

Film Review: Short Film ‘The Replacement’ at 53rd Chicago International Film Festival

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 24, 2017 - 4:59pm

- [AMC River East](#) [2]
- [Blade Runner](#) [3]
- [Chicago International Film Festival](#) [4]
- [City & State](#) [5]
- [Clones](#) [6]
- [Dystopia](#) [7]
- [Future](#) [8]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [9]
- [Mike McNamara](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [12]
- [Replicants](#) [13]
- [Science Fiction](#) [14]
- [Sean Miller](#) [15]
- [Short Film](#) [16]
- [The Replacement](#) [17]

CHICAGO – The science fiction that we once knew, that we thought was impossible, is fast becoming everyday life. One short film that premiered at the 53rd Chicago International Film Festival – “The Replacement” – takes the concept of cloning, applying a chilling and symbolic twist to a science fiction that can also be interpreted in our current times as reality. “The Replacement” screens one more time as part of the “City & State” slate of shorts on Wednesday, October 25th, 2017 (details below).



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Using cloning to replicate the same person is pretty much a go-to idea for the theory of it all, but what if a man is so right for replication that the original source for all the clones begins to have an identity crisis? This is the dilemma for Abe, and lead actor Mike McNamara portrays him and all the other replicants of himself. The main story seems ripped out of the headlines, as one of Abe’s clones becomes one of the most powerful men in the world – using language and bromides that seem oh-so-familiar – and soon the copy realizes the original might be in the way. The atmosphere created by producer Naz Khan and director Sean Miller is Blade Runner-esque in its dread, and McNamara is a revelation as he portrays his multiple selves. This is an exciting short film that could easily be expanded.



‘The Replacement’ at the 53rd Chicago International Film Festival

Photo credit: Chicago International Film Festival

Abe Stagsen (McNamara) is a janitor, or as he likes to put it “sanitary engineer.” He is not the brightest of bulbs, but as he flips through the TV channels one night he realizes that the clones that have been made of him – which he volunteered for – have gotten too numerous. He seeks to stem the flow, especially when one of his others successfully runs for President of the United States.

The special effects in this future Chicago are seamless, providing a dystopian view of the city which matches the desperation of the sanitary engineer. The mood is played for both laughs and darkness, balancing what could have been a silly or dismissive concept. Producer Khan and director Miller did an amazing job of keeping every Abe clone within frame, rarely using body doubles and effectively creating the sense of too many of the same person. Abe also interacts with other natural humans and clones, and it becomes harder to determine which is which... all the way to the chilling conclusion.

Mike McNamara, a veteran Chicago actor, produces the energy to convincingly portray different sides of the same physical form. His talent is apparent as the multiple characters are so sharply separate from each other that even though they of course look alike, they each have a distinct persona. From the smarmy bartender, to the confused state of a sanitary engineer, and finally to unctuous evil of a man in power, McNamara is able to produce all the emotions and characteristics necessary.

Overall, Miller and McNamara have teamed up to offer a likely and startling scenario from one of the dustiest of science fiction conceits. It may be about cloning but it also is a reminder of our own current state. We had our own “replacement” last November 9th, and those who voted him in had a distinct sameness for the reason they did so.

“The Replacement” will screen as part of CITY & STATE shorts at the 53rd Chicago International Film Festival on Wednesday, October 25th (5:45pm), at the AMC River East 21, 322 East Illinois Street, Chicago. The Festival runs through October 26th, 2017. [Click here](#) [18] for film schedules, information and to purchase tickets.



[19]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [20]
Writer, Editorial Coordinator
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [19]

© 2017 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 25 2024 - 3:20am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/28024/film-review-short-film-the-replacement-at-53rd-chicago-international-film-festival>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/amc-river-east>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blade-runner>
- [4] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/chicago_international_film_festival.html
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/city-state>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/clones>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dystopia>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/future>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/mike-mcnamara>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/movie-review>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/replicants>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/science-fiction>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sean-miller>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/short-film>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-replacement>
- [18] <http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/>
- [19] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [20] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>