

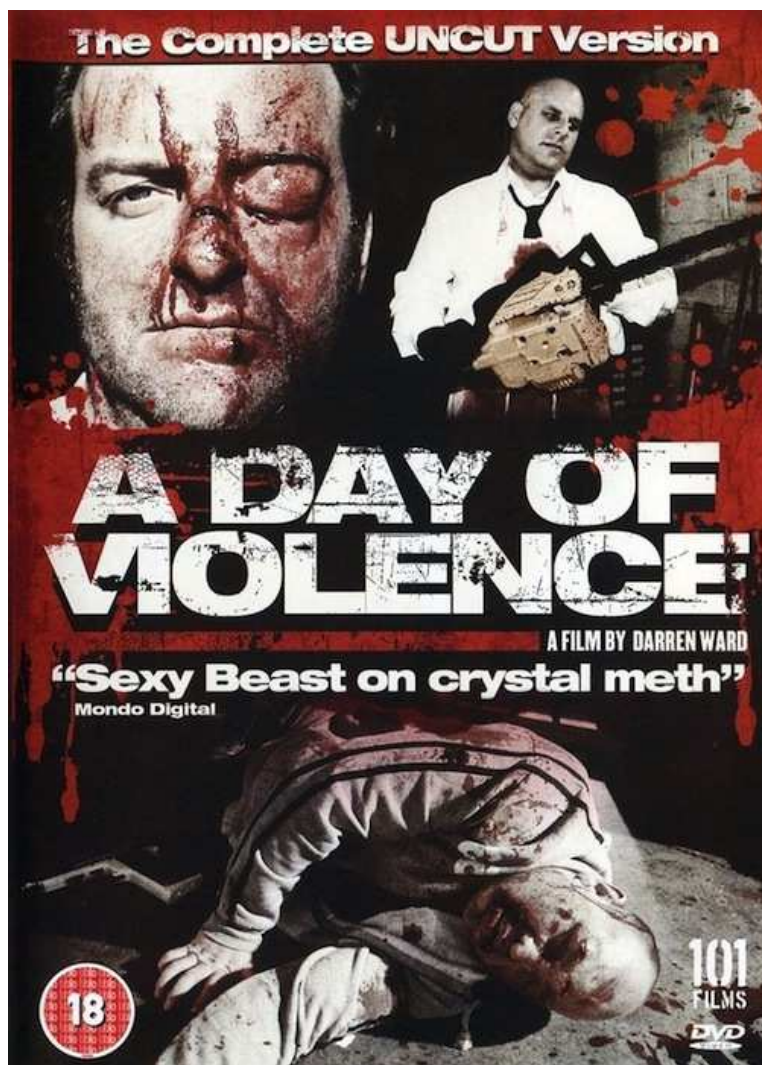


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by [Greg Baty](#) on July 23, 2012



Director: Darren Ward

Cast: Nick Rendell, Christopher Fosh, Vitor D. Thorne, Tina Barnes, Steve Humphrey, Giovanni Lombardo Radice

[Giallo Films](#) / PAL Region 2 / Rated 18 / 1.85:1 widescreen / 2.1 Dolby Digital / 114 minutes

Disk Extras: Making of *A Day of Violence* / Theatrical Trailer (Hard and Soft versions)

The bane of extreme cinema is, for the most part, the unfortunate inability to tell a good story while shocking or titillating. For some reason if they concentrate on more than one thing, the other thing suffers greatly. I liken it to that *Seinfeld* episode where George gives up sex and with his mind unfettered by scheming to get ass, he becomes a genius. Once he slips and is seduced into boning some chick with a thing for short, stocky balding men,

he reverts back into a slobbering imbecile. Once someone decides to make a gore, violent action or cutting edge art-house film, it's like their brain turns to mush and they turn into a short, stocky balding man. There are obviously exceptions to this rule, but they are few and far between and are generally considered to be the top filmmakers of their genre.

Little known British writer/director Darren Ward is out to be one of those filmmakers in the ultra-violent crime drama genre. Watching *A Day of Violence* I couldn't help but think about other phenomenal filmmakers akin to this style of movie, like Guy Ritchie, Quentin Tarantino and even Takashi Miike. Those guys are able to weave an intelligent tale in between all of the blood and carnage. Ward's lead character "Mitchell" is a leg-breaker for a local debt collector (which I can only guess is English for mobster in this case) who seems to enjoy his job or at least doesn't mind doing it for the money. Throughout the film, we learn that he isn't all he seems because he has a girlfriend and step-daughter who he truly loves and the dark, criminal things he does, he does for them; at least that is his flawed thought process. Not only does he do this dirty, violent work daily, but on his latest job he takes it a step further and kills the guy once he finds more money than he is meant to collect.



She was aiming for his rubber ducky.

is bagging the extra \$100,000, he doesn't know that his victim, "Hopper", is videoing him with his cellphone and before he dies, he warns Mitchell that he is making a huge mistake taking the extra money because it belongs to someone very dangerous. Mitchell calls his employer as he is going and tells him that he is going to work for the competition, "Boswell" and heads off to hide the bag of money. Many twists and turns lead our hero on a dangerous game of cat and mouse when it turns out to be Boswell's money. I'm not giving away anything by telling you that because it is all detail that you see coming but nonetheless drives the suspense and horrendously grisly action. Mitchell is obviously driven by something personal and goes to great lengths to protect the money even at the cost of his own life as we see in the second scene of the movie with him lying on a stretcher with his belly blown out. Knowing all of this never gives the viewer any break from the nerve straining tension and grim tone as the story is told through Mitchell's dead eyes.

I don't know which is more brutal; his dealings with the sadists trying to kill him, or his personal life. Somehow you feel for this big oafish character of "Mitchell" played by Nick Rendell who is a dead ringer for a younger James Gandolfini when he was the badass "Virgil" from Tarantino's classic *True Romance* with a little bit of "Tony Soprano" sprinkled in for a little humanity. There is all of this horrific carnage going on, a lot of which he inflicts, yet writer Darren Ward gives him a sympathy you might feel for "Lenny" from Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" if Lenny blew people away from shotguns or slit their throats until they bleed out. I got my Region 2 PAL DVD from the man himself, Darren Ward, and his company Giallo Films and was pleasantly surprised how good the movie looked, both in how Ward shot it and how great the transfer looked. I'm not very familiar with PAL disks but this one had a film-like quality that gave it a more gritty look that some digital photography loses.

The only real supplement on this European release is a "making of" that shows behind the scenes of some of the more brutal and hard to shoot stunt scenes, and very short interviews with the cast. Ward assures me that the American release, though MVD Entertainment, will have much more in the way of extras. The Euro disk is also the 114 minute "complete uncut version" which I hope they go with on the NTSC release here in The States. This extremely violent, gore-filled crime drama deserves to be seen that way Darren Ward intended; extremely violent and gore-filled, all the while telling us a great story with realistic characters.

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