



Before the Devil Knows You're Dead

Sidney Lumet

USA, 2007
English

123 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Before The Devil Knows, Inc.**

Executive Producer: **David Bergstein**

Producer: **Michael Cerenzie, Brian Linse**

Screenplay: **Kelly Masterson**

Cinematographer: **Ron Fortunato**

Editor: **Tom Swartwout**

Production Designer: **Christopher Nowak**

Sound: **Dave Paterson**

Music: **Carter Burwell**

Principal Cast: **Philip Seymour Hoffman, Ethan Hawke, Marisa Tomei, Albert Finney, Rosemary Harris**

Production: **Before The Devil Knows, Inc., 8593 Lookout Mountain Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90046 USA.**

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CONTACT INFORMATION

US Distributor: **ThinkFilm**

International Sales Agent: **Capitol Films**

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This scabrous, provocative work of film noir comes from one of cinema's more intriguing masters. Sidney Lumet's extraordinary career has delighted in unsavoury, complex characters that question the fundamentals of America's self-image. He is also a gifted director of actors, helping many of the world's greatest earn countless awards and nominations.

These elements fuse again in *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*. Essentially a botched-heist thriller, it has one chilling, essential twist and a fascinating formal conceit. The twist is that the perpetrators of the heist are two brothers, and their parents own the suburban jewellery store they want to rob. When Mom accidentally (she wasn't supposed to be working) gets plugged by a hired gun, the boys are left with some pretty tough choices, none of them pleasant.

The performances are simply outstanding. Ethan Hawke and Philip Seymour Hoffman play the brothers. Hank (Hawke) is a loser way behind on his child support, while Andy (Hoffman) is a smug and thieving drug addict whose high-powered corporate career is about to crumble around him. Marisa Tomei plays Andy's wife and Hank's lover – oops! – with great moxie, while the distinguished Albert Finney electrifies the screen as the boys' mean-spirited father out for revenge.

The film employs an overlapping time structure, revealing information by retelling the central elements of the story from different characters' points of view over different days. This allows Lumet to present broader refractions of these easily condemned sleazebags,

never justifying their actions but making their all-too-human desperation uncomfortably familiar and conceptually possible.

Lumet's impressive return to form could not have come at a better time. The tough, angry spirit of seventies cinema embodied in his classic films like *Serpico*, *The Anderson Tapes* and *Dog Day Afternoon* suffuses much of American filmmaking today. This newest film shows that Lumet the guru still has a few surprising tricks up his sleeve.

■ **Noah Cowan**

Sidney Lumet presents The Best Years of Our Lives in the Festival's Dialogues: Talking with Pictures series this year.



Sidney Lumet was born in Philadelphia and began his career as an actor before directing for live television in the early fifties. He made his feature directorial debut with *12 Angry Men* (57), which won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film

Festival, and went on to direct several dozen films. He received a 2004 Academy Award® for lifetime achievement. His features include *That Kind of Woman* (59), *The Iceman Cometh* (60), *The Fugitive Kind* (60), *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (62), *The Pawnbroker* (64), *Fail-Safe* (64), *The Hill* (65), *The Group* (66), *The Appointment* (69), *The Anderson Tapes* (71), *Serpico* (73), *Murder on the Orient Express* (74), *Dog Day Afternoon* (75), *Network* (76), *The Wiz* (78), *Prince of the City* (81), *Deathtrap* (82), *The Verdict* (82), *Running on Empty* (88), *A Stranger Among Us* (92), *Night Falls on Manhattan* (97), *Find Me Guilty* (06) and *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead* (07).