

RICHARD SCHICKEL

D.W. GRIFFITH

AN AMERICAN LIFE

Awarded the Book Prize of the British Film Institute

He transformed a nickelodeon novelty into a new art form and a powerful, glamorous American industry. He codified the rules and techniques of screen story-telling, and pioneered the conventions that brought films to life, from surging spectacle to soul-baring close-ups. A poor farm boy from the South, Griffith rose to fame with *The Birth of a Nation*, a cinematic masterpiece stained by the racism that infected his heritage. Though he went on to direct some of the most legendary films of the silent era, Griffith was doomed by his over-reaching drives, and he died an embittered man, shunned by the community he had largely created. His story is told here with unsparing truth and compelling narrative sweep.

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Limelight Editions
118 East 30th Street
New York, NY 10016

ISBN 0-87910-080-X

