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## Reworked by Stephen King, 'Shining' Is a Shriek

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

More often than not, when television decides to remake a well-known movie, especially one from a distinguished film director, the result is distressing. But that is hardly the case this weekend. The best-selling author Stephen King never hid the fact that he was unhappy with the director Stanley Kubrick's 1980 version of his novel "The Shining." Mr. King's solution: adapt the book himself for a six-hour mini-series. "Stephen King's 'The Shining' " will be shown on ABC Sunday, Monday and, running up against NBC's big guns ("Seinfeld" and "E. R."), Thursday. This television production leaves the movie in the dust.

Oddly enough, the movie, starring Jack Nicholson and Shelley Duvall, was criticized for being too long, running 146 minutes. But it is now apparent that it wasn't long enough. Mr. King's horror and ghost stories depend on an accumulation of homely details to establish character and situation. Dispensing with too many of them, the movie left the Nicholson character adrift, making his violent outbursts simply puzzling much of the time. Television provides time for the gradual and increasingly tense buildup.

Here it is Steven Weber ("Wings") who plays Jack Torrance, husband of Wendy (Rebecca De Mornay) and father of 7-year-old Danny (Courtland Mead). Jack is an aspiring writer and a recovering alcoholic. Trying to put an unsettled past behind him, he takes a job as winter caretaker at the grand Overlook Hotel, nestled in the Colorado Rockies and just closing up for the season. One other thing: Danny has special psychic abilities, which the hotel's similarly gifted cook, Halloran (Melvin Van Peebles), calls "the shining." Danny's imaginary friend, Tony (Wil Horneff), warns him to stay away from the hotel. And away we go.

The hotel and surrounding landscape are crawling with creepy phenomena. Ghosts from decades earlier wander the rooms and meet in the ballroom for lavish parties, complete with an orchestra led by a rather slimy looking Mr. King. Outside, topiary hedges shaped as animals grow decidedly menacing. A large heater hisses in the boiler room, threatening to explode if not properly monitored. This is definitely King territory, a land of shudders.

The core of the story, though, is basically a domestic drama. The Torrances are a family desperately reaching for survival. Jack has been an abusive father, especially during his drinking bouts. He keeps in touch with Alcoholics Anonymous but is by no means assured of continuing sobriety. At the same time, he has mixed feelings about his gifted son, often finding the boy a threat to his own authority. Primeval family emotions haunt the world of "The Shining."

Mr. King's script and the direction of Mick Garris ("Stephen King's 'The Stand' ") slowly and skillfully bring "The Shining" to a pitch of screeching horror. Mr. Weber, shucking the light comedy of sitcom, is chillingly effective as a man battling his own personal demons. Ms. De Mornay is the battered figure in the middle. And young Master Mead is quite extraordinary as a boy who wants desperately to believe in his father.

ABC may have found the perfect blockbuster to launch its May sweeps.

## 'Riot'

Showtime, Sunday night at 8

Geared to the fifth anniversary of the Los Angeles riots, this production uses four separate but loosely intertwined stories to look at the situation from different ethnic viewpoints.

There's the Korean-American family trapped in a small food store ("Gold Mountain," written and directed by Galen Yuen); the Latino youths lured into the looting ("Caught in the Fever," written before his death by Joe Vasquez of "Hangin' With the Homeboys" and directed by Alex Munoz); the Los Angeles policeman threatened by the violent mob ("Empty," written and directed by Richard DiLello), and the black man caught between his middle-class aspirations and the rage of the rioters in South Central ("Homecoming Day," written and directed by David C. Johnson).

Worked in among actual news reports, the anecdotes are sharply etched and often harrowing. The aim is evidently to point out that no one group had a monopoly on goodness and virtue, or on evil and culpability. But the careful re-creation of the violence will leave many viewers wondering if anything has been accomplished other than television entertainment business as usual. The strong cast, though, cannot be faulted. Included are Mario Van Peebles; his father, Melvin Van Peebles; Cicely Tyson; Luke Perry; Mako, Dante Basco, and Alex Munoz.

## STEPHEN KING'S 'THE SHINING'

ABC, Sunday night at 9

First of a three-part mini-series written by Stephen King and based on his novel. Directed by Mick Garris; Mark Carliner, producer; Elliot Friedgen, supervising producer, Shelly Johnson, director of photography; Craig Stearns, production designer; Mr. King, executive producer; music by Nicholas Pike; Lakeside Productions, in association with Warner Brothers Television.

WITH: Rebecca De Mornay (Wendy Torrance), Steven Weber (Jack Torrance), Courtland Mead (Danny Torrance), Melvin Van Peebles (Halloran), Wil Horneff (Tony) and Stephen King (Bandleader).