



FILM: **BEING THE RICARDOS**

FDG RATING: 3.0 ☺☺☺○○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Aaron Sorkin: *director*  
Nicole Kidman: *actress, Lucille Ball*  
Javier Bardem: *actor, Desi Arnaz*

DATE: February 20, 2022

### DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **BEING THE RICARDOS**

Many of us grew up watching I Love Lucy and appreciate Lucille Ball's comedic genius even more now. In the film, Being the Ricardos, the black and white scenes that reproduced some of Lucy's most memorable comic situations were our favorite parts. The rest was a mixed bag of memories narrated by her closest friends and colleagues, and a non-chronological re-enactment of her life with Desi Arnaz on and off screen, including how they met. For most of us, the pseudo documentary style with flash backs created a fractured story and we had trouble accepting Nicole Kidman as Lucy and Javier Bardem as Ricky Ricardo. However, we did like the insight into the real Lucille Ball as a very smart, confident, opinionated, controlling, dominating woman which was key to her success. A few discussion participants were not as familiar with Lucy's popular TV show and thought Nicole was totally convincing as Lucy; the actress completely morphed into her character. Others noted that Lucy had a fiery spark that was missing in Nicole's performance.

We learned that the TV studio did not want a Latin man cast as Lucy's husband, but Lucille Ball insisted that Desi play the part of Ricky Ricardo. Also, when Lucy was pregnant, the studio wanted to hide her pregnancy and Desi insisted that the pregnancy be part of the TV show. It was radical, scandalous, "You can't have a pregnant woman on television," was the immediate studio retort but it actually proved a ratings coup. More people apparently tuned into the episode celebrating the birth of the Ricardos' baby in January 1953 than watched Eisenhower's inauguration. Another pivotal back story segment concerned her registration as a Communist which she explained was to "appease her socialist grandfather" but she never self-identified as one. J. Edgar Hoover, who served as the FBI director at the time cleared Ball of any suspicions which would have put her at risk of losing everything.

It was also revealed that Desi was very instrumental in the TV series production and actually developed the technique to use three cameras to film the show. That innovation would allow sitcoms, going forward, to be filmed live.

We agreed the film lacked focus and most agreed that Nicole and Javier were miscast. Interesting back story factoid insights weren't enough to warrant a film. Rather than peek behind the scenes at their strained marriage, we are happier dwelling on Lucille Ball's genius comedy as seen so many iconic episodes of the TV show, I Love Lucy. The black and white recreations of some of those favorite scenes would receive our highest scores but the movie, Being the Ricardos, garnered a humorless 3.0 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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