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# The Killer

By Ryan Fitzmartin | November 7th, 2023

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Is there a director more suited to telling the story of a cold, calculated killer than David Fincher? The man who has so expertly turned his eye to countless serial murderers takes his vision to those who slay for pay in *The Killer*. Fincher's vision is ruthless, tight, and thoroughly planned to the minute detail. Fincher and his team take a rather boilerplate revenge tale, and make it tremendously thrilling.

The script, adapted and condensed from the French comic of the same name, is your standard assassin revenge tale. We've seen meticulous killers on screen before, and the only thing the script really does to differentiate it from standard action fare is an intriguing narration, an interesting device seen more often in comics than movies. Otherwise, there's not much depth to the story, the movie is mostly a series of gruesome hits.



It's impressive then that in the lead, Michael Fassbender inhabits the nihilistic hitman with uncommon depth. The Killer is a very organized man, who plans every inch of his crimes and abhors improvisation. Fassbender's role is one of very few spoken words, letting his monotone narration and body language dictate his character. It's a challenging role for any actor, but Fassbender does a phenomenal job of letting emotions play across his face even as his lips don't move. We always sense there's something boiling under the surface. The supporting cast is small, but the standouts are Charles Parnell and Kerry O'Malley, who have little screen time but big impacts. Tilda Swinton also pops in for two scenes with instant charisma. She's in the film for only about five minutes, but she makes the most of it.

The technical credits are impeccable, with usual Fincher collaborators in all spots. It's their work that really takes the film to the next level. Two-time Oscar winning editor Kirk Baxter keeps the movie at a brisk pace, and the two hour runtime speeds by. Baxter builds tension better than almost anyone else in the industry, and his work in the first fifteen minutes could be taught in film schools. The opening follows the Killer as he closes in on a target, and Baxter and Fincher masterfully escalate the scene. As we wait for that one perfect shot to emerge, Baxter cuts between a variety of different elements, nailing the pacing just right, until the audience is ready to explode.

Another Oscar winner, Erik Messerschmidt, lenses, and his work is strong, even if he doesn't quite top his masterful cinematography on *Mindhunter* or *Mank*. Fincher is famous for saying there's only one right way to shoot a scene, and Messerschmidt always manages to find that right way. As if that wasn't enough Oscar gold behind the camera, Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross put together a thrumming score. The score mixes with tunes from the Smiths, forming the backbeat to the Killer's intensifying thoughts.

All this talent comes together in a truly phenomenal fight sequence, one of the best of the year. I won't spoil exactly who the Killer is fighting, but it's a rollicking and gobsmacking scene. It's brutal, vicious and there's absolutely no holds barred. The sound design is perfect as guns, knives, lamps and fists are all used while the Killer struggles for his life in an absolutely mesmerizing battle. It doesn't have the balletic quality of a John Wick fight, but is something more animalistic and fierce. It feels out of control, but Fincher always has the camera in the right place to capture maximum impact, while Baxter's smart editing keeps it all coherent.

Overall though, it's a meticulous attention to craft that drives *The Killer* beyond a standard hitman or assassin thriller. There's so much intelligence, and so much detail poured into every frame of this movie. Fincher and his team spent as much time and care assembling shots as the Killer does. The result is something that you'll want to try out and catch in a theater during its limited run. *The Killer* hits Netflix on Friday, November 10, but if you can make it out to a theater before then, then you should: this level of filmmaking deserves to be seen on the big screen.

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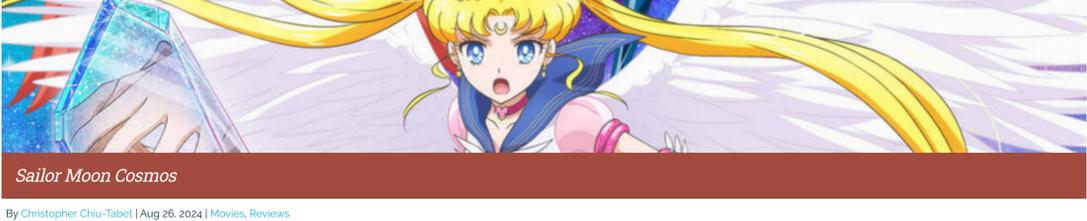
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By Christopher Chiu-Tabet | Jul 26, 2024 | [Movies](#), [Reviews](#)

14 months after it was released in Japan, *Sailor Moon Cosmos*, the two-part film concluding the second anime version of the manga — that began with the *Crystal* series, and continued with the *Eternal* movies — has now landed on Netflix with its English dub, bringing the more faithful take on Naoko Takeuchi's story to [...]

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No spoilers, but there is one pretty inessential post-credits scene. Well, here we are at long last, 15 years since *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, the movie this site was founded to defend, with Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman finally reunited, and making their way into the MCU five years after the sale of 20th Century Fox/Studios. For [...]