

## David Fincher's 'The Social Network' is a Rare Masterpiece

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 30, 2010 - 3:11pm

- [Aaron Sorkin](#) [2]
- [Andrew Garfield](#) [3]
- [Armie Hammer](#) [4]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [5]
- [David Fincher](#) [6]
- [Jesse Eisenberg](#) [7]
- [Joseph Mazello](#) [8]
- [Justin Timberlake](#) [9]
- [Max Minghella](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Rashida Jones](#) [12]
- [Rooney Mara](#) [13]
- [The Social Network](#) [14]
- [Trent Reznor](#) [15]



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – So many recent films have been called “masterpieces” by critics that the word doesn’t have the power that it once did. And yet there’s sometimes no better way to describe a film. David Fincher’s “The Social Network,” starring Jesse Eisenberg, Andrew Garfield, and Justin Timberlake is a masterpiece.

David Fincher’s film is like a drug for cinephiles. It gets into your system and stays there for days, reigniting the passion for the medium that lost a little bit of its heat over the course of a lackluster year for cinema. By now, you’ve probably read that the film “defines the decade” or serves as a commentary on how the age of internet connectivity has actually driven us further from honest personal connections, but that’s like praising a great meal for its garnish. If you get something out of those thematic issues then it will add another layer to the experience, but “The Social Network” is a masterpiece regardless of whether or not you think it says anything concrete about the digital age.



The Social Network

*Photo credit: Sony Pictures*

It’s a deeper story than something merely pulled from the headlines or sociological studies about the impact of the internet. Aaron Sorkin’s incredible screenplay touches on timeless issues of loneliness, betrayal, popularity, and the tricky balance of mixing friendship and business.

The film plays with themes far older than the information superhighway and the instant fame it affords. And it does so in a way that will make it far more than a mere document of the '00s. With spectacular performances, technical elements that are beyond criticism, and the best directorial work of Fincher's remarkable career, "The Social Network" is one of the best films of 2010.

Sorkin and Fincher very purposefully open their film in a crowded bar with two young people trying to make a connection. Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) and his girlfriend (Rooney Mara) engage in a rapid-fire conversation about how Mark can make a name for himself at Harvard that ends with the two of them breaking up. It's clearly the inciting incident for everything that will come (and is beautifully book-ended by two thematically-related scenes later in the film) but the key line comes from the heartbroken young woman who informs Mark that it's not the fact that he's a nerd that will make him unloved but the fact that he's an a-hole.



The Social Network

*Photo credit: Sony Pictures*

After that night, Zuckerberg makes the mistake of drinking and blogging, writing some horrible things about his now-ex before hacking into every one of the dorm servers at Harvard to create a page in which students pick which girl is hotter from people they actually know. The combined result of his technical activities that night catches the eye of a pair of Olympic-level crew members named Winkelvoss (both excellently-played by Armie Hammer in a technical achievement comparable to "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button") and a third investor named Divya Narendra (Max Minghella). They approach Zuckerberg with a social network concept called "The Harvard Connection." With the help of Dustin Moskovitz (Joseph Mazzello) and the financing of his now-CFO Eduardo Saverin (Andrew Garfield), Facebook is born.

With the ease possible only from our best screenwriters, Sorkin cuts back and forth in time, structuring his story around two depositions – one in which Narendra and the Winkelvoss twins are suing Zuckerberg for stealing their concept and one in which Saverin is suing him for the dissolution of their partnership. Sorkin and Fincher weave the legal proceedings around flashbacks to the incidents in question, creating an experience in which the inevitability of disaster permeates every scene. It's like watching a runaway train that you know will go off the rails. You just don't quite know where or exactly when.



The Social Network  
Photo credit: Sony Pictures

And “runaway train” is the phrase that most often comes to mind when I think about “The Social Network.” With the help of Sorkin’s amazing way with dialogue and spectacular editing by Kirk Baxter and Angus Wall, “The Social Network” simply flies. It’s one of the most expertly-paced films of not just this year but the last several and it’s enhanced by Atticus Ross and Trent Reznor’s incredible score and Oscar-worthy cinematography by Jeff Cronenweth (“Seven,” “Fight Club”).

David Fincher has long been a technical master but “The Social Network” allows him to perfectly use his skills behind the camera to enhance an Oscar-worthy screenplay and propel an amazing ensemble. Eisenberg gives the best performance of his career, perfectly capturing Sorkin’s rat-a-tat dialogue and finding the sadness beneath this admitted a-hole. Armie Hammer and Justin Timberlake are impressive enough to consider for year-end awards. But the film belongs to Andrew Garfield. Eduardo is our eyes and ears into this story, the guy always trying to do his best in a world where moral and professional standards don’t always help. I’d love it if Hammer, Timberlake and Garfield were all nominated but the Oscar should go to Andrew. He’s perfect.

Perhaps there is a better word choice than masterpiece — “The Social Network” is perfect. We can only say that about one or two films a year, if we’re lucky. Don’t miss it. And don’t be surprised when you’re so addicted to this rarely-seen caliber of filmmaking drug that you need to see it again.

*‘The Social Network’ stars Jesse Eisenberg, Andrew Garfield, Armie Hammer, Justin Timberlake, Max Minghella, Joseph Mazello, Rashida Jones, and Rooney Mara. It was written by Aaron Sorkin and directed by David Fincher. It opens on October 1st, 2010. It is rated PG-13.*



[16]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [17]  
Content Director  
[HollywoodChicago.com](http://HollywoodChicago.com)  
[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [16]

**Source URL (retrieved on Apr 17 2024 - 11:25pm):**  
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/11986/film-review-david-fincher-s-the-social-network-is-a-rare-masterpiece>

- Links:**  
[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>  
[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/aaron-sorkin>  
[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/andrew-garfield>  
[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/armie-hammer>  
[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/brian-tallerico>  
[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/david-fincher>  
[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jesse-eisenberg>  
[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/joseph-mazello>  
[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/justin-timberlake>

- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/max-minghella>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/rashida-jones>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/rooney-mara>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/the-social-network>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/trent-reznor>
- [16] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>