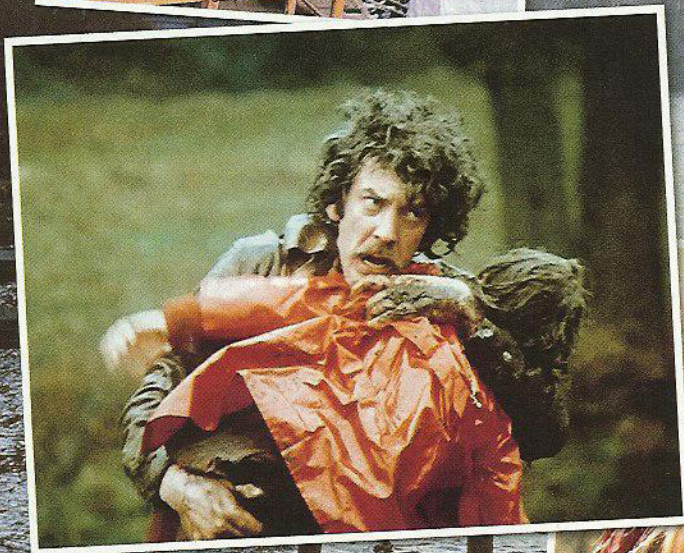


# 'It's a maze of echoes...'

Lounge sits with director Nicolas Roeg for a private viewing of his Special-Editioned masterpiece, *Don't Look Now*...



Somewhere in Soho, *Lounge* stumbles down a jagged set of stairs, ducks into a musty screening room and squeezes the hand of the 78-year-old man responsible for some of our favourite films (*Walkabout*, *Performance*, *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, *Bad Timing*)...

Nicolas Roeg offers round the egg sandwiches ("They're very good!") as the projector-man fires up his 33-year-old classic, *Don't Look Now*...

## MEMORIES

Roeg mists over a little at the sight of the rain-spattered opening credits...

It's moving to see it again, because it's like looking at old home movies – it brings back your life at the time. We had difficulties, as every movie does, but what I remember most is how happy everyone was when they were working on it.

## THE ODD COUPLE

Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie were the perfect choice. They seemed so right. I liked the culture clash aspect of an English/American marriage. There isn't a moment of acting in them. You believe them. They both wanted the parts badly, and I believe if an actor wants

a part badly enough, then they should be hired, even if they cost \$5 million.

## THE POOL

At home, struck by a flash of foreboding, Sutherland's character rushes outside to find his young daughter has drowned in the garden pool.

That moan he makes – it's extraordinary. A sort of bellow of grief. It still sends a shiver up my spine. It was terribly difficult to shoot, because the little girl picked up on Donald's acting and became quite scared.

## VENICE

To escape their grief, Sutherland and wife Julie Christie relocate to the watery city, where he takes a job restoring churches.

It's a beautiful, extraordinary place. All those backstreets and water... It's like a maze of echoes. You hear people but can't see them. In winter, it changes. Everything shuts, except a few bars and restaurants. But you rarely sense happiness in Venice. It's the most beautiful prison in the world.

## SEXUAL HEALING

The couple run through their bedtime ablutions. Roeg segues the yawning and teeth-brushing into a famously naturalistic sex-scene...

It's not a seduction. It's an understanding. They're coming back to each other. They are at ease with each other again. After the kind of thing they've suffered – the death of a child – couples won't be sexually intimate for a long time. I suppose it is a sort of healing, because they're returning to that moment where their child was created. They finally realise they can maybe do it again. It breaks your heart to think about it...

## THE SMILE

After the closing funeral, Julie Christie's character sails down the canal with a strange, Mona Lisa-style half-smile on her face...

That's a key moment. You sense it was all pre-ordained. It's not the smile of someone who doesn't care. It's the smile of the undefeated. You know, now they can't take anything else away from me. It's, "Fuck you, fate!"

## DON'T LOCK NOW

Chasing a small figure in a red coat around the shady back alleys, Sutherland passes through – and locks – an iron gate...

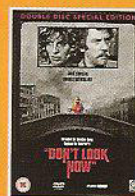
That's a very dark moment. He's essentially shutting himself into his obsession, sealing his fate. The character he's chasing can't get out, but neither can any rescuers get in...

Andy Lowe

## DON'T LOOK NOW 15

1973 Out 13 November (£17.99)

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★



Nicolas Roeg's dazzling occult thriller follows the efforts of grieving couple John and Laura Baxter (Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie) to recover from their daughter's drowning death by

heading to – irony alert – Venice.

Sutherland and Christie (both terrifically naturalistic) are also shadowed by a blind clairvoyant who insists she's in touch with their daughter from beyond the grave. Roeg builds a potent sense of dread, culminating in a shocking climax guaranteed to instill you with a lifelong fear of small people in shiny red macs.

The most significant extra on this Special Edition is a Roeg commentary, in which the director frustrates with his meandering and occasionally baffling conversational style. Patient prodding by film critic Adam Smith wrings out a few nuggets, but mostly Roeg sounds like he'd rather be scraping gum off the pavements outside instead of sitting in a DVD commentary booth, resulting in a painfully protracted listening experience. Still, Roeg's recalcitrance doesn't detract from his film's unsettling and enduring genius.

Matt Mueller

## EXTRAS

- ▶ Director commentary
- ▶ Making Of featurette