

## Film Review: Unsettling View of Evil in Lars von Trier's 'The House That Jack Built'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 14, 2019 - 5:14pm

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CHICAGO – With director Lars von Trier, who is a mad f\*\*king genius of a filmmaker, it's always make or break (or both). He breaks in his latest, "The House That Jack Built" which is all too much of evil everything, until it morphs into a last act that has an intriguing and unsettling sense of weird purpose. The story of a serial killer and the meticulous realizations of his killings is like a sound meter that is constantly going into the red zone, until the damn thing shatters.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

It features veteran actor Matt Dillon in full character mode as the serial killer, icily going from "incident" to incident (the killings) over a 12 year period in the 1970s and '80s. The planning and execution of each incident gets more and more detailed, until it becomes almost intentionally undoable. The killer's madness is almost secondary to his destiny, and the blithe way he goes about the kills becomes as bizarre as the understanding that there is no "protection" in life, only a series of lucky survival that determines whether we're done in by external forces or later by inner tissue breakdown. It could make you walk out (I did twice to take a break), and it will make you think. How you want to take it all in will be a self determination, just as life is.

The film begins with Jack (Matt Dillon) picking up a woman (Uma Thurman) on the road whose car has a flat she can't fix. On their way to a service station, the conversation turns to how she, as a stranger, might possible be in the car of a killer. The speculation is obviously affecting Jack, who eventually kills her in a shocking way, revealing that he is indeed a serial killer.

This is the "1st Incident" of five in the film, each becoming more and more horrible (again, as if he wants to get caught). As a handsome guy and smooth talker, he is able to bring a single mother (Sofie Grabol) and her sons towards an eventual "incident" (3rd) and sweet talk a another woman (Riley Keough) into another specific killing (4th). It concludes near his capture, which unfortunately couldn't come soon enough for the "house" he has created.

*"The House that Jack Built" has a limited run at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport Avenue in Chicago. For details and ticket info, [click here](#). [18] See local listings for other theaters and show times (digital release in June). Featuring Matt Dillon, Uma Thurman, Sofie Grabol, Riley Keough and Bruno Ganz. Written and directed by Lars von Trier. Rated "R"*



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Out Damned Spot: Matt Dillon in 'The House that Jack Built'

Photo credit: IFC Films



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