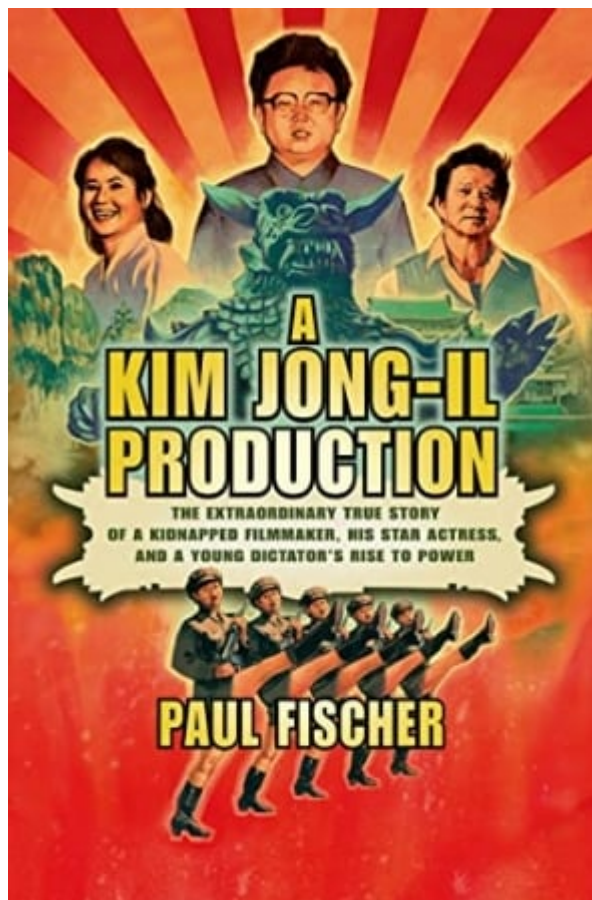


Dibidy, Dibidy, That's All, Folks! A Review of A Kim Jong-Il Production by Paul Fischer

By Armando Simón

The story is so bizarre it would be unbelievable unless one knew about the North Korean dictator, Kim Jong-Il, who was also an ardent cinephile and wanted to have a movie industry that could compete in the international arena but had been frustrated for years because of the self-imposed totalitarian blinders.



So . . . he ordered the kidnapping of a South Korean director and his actress wife so that they would make movies for him. Having very little choice in the matter, they agreed to do so. They put up with the constant surveillance, the over the top sycophantic eulogies directed at the dictator that were mandatory. They were fortunate, however, in that Kim showered them with food and presents while they were in the country even as the population experienced famine. Kim genuinely held them in high esteem, referring to them as “teachers.” Eventually, a couple

of their films even received international awards. All the while they waited for the right moment to escape. When they

did so in Vienna, they brought with them a recording of Kim talking to them; the problem was, Kim had never publicly spoken, so their story of having been kidnapped, as opposed to having defected to North Korea was met with skepticism (it would have been awkward to have asked Kim for a letter of reference).

The book is a detailed account of their experience, which is reinforced by historical background about the country, the dictators (father and son) and the flurry of kidnappings of S. Koreans, Japanese, Jordanians, Lebanese and others.

Read this book. You won't put it down.