

TV Review: 'Richard Pryor: Omit the Logic' Stays on Surface

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 31, 2013 - 12:55pm

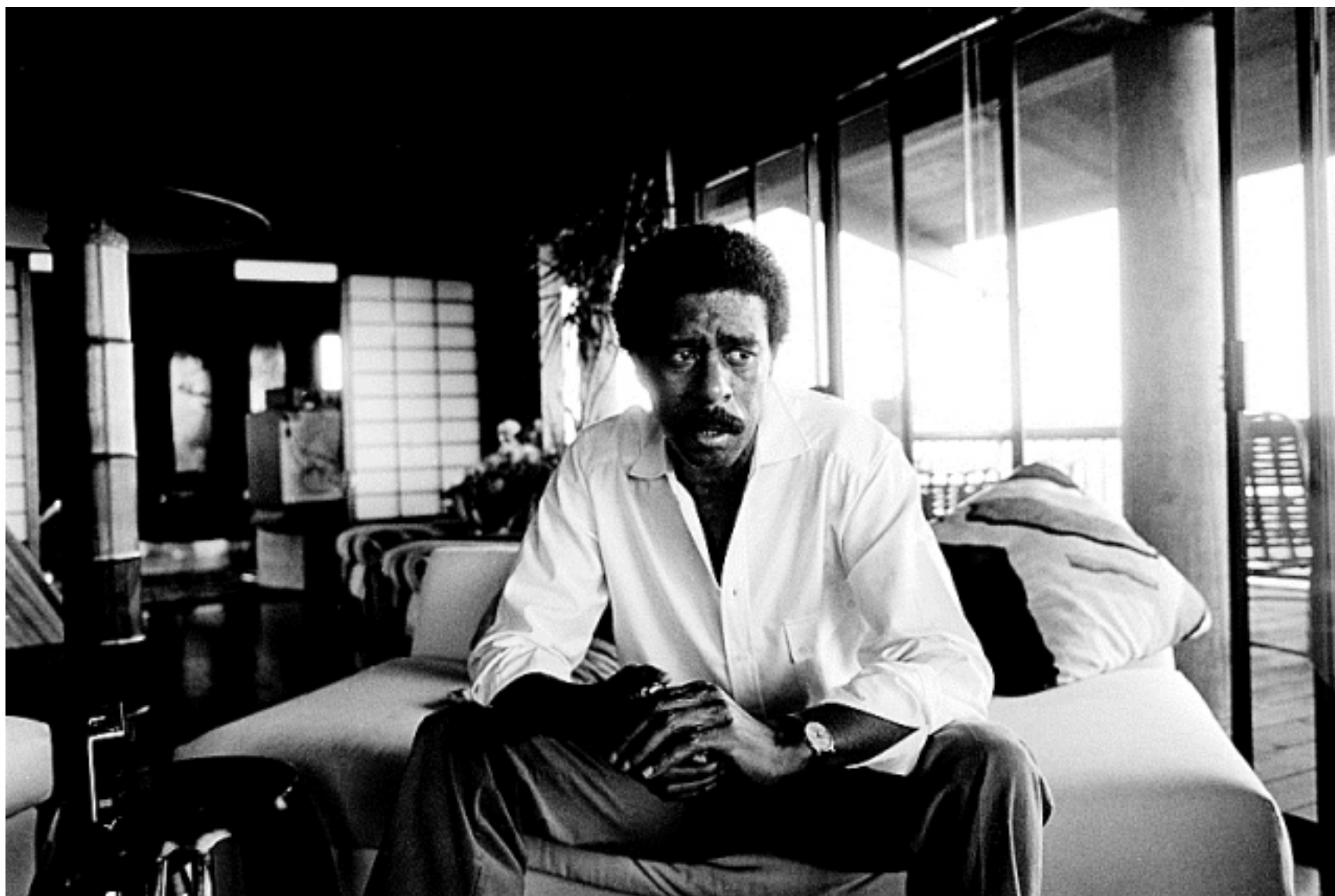
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CHICAGO – A bit too much of “Richard Pryor: Omit the Logic,” premiering tonight, May 31, 2013, on Showtime, is devoted to adoration of its subject matter from his peers and friends, and not enough insight is offered into from where the true talent or serious demons of the man originated. Perhaps no one really knows. Perhaps people as talented and as troubled as Richard Pryor are impossible to decipher. As a showcase of Pryor’s talent and influence, “Omit the Logic” is undeniably fun. It just feels a little slight given the massive cultural influence of its subject matter.



Television Rating: **3.0/5.0**

“Omit the Logic” features interviews with people who knew and worked with Pryor like Paul Mooney, Mel Brooks, and Jesse Jackson, along with those influenced by him over the years like Dave Chappelle and Whoopi Goldberg. The lesser-known personalities interviewed, the people who were actually closest to Pryor, offer the most insight and prove to be the most interesting. Over the course of the documentary, which focuses almost entirely on his professional career — too quickly jumping over his numerous marriages and family background raised in a brothel — the people who worked with and called Pryor a friend still seem to be coming to terms with a man who clearly battled depression, addiction, and anger issues. Those who didn’t know him are left, like all of us, to simply admire the work of one of the funniest men who ever lived (which you’ll be able to do so almost completely with Shout Factory’s great DVD-set “Richard Pryor: No Pryor Restraint,” which we’ll cover in June).



Richard Pryor: Omit the Logic

Photo credit: Showtime

My slight disappointment in “Omit the Logic” could be simply due to my age and I wonder if younger viewers less familiar with Pryor will be more impressed simply with the loads of stand-up material and behind-the-scenes stories, and therefore more satisfied. Director Marina Zenovich was granted access to tons of great archival footage, including old stand-up footage, TV appearances, and interviews. Although

"Omit the Logic" is slight on actual Pryor, largely because the man was pretty private. Even his friends were surprised by some of his marriages (there's an amazing story about Pam Grier & a wedding cake that had to be altered when he ended up taking another woman to the altar) and so one gets the feeling that no one really knew why Pryor self-destructed so often.

Part of the problem is that his talent often outshines any attempt at personal exploration. Sure, he shot his car and couldn't keep a relationship together and lit himself on fire, but it led to "Live on the Sunset Strip," so all's forgiven. And yet even his late career missteps are somewhat glossed over. He went to Africa after his grandmother's death and that seemed to shake his approach to comedy but then how exactly did he end up in junk like "The Toy" and "Superman III"? And why is so little time devoted to his partnership with Gene Wilder, either in the early days like "Silver Streak" or when they reunited in the late '80s?

How could a man so beloved be so self-destructive as to light himself on fire? Was he trying to commit suicide? Had his demons of addiction taken over his life? And where did those demons come from? We get glimpses of it in "Omit the Logic" and the very title of the film seems to fly in the face of too much examination. We'll never figure Pryor out. Omit the logic and just enjoy the brilliant work that he left us.

"Richard Pryor: Omit the Logic" was directed by Marina Zenovich. It premieres on Showtime on May 31, 2013 at 8pm CST.



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