

Film Review: Riveting ‘The Last Exorcism’ Burns Its Way Under Your Skin

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 29, 2010 - 10:50am

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CHICAGO – Working from inspirations as diverse as “The Exorcist” and Lars Von Trier, Daniel Stamm’s “The Last Exorcism” is one of the most interesting and accomplished horror debuts of the last few years. The final act gets a bit predictably messy but the fascinating slow burn of the first two more than makes up for any stumbling near the finish line.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

The first thing horror fans should know is that “The Last Exorcism” is not quite what you think it is from the previews. Lionsgate has been pushing the action of the piece along with Executive Producer Eli Roth’s involvement to try and bring viewers in on opening weekend who might be looking for a “Saw”-esque gore-fest. The vast majority of “The Last Exorcism” is more of a mystery or even a character drama than what you might expect. It’s a subdued, intellectual study of a powerfully charismatic man who thinks he has all the answers and learns that he’s not even asking the right questions.



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “The Last Exorcism” in our reviews section.](#) [11]

In fact, “The Last Exorcism” is very low on typical horror set-pieces as Stamm and writers Huck Botko & Andrew Gurland concern themselves more with working their way under your skin than presenting you with eye-popping action. Personally, I’ve always found this kind of horror much more effective. What’s scarier — a trap-setting serial killer or the sound of a baby crying upstairs when you know you’re alone? Expertly directed and very well-performed, “The Last Exorcism” takes the cliches of the subgenre and makes them feel new again.

Minister Cotton Marcus (Patrick Fabian) thinks he knows everything. The opening act of this faux documentary introduces us to a man with such control over his flock that he can coax an “Amen!” from them in response to anything as long as the inflection is right. For years, Marcus has been conducting exorcisms through the deep south but he’s pretty much a charlatan. He uses noise machines and crosses with fake smoke to sell the idea that he’s pushing out the devil, but he’s not painted as an evil man. As he says, if he relieves these people of their pain by exorcising what they perceive to be Satan, he’s done something good for them.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Last Exorcism” review.](#) [11]

“The Last Exorcism” stars Patrick Fabian, Ashley Bell, Iris Bahr, Louis Herthum, and Caleb Landry Jones. It was written by Huck Botko & Andrew Gurland. It was directed by Daniel Stamm. It is rated PG-13 and opened on August 27th, 2010.



The Last Exorcism

Photo credit: Lionsgate

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