

Film Review: Michael Fassbender Stars in Riveting, Daring 'Shame'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 1, 2011 - 11:01am

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CHICAGO – Steve McQueen's "Shame" is a daring examination of isolation and addiction with the best performance of the year courtesy of Michael Fassbender and one that nearly matches it from the always-stellar Carey Mulligan. This is dark, confrontational material of the kind that too few major filmmakers are willing to tackle and it will haunt you for days after you see it. Don't miss it.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Brandon (Fassbender) has a life carefully hidden by routine. He is a sex addict. He no longer gets much joy from sex or masturbation, but they define his existence. And yet his co-workers (including a friend played by James Badge Dale and a possible love interest played by Nicole Beharie) have no idea. He's not a pervert in a raincoat. He's a good-looking guy in his 30s who you'd never guess has what is becoming a [debilitating and dangerous addiction](#) [12].



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The warning signs that Brandon's sex addiction is defining his life are there early in "Shame" as he ignores repeated, seemingly-urgent voice mails from his sister Sissy (Carey Mulligan). He can't be bothered when there's pornography to watch or one-night stands to have. It gets to the point that Sissy has to come visit her brother to get some of his time and ends up sleeping on his couch. The arrival of his sister into his carefully-defined routine ups the stakes for Brandon to dangerous levels, although "Shame" is not your typical "descent into addiction" film. McQueen refuses to play the clichés that could have been found in the piece, instead giving us a much more daring and memorable drama.

Much has been made of the controversial level of nudity in "Shame," to the point that it received an NC-17 rating from the MPAA. The flesh on display is clearly designed to de-sexualize it. The first time we see both of the central characters, Brandon & Sissy, they are completely naked. We see Brandon walking around his house naked and even urinating. McQueen is taking away all possible titillation at the human body because his central character feels less and less actual passion every day.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico's full "Shame" review.](#) [13]

"Shame" stars Michael Fassbender, Carey Mulligan, James Badge Dale, and Nicole Beharie. It was written by Abi Morgan & Steve McQueen and was directed by McQueen. It will be released on December 2nd, 2011 and is rated NC-17.



Shame

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