

Film Review: Stunning ‘Compliance’ Will Rattle You For Days

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 30, 2012 - 11:21am

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CHICAGO – Craig Zobel’s “Compliance” has provoked outbursts, walk-outs, and altercations at screenings since it first premiered at this year’s Sundance Film Festival. Why? What does this unsettling film tap in viewers to get them as fired up as any movie in years? It may not have the jump-cuts of current horror films like “The Apparition” and “The Possession” but make no mistake – this is real horror. It’s the kind of horror that provokes something primal in viewers to the point that they feel like they need to respond, often deriding the action as if it’s not believable. The amazing thing, of course, is that every word of it is true.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about “Compliance” is how quickly it turns viewers into behavioral judges. “Oh, I wouldn’t believe it. I wouldn’t do that. I’m smarter than these people.” And, then, just as you think you’re above the action, the story of “Compliance” becomes truly horrific and the judgment turns within, even subconsciously, and that’s what has caused the outbursts at Q&As. We think we’re more world-wise than these people and that this could never happen and then Zobel brilliantly forces us to come to terms with those judgments. He doesn’t present his horror film in the traditional sense of a villain and a victim. There is a horrible human being in “Compliance” but the victims don’t scream like a slasher movie. They walk right into the spinning propeller and that’s truly terrifying. How are you so sure you wouldn’t do the same?



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “Compliance” in our reviews section.](#) [10]

“Compliance” is based on an incident that happened at a McDonald’s in Kentucky in 2004. The Assistant Manager on duty was called by someone who identified himself as a police officer. After gaining her trust over the phone, the officer told the manager that one of her employees had been accused of stealing. He instructed the manager to hold the employee in a back room until cops could arrive. And then this faux cop, who turned out to be a prank caller, decided to see how far he could go. Would the manager strip search the employee? Worse? Where would the line be for you if a police officer instructed you to do something that seemed against your moral code?

In “Compliance,” the fantastic Ann Dowd plays Sandra, the manager of a fictional fast food restaurant called ChickWich. She’s already having a bad day because someone left the refrigerator door open the night before and a lot of her restaurant’s produce is bad. She fears managerial repercussion, which already puts her in a vulnerable position in terms of authority. When a caller identifying himself as Officer Daniels (the always-great Pat Healy) name drops her superior as someone who’s participating with the investigation, it carries more weight because of the problems that morning and she goes along.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “Compliance” review.](#) [10]

“Compliance” stars Ann Dowd, Dreama Walker, and Pat Healy. It was written and directed by Craig Zobel. It is already playing in some markets and opens in Chicago on August 31, 2012.



Compliance

Photo credit: Magnolia Pictures

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