

## Colin Farrell, Sam Rockwell in Fun ‘Seven Psychopaths’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 12, 2012 - 12:52pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Is there room for vengeance if you believe in Heaven and Hell? How do we suppress our need for moral and even physical justice if we believe that violence leads to damnation? Is there a chance to...oh, never mind. Let's just blow someone's brains out. That's essentially how "Seven Psychopaths," the clever new action comedy from Martin McDonagh ("In Bruges") works in that it has a number of interesting ideas that aren't fully developed even if the movie is fun enough to be considered a sin.

Marty (Colin Farrell) is a writer in search of an idea. He drinks way too much, verbally abuses his girlfriend Kaya (Abbie Cornish) when he does, and steals other people's ideas. One such person who inspires Marty's writing is his friend Billy (Sam Rockwell), an abrasive personality who may or may not be one of the title characters (by the end, I think most people will count up WAY more than seven). Billy has an idea for a movie within the movie called, of course, "Seven Psychopaths," and he even takes out an ad in the newspaper looking for nutjobs to serve as inspiration (to which Zachariah [Tom Waits] shows up and tells a stunning story of gruesome murder).

Meanwhile, Billy has a scheme going on the side that will soon intersect with Marty's search for inspirational lunatics. He's been kidnapping dogs on the side with Hans (Christopher Walken) and then returning them for the ransom money. They make the tragic mistake of dog-napping the Shih Tzu of a notorious madman named Charlie (Woody Harrelson) who will go to whatever ends to get it back. Before you know it, brains are being splattered and secrets are being revealed in this action-comedy hybrid with a habit of extreme violence that's reminiscent of Quentin Tarantino and Sam Peckinpah.



Seven Psychopaths  
Photo credit: CBS Films

“Seven Psychopaths” threatens to become something more than a fun action movie on multiple occasions. Several of Marty’s characters within the film along with the people in his life have fascinating stories to the point that “Seven Psychopaths” virtually approaches anthology structure at times. We see the story of the “Quaker Psychopath” (with a BRILLIANT cameo by Harry Dean Stanton). We see Zachariah’s story. We see the story of the “Vietnamese Psychopath.” And then the film starts to fold in on itself when you consider that the lead character is a writer writing a movie with the same title named Martin. It’s not unlike “Adaptation” meets “Pulp Fiction.”

And, at its best, it’s as fun as that description makes it out to be. McDonagh is an undeniably clever writer and his gift for dialogue is undeniable. This movie crackles with life thanks to both McDonagh’s smart ear for the way people speak to each other and the incredible cast he’s assembled to deliver his words. Farrell actually plays down his personality as he’s more of the straight-man of the piece, which allows Rockwell, Walken, Harrelson, and everyone else to just let loose. Even small roles taken by great actors like Michael Stuhlbarg, Michael Pitt, Zeljko Ivanek, Stanton, and Cornish seem livelier than normal. Everyone plays up to McDonagh’s super-fun script.

I just wished at times that “Psychopaths” was more than just “fun.” It lacks the depth of “In Bruges” and feels like it could have been refined a bit more into a seamless whole. I kept waiting for its multiple arcs and ideas to gel and then McDonagh went in another direction in the final act (almost commenting on expectations for a movie like this in the first place) and I left thinking that the result was more shallow than I had hoped it would be. I can’t deny the sheer enjoyment of the film and quality performances within and so those who like McDonagh, this genre, or any of the cast should check it out, even if I wish there was a bit more reasoning behind these particular psychopaths.

*“Seven Psychopaths” stars Colin Farrell, Sam Rockwell, Abbie Cornish, Christopher Walken, Harry Dean Stanton, Woody Harrelson, Zeljko Ivanek, and Olga Kurylenko. It was written and directed by Martin McDonagh. It was released nationwide on October 12, 2012.*



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