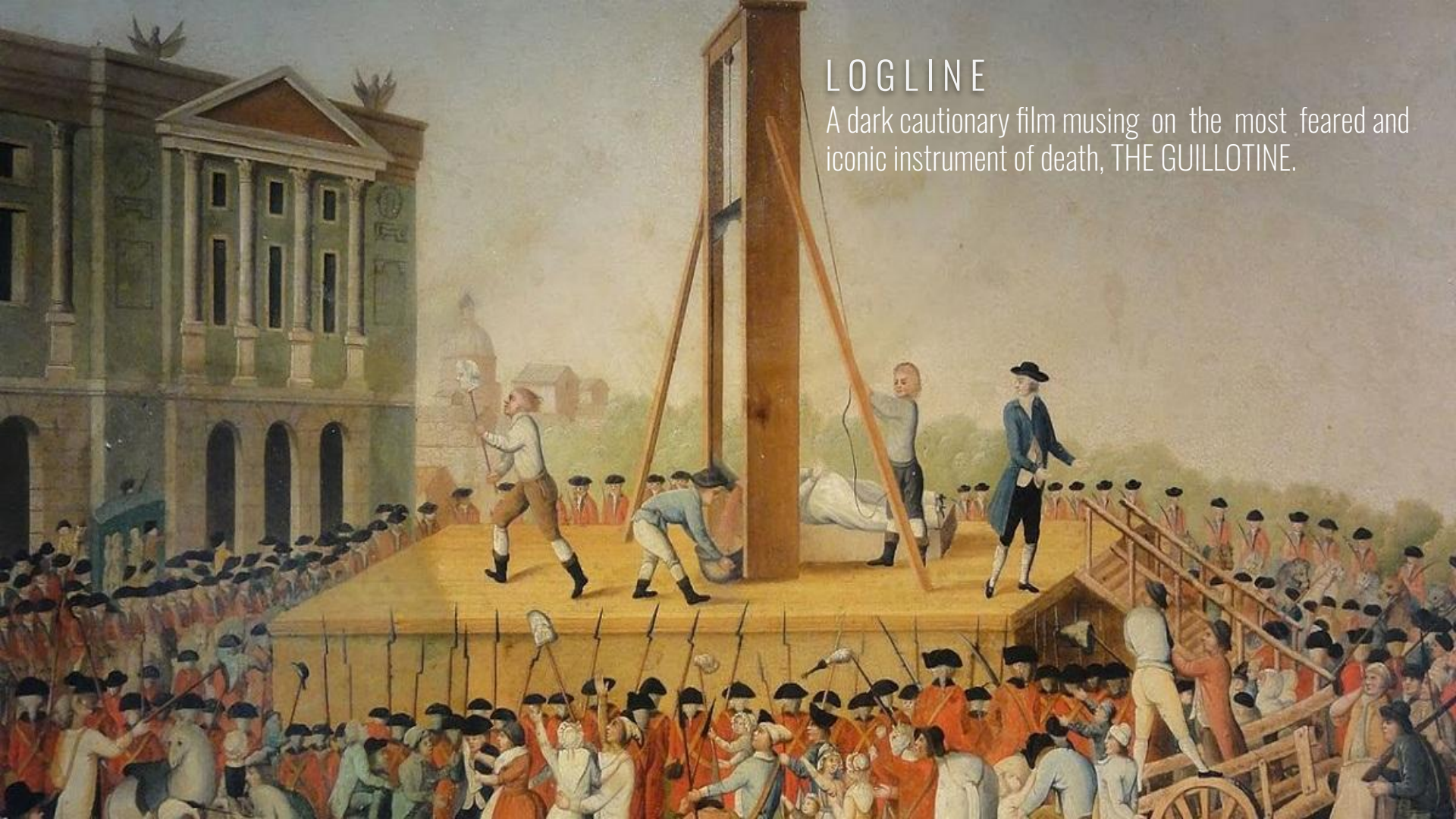


GUILLOTINE

FEATURE FILM PRESENTATION



CREATED BY RAY IZAD-MEHR



LOGLINE

A dark cautionary film musing on the most feared and iconic instrument of death, THE GUILLOTINE.

SYNOPSIS

THE GUILLOTINE was built on the ideals of *The Enlightenment*, an attempt to instill grace to an otherwise brutal expression of justice.

Organized within **5** factual tales, we examine the Guillotine's role in history, from The French Revolution to the Fall of Saddam Hussein.

At times humorous and ironic, to poignant and thoughtful, these stories also reflect the morality of their times, tracing the philosophical attitudes about capital punishment, and the power structure that allows it to be.

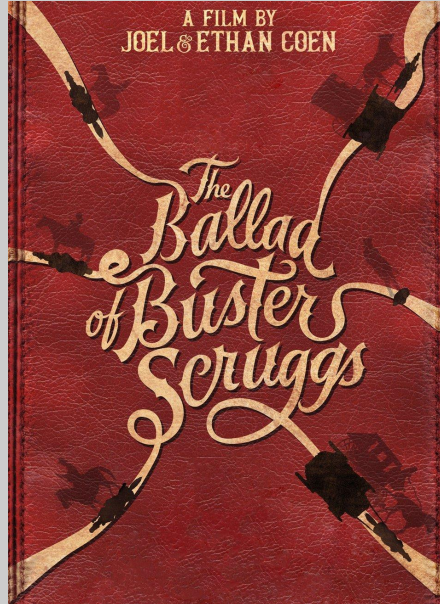
From a necessary evil to cold-blooded amusement, the blade falls with no less detachment.



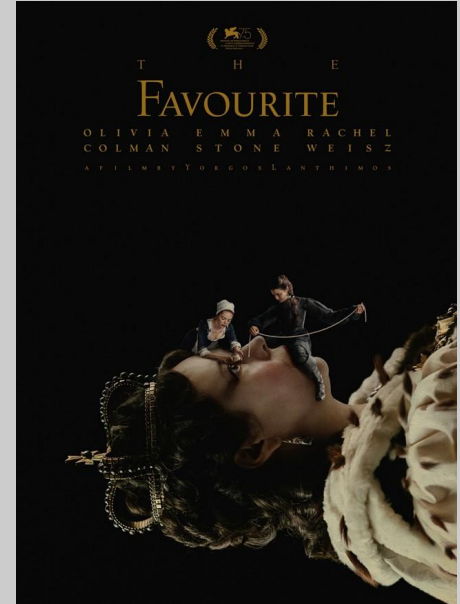
FILM CROSS



MEETS



MEETS



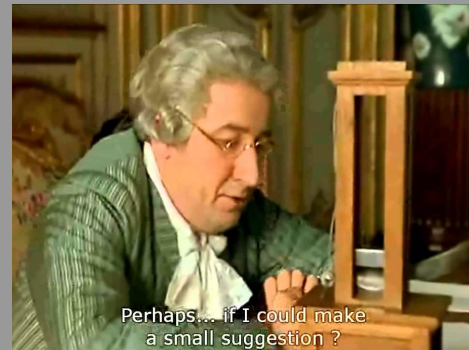
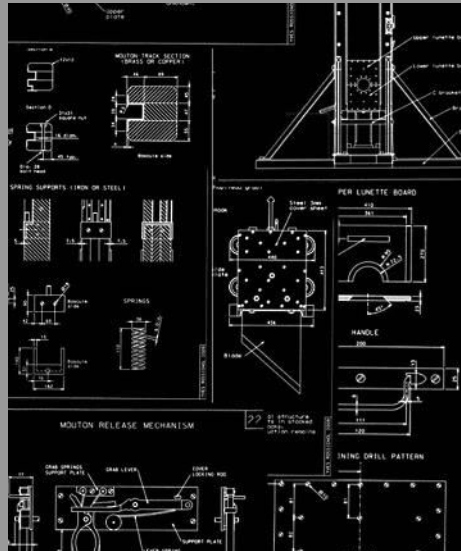
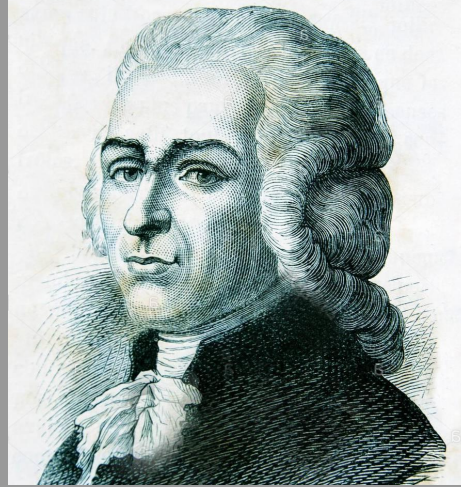
THE GOOD DOCTOR

Dr. Joseph-Ignace Guillotin was a French physician, politician and freemason who proposed the use of a device to carry out death penalties in France, as a less painful method of execution.

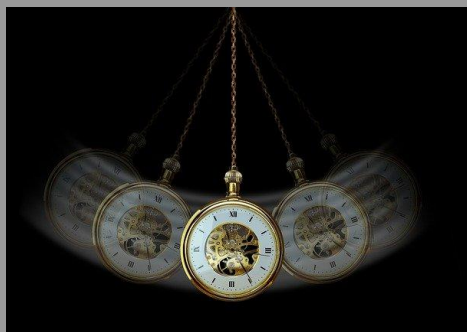
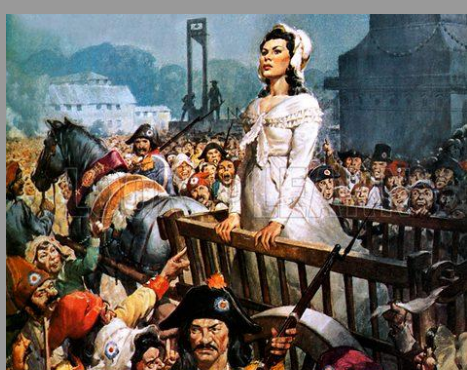
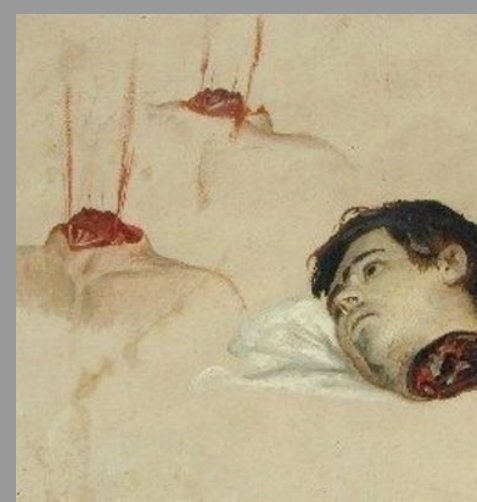
"Now, with my machine, I cut off your head in the twinkling of an eye, and you never feel it!" The statement quickly became a popular joke, and few days after the debate a comic song about Guillotin and "his" machine circulated, forever tying his name to it.

The use of beheading machines in Europe long predates the French Revolution. The French prototype was made in 1792 by German engineer and avid harpsichordist, Tobias Schmidt. According to the memoirs of the French executioner Sanson, Louis XVI suggested the use of a straight, angled blade instead of a curved one.

In a twist of fate, King Louis found his suggestion most disagreeable when *his* crown fell beneath the blade.



Perhaps... if I could make a small suggestion?



3 TALES CUT SHORT

Philosopher George Berkeley famously asked “If a tree falls in the woods, does it make a sound if no one is there to hear?” Expanding on that notion, does an afterlife (or heaven/hell) exist if people cannot perceive it? Is death instantaneous, a black void, or does consciousness continue?

There are three famous anecdotes from the steps of the Guillotine which might give an indication of what happens after that “final moment”.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY was an aristocrat whose misfortunes led her to a tragic ending. Upon being dispatched, the executioner recovered her head from the basket, and smacked her on the cheeks as a final insult. To everyone’s astonishment, she blushed.

ANTOINE-LAURENT DE LAVOISIER was a renowned French chemist responsible, in part, for devising the metric system. In his last service to science, Lavoisier made a pact to blink for as long as he could after the blade came down. He blinked for as many as thirty seconds, a conscious act from a detached head.

ANTOINE JOSEPH WIERTZ, a well known Belgian painter, agreed to be hypnotised and instructed to identify himself with a man who was about to be executed. “Terrible! The head thinks!” According to Wiertz, the head of the executed man thought, saw, and suffered. How long did it last? Three minutes, they told him. The executed man must have thought: three hundred years.

EFFICIENCY EXPERT

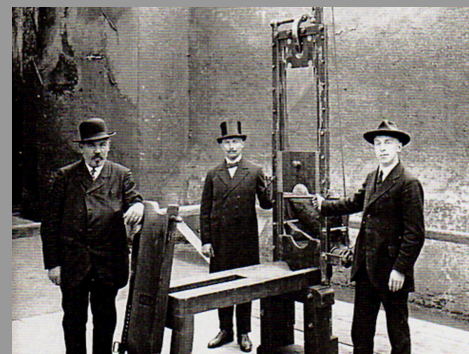
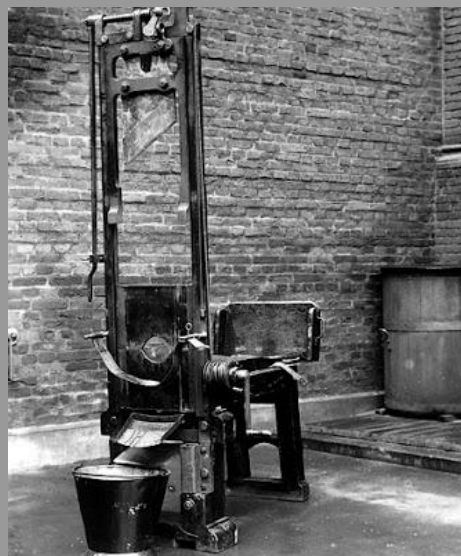
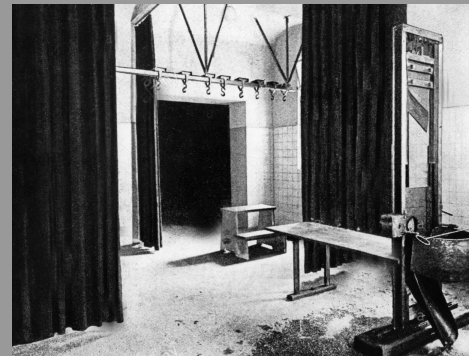
JOHANN REICHHART was a German state-appointed judicial executioner from 1924–1946. During the Nazi era, he executed 2,951 people (250 of them women) via guillotine, and 59 by hanging.

After the war, while interrogated by the allied forces, Reichhart recounted how he had gained a high-degree of efficiency at his trade, making several upgrades in the procedure and equipment.

He claimed that he could execute 9 people within a 20 minute cycle, 8 by hanging, 1 by Guillotine.

His cool demeanor made a deep impression on the American forces and was commissioned by the United States Military Government to supervise the construction of the gallows in Nuremberg.

He lived till his 78th birthday.



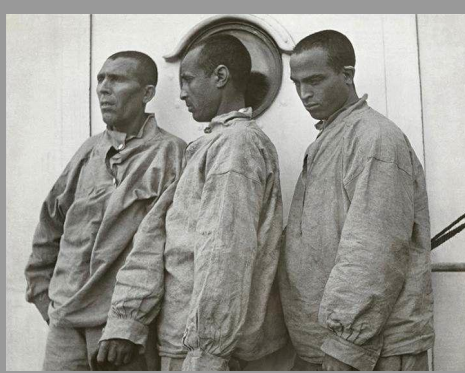
DIVINE RIGHT

Fernand Meyssonier (1931–2008) was an executioner in the last years of French Algeria. He worked from 1947 to 1961 and Guillotined more than 200 people. He is the author of a book "The Executioner's Tale" answering questions about his bloody work.

He inherited the job of executioner from his father Maurice Meyssonier in 1947 when he ended compulsory education. His ancestors had been executioners from ages ago.

Fernand would be accompanied with a priest, as the two would travel with a mobile Guillotine to various prisons. He remarked how they would carry deeply meaningful discussions on the nature of their respective vocations.

They arrive to find a man not guilty of murder, rape or robbery - but for speaking against the state. The conversation between the three is a dissertation on the nature of power, and a person's place in the scheme of it.



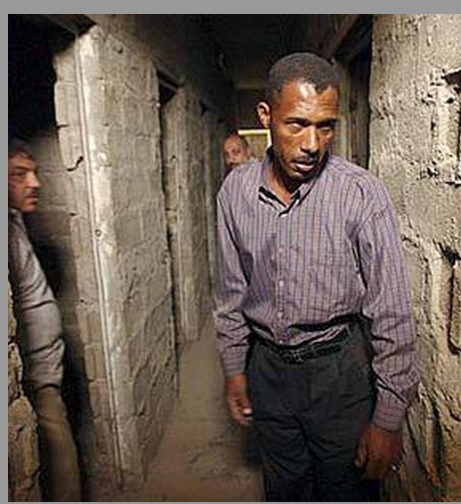
THE RED ROOM

By most accounts, Saddam Hussein's regime was marked by brutality, blood-curdling violence, and an almost cartoonish glee for absurd forms of murder, not rivaled since medieval times.

This penchant for macabre forms of dispatching his victims was not only encouraged, but celebrated and mimicked by his sons Uday and Qusay. Uday is said to have boasted to a childhood playmate that his father took him and his brother to prisons to witness torture and executions.

When the Coalition forces landed and took control of Baghdad, they were not prepared for the discoveries made in the various subterranean bunkers throughout the city. One such location, in the basement of Saddam's largest palace, was euphemistically dubbed THE RED ROOM.

Curated by Uday, a sadist and near psychopath groomed for cruelty, the Red Room was his personal torture chamber, replete with various ancient weapons of pain, including his prized possession, a Guillotine auctioned at Sotheby's.



In the Sunset of dissolution, Everything is illuminated by the aura of nostalgia, even the Guillotine.

-Milan Kundera



A belief is like a Guillotine. Just as heavy, just as light.

-Franz Kafka

GUILLOTINE, n. A machine which makes a Frenchman shrug his shoulders with good reason.

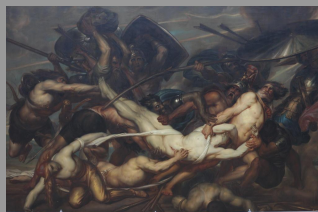
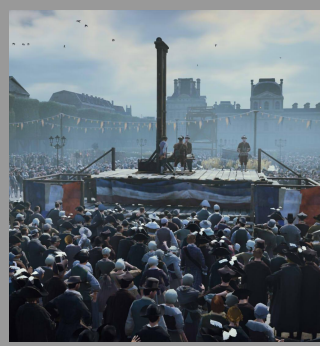
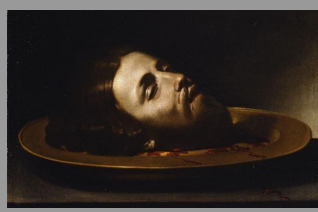
-Ambrose Bierce

STONE

The film is an odyssey into the dark recess of man's ability to kill another, displaced and distanced from the visceral by the aid of a cold machine.

Visually, each chapter of the anthology will have its own treatment, based on references of the art from each particular era. The 18th century will be colored and styled based on contemporary paintings, while the Nazi story will be in a documentary black and white newsreel style. The 1960's set Algiers story will be designed based on the color schemes of the British Hammer Films.

Overall the film will have visual styles and color palettes ranging from "Barry Lyndon" to "Three Kings".





GUILLOTINE
FEATURE FILM PRESENTATION

EMAIL ray@ozonfilms.com
EMAIL peterdonner@outlook.com

G U I L L O T I N E

