

## Film Review: ‘Don’t Breathe’ is a Terrifying Sensory Experience

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 27, 2016 - 6:21pm

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CHICAGO – The horror genre can be a complex creature. The great films can show you the difference between ‘horror’ and ‘terror’. Some horror is all shock and no substance, while terror can be all fear, but no shock. The difference between them is so nuanced that only a skilled director, like Fede Alvarez, can show you the difference in his latest film, “Don’t Breathe.”



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

You don’t need a worldwide zombie apocalypse or some other pandemic plague to create an enveloping sense of dread. Sometimes all it takes is the confines of a room, house or even cabin. 90% of “Don’t Breathe” happens within the walls (sometimes literally) of a single house, but it uses this stifling sense of claustrophobia to its advantage. This isn’t writer and director Fede Alvarez’s first time confining his horror to a house, but it remains as effective as the first time. The set alone is meticulously curated with every detail becoming a part of the storytelling. Every dingy, paper-covered window, every layer of locks on the doors, and every ingrained shadows on the wall reveal a part of the story that is discovered while trying to survive. The set also plays a major role in character development and exposition, like having the brunt of The Blind Man’s (Stephen Lang) story told through news clipping and elements found in his own home.

Throughout the film, the title “Don’t Breathe” becomes less of the film’s core survival message and more of an audience-felt byproduct from the film’s suspenseful build-up. The complex technical design is complimented by the seemingly simple story and sparse dialogue. This strategy allows the film to explore other forms of storytelling and exposition, elevating it from the conventional doldrums that typically plague the genre. Instead, director Alvarez takes it one step forward and heightens the film’s sense of dread and terror with intrigue and spellbinding suspense to create a completely immersive horror/thriller hybrid.

*“Don’t Breathe” opened everywhere on August 26th. Featuring Stephen Lang, Jane Levy, Dylan Minnette and Daniel Zovatto. Written by Fede Alvarez and Rodo Sayagues. Directed by Fede Alvarez. Rated “R”*



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The Blind Man (Stephen Lang) Defends His Realm in ‘Don’t Breathe’

*Photo credit: Sony Pictures Releasing*



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