

Might ‘Sweeney Todd’ Take Cake For Biggest ‘Bait-and-Switch Scheme’ in Movie History?

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on December 10, 2007 - 3:39pm

- [Adam Fendelman](#) [2]
- [Alan Rickman](#) [3]
- [Chicago Sun-Times](#) [4]
- [Helena Bonham Carter](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Johnny Depp](#) [7]
- [Lewis Lazare](#) [8]
- [Sacha Baron Cohen](#) [9]
- [Stephen Sondheim](#) [10]
- [Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street](#) [11]
- [Tim Burton](#) [12]

❖❖ As “Sweeney Todd” continues to capture all sorts of different kinds of buzz, one that particularly caught my eye on Monday came from the pen of *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter Lewis Lazare.



Johnny Depp and Alan Rickman in “Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street”.

Photo credit: IMDb

He asks if its marketing will give patrons a haircut and says unsuspecting fans might sing another tune. Plus, the best line of all:

From what we know about the movie from its marketing strategy to date and from a small body of critics and VIPs who have seen the film (we have not), this “Sweeney Todd” also might be remembered for being the subject of one of the biggest bait-and-switch marketing schemes in movie history.

[This] bait and switch ... became an imperative to ensure the film generates an opening weekend box-office figure substantial enough to suggest “blockbuster” to the moviegoing public.

Lazare is ultimately questioning if the film’s actually for “slasher fans” or if it screams “Sondheim musical”.

Tim Burton’s film – starring Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Rickman and Sacha Baron Cohen – is based on composer Stephen Sondheim’s stage musical from three decades ago.

Its marketing, though, has shifted from deliberately targeting its musical side and separately honing in specifically on its throat slitting. Lazare wrote:

Sondheim’s original Broadway score in almost its entirety is said to be included in the Burton movie. In fact, reports indicate that about 90 percent of the movie is comprised of sung scenes.

But curiously, you’d never know that to be the case from watching the 150-second trailer, which makes the movie seem like a fast-paced bloody period thriller/horror flick about a crazed murderer and his sidekick.

The full *Chicago Sun-Times* story can be [found here](#) [13]. “Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street” opens on Dec. 21.

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- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/alan-rickman>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/chicago-sun-times>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/helena-bonham-carter>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/johnny-depp>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/lewis-lazare>
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- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/stephen-sondheim>
- [11] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/sweeny_todd.html
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/tim-burton>
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