

"We've got chicken tonight. Strangest damn things. They're man made. Little damn things." -

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INSANITY (DVD)

by KJ Doughton
(2005-03-08)



★★★★

2003, Un-rated, 100 Minutes, Sorelosers Productions, Inc.

CREDITS



If Oliver Stone produced a video game, it might resemble Richard T. Celenza's "Insanity," an ambitious, paranoid freak-out of a movie. Is it the LSD trip of some acid-ingesting gamer? Is it the sci-fi action fan's answer to "Memento?" Is it a tough-talking gangster variation on "Minority Report?" A companion piece to that other Windy City whodunit, "The Fugitive"? One could argue for any of these comparisons, or for all of them – "Insanity" is packed to its cold, nasty gills with ideas and invention.

Is there another indie flick around that frames its credits in front of what looks like a YMCA promotional clip shot through a kaleidoscope? We watch Chicago crime-fighter Guy Shelby (Guy Petruzzelli) sprinting on a treadmill and beefing up on weights as he prepares to punt underworld rump. Meanwhile, any movie that begins with the threat, "We're gonna push your elbows up your ass and saw your cock off," certainly gets points for chutzpah.

And this is before Celenza tosses in a black-garbed hit man in night vision goggles (who bears an unsettling resemblance to the Sand People of "Star Wars"), a squad of elite urban assassins who casually gun down two robbers interrupting their boss' boardroom speech, and a newfangled forensic invention that allows law enforcement officials to study the final, cortex-bound memories of the dead.

Shelby is the hero of "Insanity" - a cynical, embittered police detective (is there any other kind?) whose forensic pathologist father develops a revolutionary mind-reading machine. After dad and his team of criminology experts are rubbed out by a mysterious, untraceable killer, Shelby vows revenge. Meanwhile, viewers are left to untangle a web of warped connections involving two rival hit men, the covert birth of a female assassin's baby, and a governor's murder at the scene of a macabre cult gathering.

Sound complicated? You have no idea. View "Insanity" once, and beware the temptation of repeat viewings, to stitch together this patchwork quilt of uneven seams and odd-shaped pieces. Along the way, cinematography fans will relish Celenza's colorful assault of camera tricks, including 360 degree "Matrix" loops, varying camera speeds, and bird's eye/snail's view perspectives. Clearly, this is a filmmaker with style to burn. And you've gotta love those tough-

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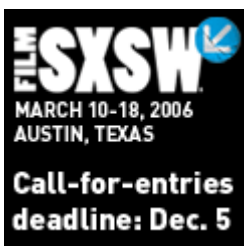
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7/4 Tr
8/7 Tr
9/6 Tr
10/5Cr

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as-nails, neo-Tarantino lines like, "I'm gonna peel off your skin with the crusty edge of a rusty muffler."

With its huge maze of characters, agencies, locations, and twists, "Insanity" ultimately takes on more material than it can coherently chew. But give Celenza kudos for aiming high with his enthusiastic, entertaining hybrid of the hardwired and the hard-boiled.



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