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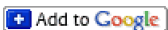
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Review by [Jeremy Biltz](#) | posted November 8, 2012 | [E-mail the Author](#)

The Movie:

Action films can be hard to do well on limited budgets. Things like stunts, weapons, cars and effects cost money, and audiences can generally tell the cheap dodges from the quality material. Nevertheless, the producers of *A Day of Violence* manage to pull it off quite well, even though the film does have a few flaws.

Mitchell (Nick Rendell) is a regular guy, a tough who collects outstanding debts for the local mob. He may beat people up, and worse, to get them to pay back their loans, but he is hopelessly devoted to his wife Abbi (Tina Barnes) and step-daughter Holly (Bryony Mechan). His relationship with them sours, however, when an angry debtor rams Mitchell and Holly in the car, putting Holly into a coma.

Living on his own, and not doing very well, Mitchell thinks he's finally found the answer to his prayers, and the funds to pay for the expensive experimental treatments to help Holly, when he discovers a cool hundred thousand in cash hidden in a bean bag by lowlife drug dealer Hopper (Giovanni Lombardo Radice). Stopping at nothing in his desire to heal both his step-daughter's body and his relationship with his wife, Mitchell calmly slits Hopper's throat and takes the money. The next day, he starts his new job as a collector for mob boss Boswell (Victor D. Thorn). Quickly, he is thrown into turmoil as his friend, and brief co-worker, Smithy (Steve Humphrey) is tortured and killed by Boswell for skimming funds, and Mitchell himself is sent to collect the very same one hundred thousand he stole from Hopper the day before. The money was Boswell's, and he wants it back.

Of course, things go poorly for Mitchell and those around him from here on out. A brutal panoply of double crosses, deception, more torture, chases, gun battles, savage beatings and brawls make up the remainder of the film, as Mitchell tries to find some way to get out of his predicament yet keep the money. It isn't easy, and a lot of people die along the way. But that's what we like in our action movies. If it was a walk in the park, it wouldn't be fun.

And *A Day of Violence* is fun, if one can get past the hyper-realistic and queasy stomach making blood and gore effects. The producers here really push the envelope, and show not only throat slits, beatings, and bullet hits, but a very realistic castration by garden shears with pretty close to a full on view. If one is not a fan of gore and ultra-violence, this is definitely a film to skip.

But there's more going on here than mere gore. The story is pretty compelling too, though the multiple flashbacks are a bit cumbersome at times. One can understand and sympathize with most of the decisions that Mitchell makes, even if we find them repugnant. They make sense to his kind of person in his kind of situation. (Though some of the more horrible things he does make it more difficult to empathize or identify with him.) The front end of the film takes a while to get going, and has a few narrative stumbles, but the tension is maintained pretty well, and the third act is taut and thrilling.

The performances are somewhat haphazard. Rendell as Mitchell is natural and easy, quite believable throughout. Others, not so much. Victor D. Thorn as Boswell does quite well arguing with one of his henchmen in the car, or giving off a quiet air of bored menace, but there are a couple of scenes where he needs to really bring the crazy, and he can't quite get to that level. Those two are the main highs and lows, and the rest of the cast are serviceable enough for what is required. They do their turns, with few frills, and get the job done. That's a good metaphor for the film itself. It's workmanlike, providing solid action thrills with not a lot of

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extras. The standout being the spectacularly well executed effects.

A Day of Violence is a good movie, if you can stomach it. Its small budget constrained it enough that it's not a great movie, but it's definitely worth a viewing. Recommended.

The DVD

Video:

The video is presented in 1.78:1 widescreen, and generally looks good, with a few minor issues. There is mild posterization throughout, which lends a feeling of grain to the image, even though it was shot in HD.

Sound:

Audio is Dolby digital 2 channel, and is also decent, with some minor flaws. On occasion it can be a bit difficult to make out the dialogue, and the lack of subtitles exacerbates this. No alternate language track is included.

Extras:

A number of extras are included. They are:

Making Of

It requires a certain amount of chutzpah to include a making of documentary that's almost as long as the feature film it's about, but that's exactly what the producers of *A Day of Violence* did here. The making of clocks in at 1:18, and the feature at 1:34. Nevertheless, there's a lot of interesting stuff here. It's mostly director Darren Ward (and others) wandering around with a video camera doing ad hoc interviews with the cast and crew. A lot of material is covered, often focused on the blood and gore effects and how they were accomplished, but other topics as well, and it would be quite informative for those interested in low budget filmmaking.

Casting a Legend

The title is a bit of a play on words, as this five minute featurette details the effects team making a latex cast of Giovanni Lombardo Radice's neck for his throat slitting scene. Radice is quite famous in horror circles for appearing in a number of quite violent Italian horror films in the eighties.

Deleted / Extended Scenes

Three scenes are included, for a total of almost seven minutes of footage, apparently cut for time.

Interview With Giovanni Lombardo Radice

This is an eight minute interview with Radice, discussing how he got involved with the film, and what the experience was like on set. Radice is a charming fellow, and quite engaging here.

Final Thoughts:

A Day of Violence is obviously not a film for everyone. In fact, outside of gore hounds and the like, most folks won't find it at all appealing. Regardless, it is quite well done, considering its constraints, and offers up an hour and a half of action, thrills, pathos and redemption, of a sort. Check it out.

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