

Blu-Ray Review: Casey Affleck Stars in Disturbing ‘The Killer Inside Me’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 5, 2010 - 10:43am

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CHICAGO – Michael Winterbottom’s “The Killer Inside Me” provoked such a strong response after its Sundance Film Festival premiere that the auteur behind “A Mighty Heart,” “9 Songs,” and “24 Hour Party People” was shunned by a crowd that typically embraces challenging films. What turned them? Check out Winterbottom’s daring film with Casey Affleck, Jessica Alba, Kate Hudson, and Simon Baker, now on Blu-ray and DVD.



The fact is that people still respond very, very strongly to extreme violence, especially when it’s linked to brutal misogyny. This critic has serious problems with violence merely for the sake of violence and I can see why some people saw that in some of the more disturbing sequences in “The Killer Inside Me” but I see something very different. I think people expected something from Winterbottom’s noir that it never intended to be. This film is closer to “American Psycho” or “Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer” in that it’s a violent film because it’s about a violent person.



The Killer Inside Me was released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 28th, 2010
Photo credit: MPI/IFC

Violence has long been the foundation of noir but it’s usually so stylized that it’s either toned down completely or ignored in favor of sex — the femme fatale seducing the hapless lead. But sex isn’t that interesting to Lou Ford (Casey Affleck). He certainly doesn’t get the same kick out of it that he does out of abuse and murder. “The Killer Inside Me” can be hard-to-watch but shouldn’t the story of an absolute psychopath be hard-to-watch?



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Photo credit: MPI/IFC

Affleck has a boyish appearance that makes him a perfect fit for Ford and his easygoing Texas Sheriff feels like the kind of guy that people would trust and women would be drawn to. Two such women are Joyce Lakeland (Jessica Alba) and Amy Stanton (Kate Hudson). Amy is Lou's hapless-and-doomed girlfriend and Joyce is a prostitute who has been caught up in an affair with the son (Jay R. Ferguson) of an important man (Ned Beatty) and Ford goes to her to try and convince her to leave town.

Here's where "The Killer Inside Me" started to earn a few Sundance walk-outs. After Joyce, physically threatens Ford, he pins her down and spansks her. It turns out that Joyce likes it and the two form a sadomasochistic relationship until Ford realizes that there's a way out of the situation that will not only put him in a position of power but satisfy the dark urges he's been feeling since he was a child. In a scene that would make the doctor from "The Human Centipede" turn away, Ford punches Joyce repeatedly in the face until she's barely recognizable.

With Joyce in a coma, "The Killer Inside Me" plays out in the not uncommon cinematic form of the unraveling of a maniac. Ford is forced to kill again to keep his lies from coming apart and to satisfy his dark passenger. Great character actors including Elias Koteas, Simon Baker, Tom Bower, Brent Briscoe, and Bill Pullman pop up in small-but-effective roles and even Alba and Hudson, two actresses that have been hard to praise lately, do decent work. Winterbottom has crafted a daring, unique noir that is unabashedly pitch black and dares you to go with its lead character into the darkness.

The final moments of "The Killer Inside Me" feature a few drastic missteps and the last scene of the film was a straight-up mistake. Writer John Curran clearly felt like he needed a climax to top the dark places that the story had gone before but he went too far over. Until that ending, "The Killer Inside Me" works. It's a very dark take on a genre that often forgets that it's very name suggests something black as night.

- Special Features:
- o Trailer
 - o Making of With Casey Affleck
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"The Killer Inside Me" stars Casey Affleck, Kate Hudson, Jessica Alba, Ned Beatty, Elias Koteas, Tom Bower, Simon Baker, and Bill Pullman. It was written by John Curran based on the book by Jim Thompson and was directed by Michael Winterbottom. It is rated R and runs 109 minutes. It was released by IFC/MPI on September 28th, 2010 on Blu-ray and DVD.



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