

WORKINGMAN'S DEATH

a film by Michael Glawogger

Astonishingly powerful documentary about really, really hard work ... Staggering ... A blistering examination of the extremes to which honest workers will go to earn their daily bread ... Frightening, stomach turning and deeply moving ... At once a celebration of the joy mankind takes in honorable hard work and an indictment of how wretched is the life of manual workers bereft of unions and other help in a world of government indifference and corporate greed ... Glawogger and his cinematographer Wolfgang Thaler were brave themselves to obtain the unforgettable images that make up one of the most searing testaments to the simple decency of hard work ...

Ray Bennett, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Compelling ... I cannot say that Glawogger seeks to provoke indignation in us. But perhaps when we are confronted with so many manipulative films, we become more sensitive to those that simply show, apparently without commenting. Such visual images, especially if they are as powerful as those in WORKINGMAN'S DEATH, speak for themselves. Sometimes showing, if it is done with this level of skill and art, can be enough. And what this film does is bring hidden concepts to the surface and into our field of vision. We see the workers doing the work, and not just as abstract symbols of a category of society ... The powerful music by John Zorn punctuates the images, reinforcing their aesthetical dimension. Happily (exceptionally?), WORKINGMAN'S DEATH is not just worth watching for its content. It is a work of art that mobilizes the resources of film language, and in every scene it is apparent that Glawogger really cares for the form of his film ... Glawogger presents the hard laborers in all their dignity, but not that lost dignity of a former social status ...

Pamela Bienzobas, FIPRESCI

A film of extreme elegance and beauty ... Describes the hard work, fears, pain of thousands of humble workers, but it also exalts also their dignity and heroism ... Glawogger records all with an impressive clearness, his eye does not hide any of the misery and danger of the situations nor does he withdraw showing images of cruelty. Nevertheless, he always maintains a high, elegant style with tracking shots and panoramic widths, scenes of great beauty, unexpected lyric gashes ... There's no rhetoric or voluntary denunciation. Commentary is practically nonexistent. The film's meaning emerges from the force of the images and their assembly, the faces and the words of the many persons met along the way ...

Aldo Spiniello, SENTIERI SELVAGGI (Italy)

Brilliant exposés on workers in Nigeria, China, Ukraine, Germany and Pakistan...

Moira Sullivan, GREEN CINE DAILY (USA)

Courageous ... Does not seek to impress or to punch the sensitivity of the audience overwhelmed by bloody sketches of slaughtered goats or by asphyxiating images of crouched miners in tunnels. The impression is rather one of condemning Western culture for having forgotten certain working truths at the beginning of the 21st Century ...

Emanuela Visco, CLOSEUP (Italy)

8 out of 10 ... Extraordinary documentary ... Approximately two hours of images of rare power ... Shocking images, brave and necessary ...

Gabriella Gallozzi, L'UNITA (Italy)

WORKINGMAN'S DEATH achieves its power without resorting to the deliberate use of visibly staged scenes ... It can be seen as a last hymn (thus, a John Zorn soundtrack) to the worker ... But at the same time, it is a chronicle of disappearance, not least of class consciousness, a moving and important contemporary document as well as another testament to its relentlessly globetrotting director's universal curiosity ...

Christoph Huber & Olaf Möller, CINEMASCOPE (Canada)

Profiles in poetic style workers toiling at endurance-testing, highly dangerous or simply horrible occupations in five corners of the globe ... A sobering reality check for anyone who's ever complained about his job ...

Leslie Felperin, VARIETY

Glawogger observes the workers with patience and meticulousness. The director, who sometimes also serves as cameraman, succeeds in creating impressive images in this way ... Makes us face our own conception of what work is. A subject which concerns everyone for their entire life ...

Nana A.T. Rebhan, ARTE (France/Germany)

Disturbing ... the exploitation of unskilled labor in the world ... In the open-air slaughterhouse in Nigeria, I defy anyone not to flinch from the images at least for a moment ...

Alessandro Boschi, RIVISTA DI CINEMATOGRAFO (Italy)

Well-chosen examples from all over the world shock you with drastic realism, terrific camera work by genius Wolfgang Thaler ... Unforgettable scenes ... Barely sufferable ... (the film) virtually provokes a physical reaction in the audience.

Rudolf John, KURIER (Austria)

One of the Venice Festival's best ... A great feature ... Has the courage to spark a deep reflection on the existence of the manual labor class through systematic and impassioned research ...

Emanuele Di Nicola, RASSEGNA (Italy)

Without a doubt, one of the most shocking and beautiful films that I have seen all year ... I cannot recommend this film enough as a purely visual experience ... A work of art more than a movie ... I was spellbound.

Matthew, TWITCH (Canada)

The fact that Glawogger attaches so much importance to color, lighting, sound and other shock effects constitutes the straight attraction of WORKINGMAN'S DEATH. The idea, work in very different places forced under very different social and economic conditions, end up aesthetic whether he does it also conceptually or not ...

Cristina Nord, DIE TAGESZEITUNG (Germany)

Biting ... Particularly impressive ...

Marli Feldvoss, NEUE ZURCHER ZEITUNG (Switzerland)

Glawogger films with wisdom ... The narration comes from the images there on the screen, thus seeing renders the knowledge concrete ...

Cristina Piccino, IL MANIFESTO (Italy)

Glawogger doesn't theorize, he shows. He doesn't comment and let's us decide ...

Giuseppe Ghigi, IL GAZZETTINO (Italy)

Pleasantly toned by John Zorn, Glawogger's film reaches a connection between art and documentary film like once existed with avant-gardist Walter Ruttmann. From the totalitarian cultural epic film, Glawogger artfully deconstructs a legacy.

Daniel Kothenschulte, FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU (Germany)