

'Deliver Us From Evil' Goes Straight for the Jugular

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 2, 2014 - 7:21pm

- [Chris Coy](#) [2]
- [Cops](#) [3]
- [Dave Canfield](#) [4]
- [Deliver Us From Evil](#) [5]
- [Edgar Ramirez](#) [6]
- [Eric Bana](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Joel McHale](#) [9]
- [Movie Review](#) [10]
- [Olivia Munn](#) [11]
- [Police](#) [12]
- [Possession](#) [13]
- [Screen Gems](#) [14]
- [Sean Harris](#) [15]



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Deliver Us from Evil” is director Scott Derrickson’s second foray into possession horror. His first, the excellent “The Exorcism of Emily Rose,” was taut, thoughtful and offered some truly unsettling demon scares...it still ranks as one of the most important and best of the new crop of possession/devil films it helped kick start into being with their box office numbers. Like Emily Rose this film is very loosely based on actual accounts. In this case, the accounts of retired policeman Ralph Sarchie who left the NYPD to become a demonologist eventually writing the book from which the film gets its title.

Ralph Sarchie (Eric Bana) is a cop clearly troubled by his job. Witness to the worst society has to offer, and beginning to bend under the psychic weight, he gets by on his wits, occasionally following up on hunches that put him in the crosshairs. One such call, involving domestic abuse, starts him and his partner Butler (Joel McHale) on a long and lethal investigation leading them from Iraq to the New York slums and beyond. It also leads Sarchie to Father Mendoza (Edgar Ramirez), a young priest with troubles of his own, and a strong ally in the fight against what is obviously a supernatural evil.



Sarchie (Eric Bana) is On a Journey in 'Deliver Us From Evil'

Photo credit: Screen Gems

Derrickson goes for the jugular right from the start with a shot that forms the basis of every policeman’s worst nightmare. It’s clear from the

get go that Sarchie is the main character here and as we find out more about him the film leads inexorably to a point of resolve about his issues. The way it does that is far more interesting than anything else in the film. Bana is great, exuding the macho emotional remove of a man whose intense inward struggle to find meaning and forgiveness is at war with his secret sins and his fear of the unknown. With rage leaking out into every area of his life he's in real danger of self destruction.

McHale is fine as Butler although the dialogue forces him into some stilted posturing that feels like filler. Ramirez is dynamic as Mendoza and manages to instill a sense of real life conversation into scenes that explore spirituality in detail. Such moments have very little of the expository tone that can be the kiss of death for any film, much less a horror film.

Almost all possession films have a major exorcism scene in the third act where all the special effects bells and whistles come to a climax. But here the climax is emotional and there's certainly room to criticize this scene in "Deliver Us from Evil" as being a bit been-there-cast-out-that. None of the special effects in it are particularly interesting or add anything new to the visual vocabulary of demonic possession films. In short it feels less horrific and dangerous than it should. But it's still better than almost all such scenes in recent fare like "The Devil Inside," "The Rite" or "The Possession." It should also be mentioned that the effects in other scenes fare much better with some genuinely creepy and disturbing moments. Trust me this movie is gory, gross and spooky enough for any horror lover.

While the screenplay takes viewers down some well trodden paths it also cleverly references films such as "Fallen" in the use of music, "Se7en" in the general aesthetic and a criminally underrated "Exorcist III" in the overall structure and subject matter. There's even a couple of well played moments that invoke "Silence of the Lambs." What emerges is an odd little crime drama with dark supernatural overtones and some stomach wrenching gore.

Derrickson has never been interested in offering up simple scares. His last film, the masterful "Sinister," offered a potent reminder of how complex this business of images as entertainment can be, as it told the story of one man driven to consume images for the wrong reasons. He inverts that story here – and while it isn't as unnerving – the sense of goodness seems palpable. Not goodness in an aesthetic sense, but in a more ethereal-but-no-less-real, making this one of the more complex and interesting horrors of the year.



Sarchie and Butler (Joel McHale) in 'Deliver Us From Evil'

Photo credit: Screen Gems

Movie critics are a little like exorcists in that we inhabit a questionable profession in the minds of most people. We are staid believers in the power of cinema and yet we live in a culture that couldn't care less if that power is real. Trotting off to see whatever's new at the multiplex is the norm among casual movie goers. Any attempt to dissuade them from seeing bad movies (and by bad I mean movies that do not even succeed at entertaining their core audience) tends to result in being looked at a little strangely.

Those possessed by the sort of fandom that demands they see everything in a particular genre are somewhat exempt here because they are driven by a real passion, a love for something they can define. Just try asking the casual moviegoer demon of "that sucked" if they might have missed the point of this film and you'll get barfed on, spat at and reviled. "Deliver Us From Evil" seems geared to do exactly what its title suggests. It's also a lot of fun. Only the sneering cynic need not apply.

"Deliver Us From Evil" opens everywhere on July 2nd. Featuring Eric Bana, Édgar Ramírez, Olivia Munn, Joel McHale, Chris Coy and Sean Harris. Screenplay by Scott Derrickson and Paul Harris Boardman. Directed by Scott Derrickson. Rated "R"

By [DAVE CANFIELD](#) [17]



[16]

Contributor

HollywoodChicago.com

dave@hollywoodchicago.com [16]

© 2014 Dave Canfield, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Sep 22 2024 - 9:13am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/24204/deliver-us-from-evil-goes-straight-for-the-jugular>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/chris-coy>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/cops>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/dave-canfield>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/deliver-us-from-evil>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/edgar-ramirez>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/eric-bana>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/joel-mchale>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/olivia-munn>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/police>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/possession>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/screen-gems>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/sean-harris>
- [16] <mailto:dave@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#DAVE>