**N5640 THE NINTH CONFIGURATION (USA, 1980)**

(Other titles: Nona configurazione; Twinkle, twinkle killer Kane)

**Credits:** director/writer/novel, William Peter Blatty.

**Cast:** Stacy Keach, Scott Wilson, Jason Miller, Ed Flanders.

**Summary:** Psychological melodrama set in the contemporary U.S. Colonel Hudson Kane (Keach) arrives to take charge at an old Gothic mansion near Washington which the military has acquired to study the possibility that incidents of psychosis in Vietnam are faked. The inmates submit him to a harrowing display of eccentricities which they hope will break him down like his predecessor. Appointed by a clerical error, Kane is no psychiatrist, but a combat veteran troubled by dreams of his brother Vincent, a ruthless killer. Kane holds a Catholic belief in the essential goodness of man. This belief is mocked by Capt. Cutshaw (Wilson), a mad astronaut. Realizing that his patients need a safety valve, Kane plans to stage John Sturges's *The Great Escape* as a psychodrama. However, when a new arrival recognizes him as 'Killer Kane' he collapses. Col. Fell (Flanders) then reveals himself to be the real Hudson Kane, explaining the masquerade as a form of shock therapy to heal his traumatized brother. Disillusioned by this revelation, Cutshaw runs away. Kane rescues him from a group of hostile bikers by reverting to his 'Killer' persona, then commits suicide. Cutshaw eventually is rehabilitated and rediscovers a St. Christopher medal which Kane gave him at their first meeting.


“Blatty’s ‘Configuration’ bought for world by United Film” *Variety* (Jun 20, 1979), p. 28.


Devine, Jeremy M. *Vietnam at 24 frames a second* [GB] (p. 201, 320)


Kermode, Mark. “The ninth configuration” *Sight and Sound* 9 (Jul 1999), p. 50. (see also under Blatty, William Peter)
Lanning, Michael Lee. *Vietnam at the movies* [GB] (p. 280-81)
[Reprinted in *Film review annual 1981*]
Muse, Eben J. *The land of Nam: the Vietnam war in American film* [GB] (p. 138, 258)
[Reprinted in *Film review annual 1981*]
Tamulis, Jim. “Twinkle, twinkle killer Kane” *Film journal* 83 (Sep 1980), p. 16.
Walker, Mark Edward. *Vietnam veteran films* [GB] (p. 137)
“William Peter Blatty on ‘Killer Kane’” *Film journal* 83 (Sep 1980), p. 6+ [2 p.]
Williams, Tony. “Ninth configuration” *Vietnam war feature filmography* (1992 draft) [GB] (p. 275-7) and *Vietnam war films* [GB] (Entry 409)
[Reprinted in *Film review annual 1981*]

c2005 J.K.M. Enterprises