



Chiasso, Cinema EXCELSIOR

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THE POST

2017

115' minutes

Directed by **Steven Spielberg**

Starring: Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks

Spielberg opens with a black screen, which gives way to a bloody Vietnam firefight in 1966, witnessed first-hand by military analyst Daniel Ellsberg (Matthew Rhys). Fast-forward to '71, where Ellsberg's leaked report ("United States – Vietnam Relations 1945- 1967") makes the front page of the *New York Times*, telling the world that four successive administrations had misled the American public about the war, and revealing that former secretary of defence Robert McNamara (Bruce Greenwood) "knew we couldn't win in 65 – that's six goddam years ago!"

Widowed socialite and mother of four Katharine "Kay" Graham (Meryl Streep) is a close friend of McNamara. But she is also the proprietor-publisher of the *Washington Post*, whose editor Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks) is eager to pursue the Pentagon Papers story, despite an injunction against the *Times*. "Kay throws a great party," says a colleague "but her father gave the paper to her husband" – a demeaning assessment shared by many of the belligerent men who surround Graham at work. Will she have the mettle to stand and fight for what is right, even if doing so puts the paper's very existence at risk?

The Post has been described by Hanks as a story "about the week Katharine Graham became 'Katharine Graham'". Certainly, Streep's character provides the emotional fulcrum on which the drama turns. Time and again, Spielberg pictures her as the only woman in the room, initially disempowered. But as the story progresses, Graham finds her own voice – hesitant at first, but increasingly firm and forthright.

As for Hanks, he captures the swashbuckling bravado of Bradlee, who realises that the cosy relationship he has formerly shared with presidents must come to an end. With his chin-forward stance and ready-for-action manner, Hanks seems utterly at home amid the typewriter clatter of production designer Rick Carter's newsroom sets.

For all its period detail, however, this is an urgently contemporary tale. Hitting our screens as the current White House incumbent raves about news media being "the enemy of the American people", *The Post* offers a reminder that "the founding fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfil its essential role... to serve the governed, not the governors". The film-making may hardly be groundbreaking, but this story is more relevant than ever, and it is told with wit, precision and understated passion. (Abridged from The Guardian 21st January 2018)

Critics' comments:

The people deserve the truth and not to be lied to, but "The Post" shows that is easier said than done, and it's harder than just writing a story and sending it to the presses. "The Post" — like "Spotlight" two years ago — respects the craft, the mission and the thrill of journalism, as well as those dedicated to carrying it out. It's a love letter to newspapers and a thumb in the eye to those who try to silence them. (Adam Graham The Detroit News Jan 12 2018)

It's a high-quality, all-star production that boasts a stacked cast and a musical score from the legendary John Williams. Every character on screen — even the lowly intern — is more intelligent than you, and Spielberg prides himself on it. The roll-up-the-sleeves-and-dig-in attitude is a joy to watch; the multitude of self-righteous monologues are anything but. (Mara Reinstein usmagazine.com January 8, 2018)

I thought this was going to be a dry film with big names for critics to slobber over. I was wrong. This movie didn't just use big names to advertise, it showed us why the names Streep, Hanks, and Spielberg carry as much weight as they do. All three deliver and the screenplay/story is equally gripping. (Sanjay Rema)