Feature: 5 Signs of the Apocalypse in ‘The Bling Ring’

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CHICAGO – “The Bling Ring” is the latest film from director Sofia Coppola. Her universe of the American Dream is filtered through a circumstance of Hollywood privilege. Who better to understand the end of the world than a director in the grasp of the modern film industry? The end is near.

The following are five signs of the coming apocalypse as filtered through “The Bling Ring.” The white hot nature of the left coast comes through as they are closest to the flame of the end, and therefore produce entertainments that presuppose those days. “The Bling Ring,” besides being excellent social commentary on L.A. society, has the following signs of the essential end of times.

L-R: Taissa Farmiga, Israel Broussard, Emma Watson, Katie Chang and Claire Julian are ‘The Bling Ring’
Photo credit: A24

The Celebrity Culture Becomes Culture

The worship of celebrity becomes so acute in “The Bling Ring” that it becomes the be all and end all of the heists and their results. The burglary “gang” in the “bling ring” track movements of the celebrities through extensive coverage of their comings-and-goings on the internet, thus assuring that they can easily break into their homes and rummage through the stuff. What is important to the infiltrators is not so much the stuff they take (somewhat important), but who they take it from. The importance of the goods, because they belong to certain people, are as valuable as their market worth.

Being Famous is More Important than Contributing to Society

The aim of the burglars in “The Bling Ring” is to almost through osmosis absorb the fame of the folks they are stealing from – by wearing Paris Hilton’s shoes, or experiencing Jude Law’s rings, they believe they become a part of who and what those people are. This is absurd, but the buzz – from the robbers point-of-view – is that possessing the intimate stuff means forever knowing and being part of those celebrities. The proof is in the pumps, with six inch heels.

Material Possessions are More Important than Relationships

There is an excess of material possession in "The Bling Ring." Within each of the celebrity homes, there is excessive stuff possessed by the owners, so much so that it takes awhile before they realize that anything has been stolen. This distinction – that the privileged have more stuff, more than they know what to do with or even know about – is a theme that become prevalent when the robbers start enjoying the benefits of the heist. In essence, what is lifted becomes more important than the friendships that preceded the planning of the robberies, and that is where the weakness develops in the overall series of capers.

Appearances are More Important than Education

There is home schooling in "The Bling Ring," but it involves a limited perspective based on "The Secret" – that whatever you wish for in the universe inevitably will come true. A family of women in the film engage this philosophy outside any perspective of education, and the shallowness that develops is the most insubstantial end of philosophy. These involve fortune cookie sayings that are narrow casting, rather than a broad outlook, and the world shrinks symbolically down to the inside of a cookie. When something is that small, it can collapse accordingly.

The Shoe Closet of Paris Hilton in 'The Bling Ring'
Photo credit: A24

The Triple Paris Hilton

Finally, the ultimate sign of the end times – the triple Paris Hilton. Paris Hilton was robbed by The Bling Ring in real life, and in the film she makes an appearance as herself, and also lends her home as a set piece within the fictional film to re-create the heists. Those three Paris infiltrations – the reality, the fiction and the actuality – are a three headed hot rod sign of the end of days. It's like drawing three kings in a poker game, only to be beaten by three aces. Be afraid, be very afraid.

"The Bling Ring" is in theaters now. Featuring Katie Chang, Emma Watson, Israel Broussard, Taissa Farmiga, Leslie Mann and Paris Hilton. Written by Sofia Coppola and Nancy Jo Sales. Directed by Sofia Coppola. Rated "R".

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