



38<sup>th</sup> SEASON

## ENGLISH FILM CLUB 2017/18

Locarno, Cinema Kursaal

18.15

Friday, 23 February 2018

**The Founder**            **2017**

115 minutes

Directed by **John Lee Hancock**

Starring: Michael Keaton, Nick Offerman and John Carroll Lynch

Ray Kroc is a traveling salesman selling Prince Castle brand milkshake makers in 1954 but with little success. While he has a supportive wife, Ethel, and has saved enough to live a simple and comfortable life in Arlington Heights, Illinois, he craves more. After learning that a drive-in in San Bernardino is ordering an unusually large number of milkshake makers, Ray drives to California to see it. What he finds is McDonald's — a highly popular walk-up restaurant with fast service, high-quality food, disposable packaging and a family-friendly atmosphere.

Ray meets with the two McDonald brothers, Maurice "Mac" McDonald and Richard "Dick" McDonald. Ray tours the kitchens and notes the employees' strong work ethic. Dick explains the high-quality food and lightning-fast service are the backbones of their diner. Ray takes the brothers to dinner and is told the origin story of McDonald's. The next day, Ray suggests that the brothers franchise the restaurant and discovers that they had previously attempted to do so only to encounter absentee owners and inconsistent standards, which ultimately led to the failure of the endeavor. Ray persists and eventually convinces the brothers to allow him to lead their franchising efforts on the condition that he agree to a contract which requires all changes to receive the McDonald brothers' approval in writing.

Initially, Ray begins building a McDonald's restaurant in Des Plaines, Illinois, while attempting to entice wealthy investors (specifically fellow members at the country club he and Ethel were members of) to open franchises, but encounters the same poor management ethic which doomed the original franchise efforts. Ray hits on the idea of franchising to middle-class investors, who are more likely to be hands-on and willing to follow the McDonald's formula. This proves successful, and new franchises begin opening across the Midwest, with Ray representing himself as the creator of McDonald's. During this time, Ray meets Rollie Smith, an upscale restaurant owner in Minnesota who wishes to invest, and his wife Joan, to whom Ray is immediately attracted....

### Critics' comments:

- *The Founder* features an engrossing tale of the rise of a fast-food empire, an exceptional cast that's at the top of their game, and a marvelous screenplay that lays out these events in all of their intriguing, gritty detail. (Jeff Beck, *The Blu Spot*)

-*The Founder* is, at first glance, a conventional biopic but it's the story of a cynical predator, the perverter of the innocent dream of two naive brothers who tried to counter the chaotic drift of those dinners. (Jordi Costa, *El Pais*)