

Ray Stevenson IS the Punisher

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Friday, 05 December 2008
Last Updated Friday, 05 December 2008

Went and saw Punisher:War Zone

While I wanted to avoid spoilers I did hit the reviews this morning; Neil Miller over at Film School Rejects sums it up nicely; and I had to laugh and agree with his comment about Thomas Jane in the last Punisher movie:

The truth is that I have a man-crush on Thomas Jane, the Punisher of 2004, and that man-crush was blinding me to the fact that Stevenson makes for a great Punisher.

I'm a bit of a fan-boy, so for perspective I'm gonna touch on all three of the big-screen Punisher takes:

Micro-reviews:

The Punisher (1989)

Dolph Lundgren as the Punisher, Lou Gosset Jr. in a supporting role.

This one was fun - which is half the problem. It's got a few great moments - I love the cheesy monologues Dolph delivers and he is a big hulking S.O.B. so it should have been great, but the only place you see Frank's trademark skull is on a knife hilt and HE REFUSES BODY ARMOR when its offered. Uh, what?

Basically, it's a run-of-the-mill 80s action movie that should have been more.

The Punisher (2004)

Got alot right; the military vet ->FBI angle coupled with his sneaky maneuvers later was pretty cool. We get the trademark skull, and John Travolta manages to not completely chew the scenery - in fact he gets arguably the best lines in the movie:

John Saint: Where've you been? Where's Quentin?

Howard Saint: Oh, he's wrapped up in something.

John Saint: I called home, no one was there.

Howard Saint: Your mother's gone.

John Saint: What?

Howard Saint: She took the train.

They definately understood the character:

I leave this as a declaration of intent, so no one will be confused. One: "Si vis pacem, para bellum." Latin. Boot Camp Sergeant made us recite it like a prayer. "Si vis pacem, para bellum - If you want peace, prepare for war." Two: Frank Castle is dead. He died with his family. Three: in certain extreme situations, the law is inadequate. In order to shame its inadequacy, it is necessary to act outside the law. To pursue... natural justice. This is not vengeance. Revenge is not a valid motive, it's an emotional response. No, not vengeance. Punishment.

... but it was an origin movie... so they left room for sequels, and I guess were saving the good sh*t for the sequels...

The Punisher:War Zone (2008)

Best of the bunch; for anyone that doesn't know who the Punisher is, and why he does the things he does, they give you about ten minutes of flashbacks and backstory - and that's plenty.

- Microchip's in it, and doesn't suck. Wayne Knight makes for a great micro
- I've gotta dig through my trades, but I'd swear McGinty is from a one-off from not too long back.
- Jigsaw looks great er, awful and that's great... you know what I mean. He's a bit over the top, but it works - he's got an even nuttier brother
- Loonie Bin Jim - great nutjob performance, nice addition to the story.
- Buffy/Angel Fanboys take note - Julie Benz [Darla] co-stars and she looks great, and gives a great performance.

If you want spoilers they're easy enough to find, you won't get them here.

Great movie that doesn't re-write anything about the character (well, he's not a Vietnam Vet, but I'm ok with that) and doesn't hold back on the violence.

Leave the little-ones at home for this one gang. This is for us supposedly grown-up kids.