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[Double Crossed \(Screen Magic Films\)](#)

By

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It may be that I don't know my crime genre that well – and while I've seen my share of crime movies it's hardly my area of expertise, especially urban crime actioners. I've just spent more time ranging through the horror arena. Anyhoo, "Double Crossed" seems an odd film. Curiously, its oddness is, I suspect, an admixture of creativity and the need for another draft in the screenplay. The original angle of approach used by "Double Cross" to generate its suspense involves the setting up of a card game with a huge double-or-nothing stake – then skipping to the end of the game, leaving what happened a question mark. And it is this question mark that drives the rest of the film. "Double Crossed" is a fairly complex story, with an ensemble approach to its character dynamics, and the interwoven stories of the several main characters lend depth to the unfolding of events that lead to an unusual confrontation over the poker game. The viewer, like many of the characters, end up confused and in the dark; it's unpleasant for the characters but fascinating and suspenseful for the viewer. What happened? Who's telling the truth? What the fuck is the truth? "Double Crossed" gets around its low budget for the most part. Let's face it: a low budget is always a liability in some ways (though if you ask the likes of Robert Rodriguez, you'll get told that a low budget inspires creativity, and with the right people on board, it's true). But "Double Crossed" gets over most of those hurdles the smart way – by not attempting to do what simply can't be done without the proper resources. This doesn't mean that action is cut from the film due to the lack of ability to create the action. It means that much of the action is shot with some creativity. This is especially noticeable with all the gun play, which frequently gives us unique POVs of the shootings since an abundance of squibs or fancy CGI

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was not to be had. (So far as the CGI goes, the film saved the bulk of it for one awesome scene with the now famous slo-mo bullet trick, executed here with a pinch of distinctiveness.) The down side is that, occasionally, the attentive viewer who understands the language of cinema is suddenly aware of the budget restraints, revealed to his or her initiated eye thanks to a keen understanding of the visual aspects of movie storytelling. But most complaints here are minor. What "Double Crossed" achieved on its B-movie budget is more impressive than any budgetary shortcomings. Really, what the film pulled off is commendable. It's got panache and interesting characters. Most of the acting is effective. The action is largely accomplished without faltering. The story keeps you guessing all the way to the end and even doles out a couple of left-field surprises to leave your mouth hanging when the credits roll. The only red mark I might put on here that is slightly past minor is the script. On the one hand, it's smart and hellbent on not being derivative – not being just another "urban crime drama" or whatever. But, especially noticeable in a bizarre detour that comes shortly before the climax, the screenplay is less than taut. Another rewrite and a good script could have been great. Nevertheless, story meandering aside, "Double Cross" mostly keeps its eyes on-target. There's a lot of story ground to cover but rest assured, minus the Tarantino-esque side road I mentioned, it's all part of the blossoming. It all comes together. When the credits do roll, the viewer finds himself very satisfied. And given that a sequel could easily arise organically from the resolve of "Double Crossed," one can only hope there's a "Double Crossed 2" in the future – though maybe it'll have a more creative title than that.

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