

## Film Review: Cillian Murphy, Robert De Niro in Messy 'Red Lights'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 2, 2012 - 2:38pm

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CHICAGO – "Red Lights" is a mess. And yet it's also not messy enough. Rodrigo Cortes follows up his vastly superior "Buried" with this supernatural tale filled with plot contrivances that would make M. Night Shyamalan call bullshit. Still, he does so with a direct, straightforward style when a bit less polish would have given it the character it's missing. The script is a mess but the production is clean. It's nonsense on a plot level but played seriously without nearly enough personality or edge. Even the film's undeniably talented cast can't save it.



Rating: **2.0/5.0**

"Red Lights" starts with a promising series of scenes as Margaret Matheson (Sigourney Weaver) and her investigative partner Tom Buckley (Cillian Murphy) arrive at a run-down estate that is allegedly haunted. In a matter of minutes, they have not only found the source of the loud sounds in the night but debunked the psychic who has come to talk with people from the other side as long as the fee is high enough. That's what Margaret and Tom do. They take down the charlatans who use people's grief and willingness to believe and turn it into profit.



[Read Brian Tallerico's full review of "Red Lights" in our reviews section.](#) [14]

Tom and Margaret's white whale is the legendary Simon Silver (Robert De Niro), a psychic who disappeared many years ago after the mysterious death of his greatest skeptic and has recently returned to the spotlight after years in self-imposed exile. As Silver becomes popular again, Tom & Margaret try to decipher his magic tricks. How is he pulling it off? Or could he really be what he claims to be? Supernatural elements continue to add up while Elizabeth Olsen, Toby Jones, and Craig Roberts play supporting roles.

The cat-and-mouse game of "Red Lights" could have been a clever one – two investigators deal with their own issues of belief as they try to cut the strings of a perceived magician who may actually be magical. It's a very strong idea for a thriller. But Cortes makes so many mistakes with his set-up that they become the most memorable elements of his film. Other than his concept and his casting (you can't deny that ensemble and it should be noted that none of the performances are a weakness...Murphy is the best thing about the film), Cortes consistently made bad choices at every stage of production.



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*"Red Lights" stars Cillian Murphy, Robert De Niro, Sigourney Weaver, Elizabeth Olsen, Toby Jones, and Craig Roberts. It was written and directed by Rodrigo Cortes. It is playing in some markets now and opens in Chicago on August 3, 2012.*



Red Lights

*Photo credit: Millennium Entertainment*

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