industry; with new ideas, new stars and more directness and frankness than previously imaginable in Tinseltown. Feelings of lose and depression are addressed as experiences from Americans themselves. After Vietnam, Watergate and the fall of Nixon, themes like alienation and confusion keep appearing again and again in these films. But none translated those themes to a more personal experience as "*Taxi Driver*".

The story focuses on Travis Bickle, a young war veteran struggling with insomnia and extreme self-loathing. Trying to battle the thoughts swirling in his head, he takes on a job as a NY cabbie, prowling the streets at night when he's unable to catch any sleep. Watching the world of junkies, thieves and whores glide past his window night after night only feed his desire to explode in this sordid, unloving world Travis lives in. Desperately, but forcefully, trying to reach out to Betsy, a local political campaign worker, only results in failure and pushes Travis to revenge. Between work shifts, his focus shifts to violence and he tentatively fantasizes of an assassination attempt on Betsy's boss. But when on a particular night he encounters a hapless child prostitute called Iris, Travis' mounting psychosis pushes him over the edge.

Despite Scorsese's excellent directing, Robert de Niro's powerful acting, the mesmerizing use of camera, colour, sound and music, "*Taxi Driver*"'s brilliance can be traced all the way back to Paul Schrader's screenplay. Published by Faber and Faber, and accompanied by two interviews with Schrader and Scorsese as well as being illustrated with a series of black-and-white movie stills, this publication returns to the source of the acclaimed film.

Schrader's work is a thing of beauty, and can be read very well in its presented form. It doesn't feel like a script at all. Apart from being split up into chapters, there are descriptive passages in his work which one wouldn't expect to find in here. Travis is being introduced as "raw male force. [It's] inevitable. The clock spring cannot be wound continually tighter. [...] Travis Bickle moves toward violence." Further on, Travis' first impressions of a particular gun are described as "a monster. [...] It is built on Michelangelo's scale. The Magnum belongs in the hand of a marble god, not a slight taxi-driver."

It must've been these powerful passages, the raw power and pain described in Schader's work which captured Scorsese's attention to turn it into film. It's the perfect distilled image of a struggling young man; no introduction or dissection, but a crystal clear and heartfelt look at a man in tremendous pain. Paul Schrader's work goes straight to the heart and the mind.

This publication is far more than a simple gimmick to cash in on the movie's success. It offers a whole new way of looking at the brilliance of "*Taxi Driver*".

Zaki says

I don't care what people say Paul Schrader's *Taxi Driver* is a comedy. ok maybe not a comedy but a tragi-comedy. OK alright it's just a tragedy. i don't think schrader had any intention to be funny but i laughed out loud at some of the scenes in this. and i found travis's maniacal metamorphosis f-ing hilarious.

Rebecca McNutt says

If you've ever seen the film *Taxi Driver*, you probably know how unforgettable it is. Reading the script was a chance to analyze the story and to really understand its depth and meanings behind the fast-paced plot and creative characters.

Inder Suri says

This Screenplay throws at me, the darker side of my own Life .
It tells me I am not alone, It tells me I am alive .

Mousa says

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J.C. says

Reading the script was interesting for me because as a teenager i had seen the film numerous times, so reading it i could hear the film in the back of my head. The best part about reading this, for me, was the fact that I got to see just how much of the film dialogue was improvised on the spot. Actors either added or subtracted to the dialogue on some scenes, adding so much more to the film than what was already there in the script. I added this in notes, sometimes word for word the changes. It made it more fun to read, for sure.

To be honest, I've never really read a full screenplay before. Bits and pieces, sure, but never something entirely. This one doesn't seem to be covered in much jargon, which made it easier to read without having to be bothered by all the instructions. i've always wanted to write a screenplay...I attempted it years ago but I found writing it the way that i was writing it was extremely tedious and boring. Now, with this script's formation as an example, I can see how it might be far more exciting and yet to the point.

Anyway, the film is still interesting and still modern. Travis speaks to all those who are isolated by modern society, the loners and outcasts who don't understand themselves or the world around them. Not saying all of

them are going to be or will be assassins, but I think there's some humane quality, in a very bizarre and dark light, about Travis, and that's the most interesting part of his character is to me.

Chavi says

Reading this - the screenplay of Scorsese's film 'Taxi Driver' - confirmed for me what a great movie it is. The screenplay is a story - dialogue, a plot, a character.

The movie is more than that.

When I watched the film I experienced it - the kind of movement where time gets shorter and you're anticipating what's coming next without realizing that you're holding your breath.

I didn't know until after when I'd read reviews about the famous movie that I was experiencing the descent into psychosis, the buildup towards violence.

The screenplay doesn't have that same kind of momentum, which is I guess what makes it such a great screenplay - it's written specifically for the screen.

Nicoleta says

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KamRun says

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Travis struggles up and collapses on the red velvet sofa, his blood-soaked body blending with the velvet. He looks helplessly up at the officer. He forms his bloody hand into a pistol, raises it to his forehead and, his voice croaking in pain, makes the sound of a pistol discharging:

Pgghew! Pgghew!

Saman Kashi says

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Jeremy Kelley says

Paul Schrader's masterpiece reads well. His voice comes clearly through the natural dialogue and the insightful screen direction. There is a subtle wit that lies spread over his concise descriptions of character, action and setting but more than that, the descriptions burn with a kind of empathy for the characters; no judgements here, simply the passage of events that take place in a certain space and time where the characters are free to be who they are and their fates are in the battling hands of will and desire.

Arlind Fazliu says

I found it cool that it was very much like the movie. Maybe I am not very familiar with screenplays and how much of them should a movie portray in the screen but being a big fan of the movie I must say that I absolutely adored it and I read it with a hot coffee nearby which at the end was cold as Arctic because I had just forgotten to drink it from being too absorbed in the reading.

This screenplay is so important to me because it portrays a big portion of my life and the way I often feel. I find it at the same time very dangerous because there are millions of people who can identify themselves with Travis Bickle and some of them may think that their destiny is similar to that of Travis and decide to go in a killing spree. Anyways, this screenplay is great and everyone who has seen the movie and is a big fan of it shall give it a go and find the similarities and differences.

Sirius Black says

It is an amazing script. I have never read such an instructive screenplay before; Schrader is in control of everything. Of course he had listened to the director and they cooperated together. I cannot really say the story is good; but Schrader creates a character, who might be considered a cliche for today. Nevertheless, this might be the movie which turned this character into a cliche, so that means the roots of stoic pscyho, anti-hero were initiated in this script. Indeed, knights, cowboys and other archaic heroes have similar codes. Even today we can see the similar characteristics; Goslings mostly acts this type of characters. The Driver and Blade Runner 2049 have the same hero. Especially in the Driver, the interesting and ironic thing is these heroes have distorted notion of "moral." They are both black and white, and do not know what is really "right." In this sense the characters have a similarity with Fleming from The Red Badge of Courage; Fleming is a coward, but as a result of a coincidence he becomes a hero just like Travis, who plans to assassin the politician but fails. Creating an existentialist character, who does not talk a lot and does not sleep enough is good; but questioning the nature of morality and the circumstances is a better dilemma created in the script.

