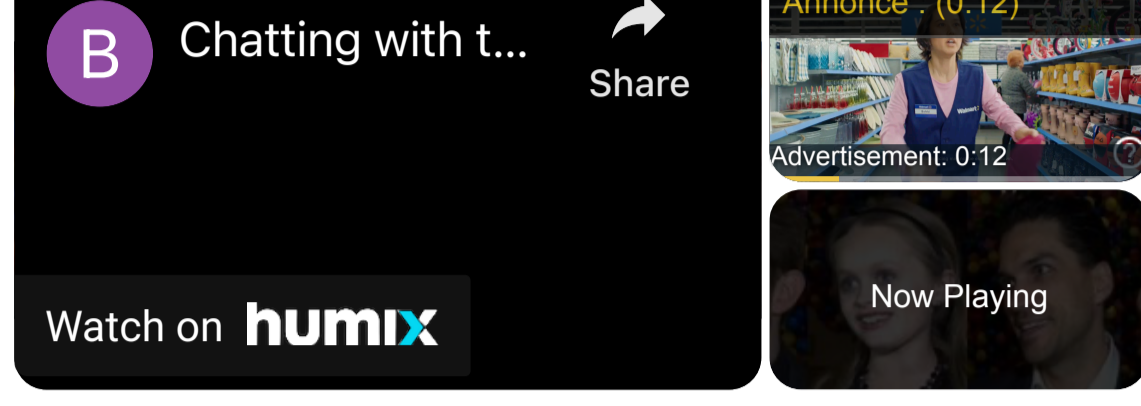




DUSK FOR A HITMAN



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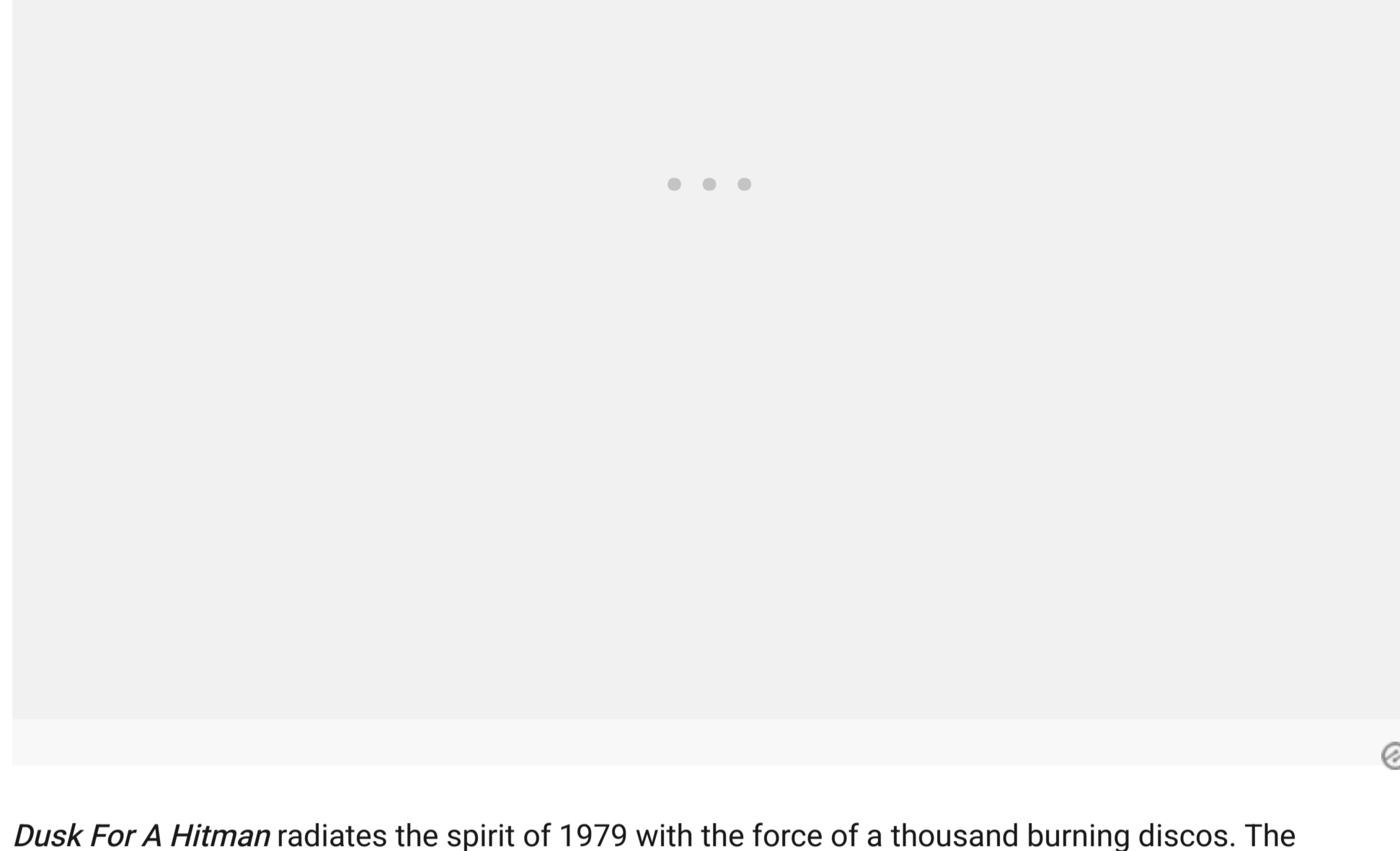
By [Michael Talbot-Haynes](#) | April 23, 2024

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NOW ON VOD! Slap on your mirror shades to gaze upon the Naugahyde shine of the dying light of the 1970s with the chilling French-Canadian assassin drama *Dusk For A Hitman*, directed by Raymond St-Jean. The screenplay, adapted from true-life events by St-Jean and Martin Girard, follows Donald Lavoie (Eric Bruneau), who supports his family by murdering people. He's the bloody right hand of Montreal crime boss Claude Dubois (Benoit Gouin), following each order with lethal precision, not questions. As the hitman lifestyle is both fueled and anesthetized by alcohol and cocaine, Donald's seldom at home with his wife Francine (Rose-Marie Perreault) and baby daughter Sophie (Agathe Ledoux).

Donald's brother Carl (Simon Landry-Desy) is fresh out of prison and wants to talk about their ailing father. However, he still carries fury due to being abandoned as children by the man. Carl is looking for work with the Dubois mob, but his brother puts his foot down, as Carl is too loose a cannon. Meanwhile, the head of the organized crime unit, Roger Burns (Sylvain Marcel), would love to get Donald as an informant, but the assassin has no words for the cop. As 1979 smashes into 1980, the cold-blooded landscape Donald knew starts constricting around him like the deadly coils of an anaconda.

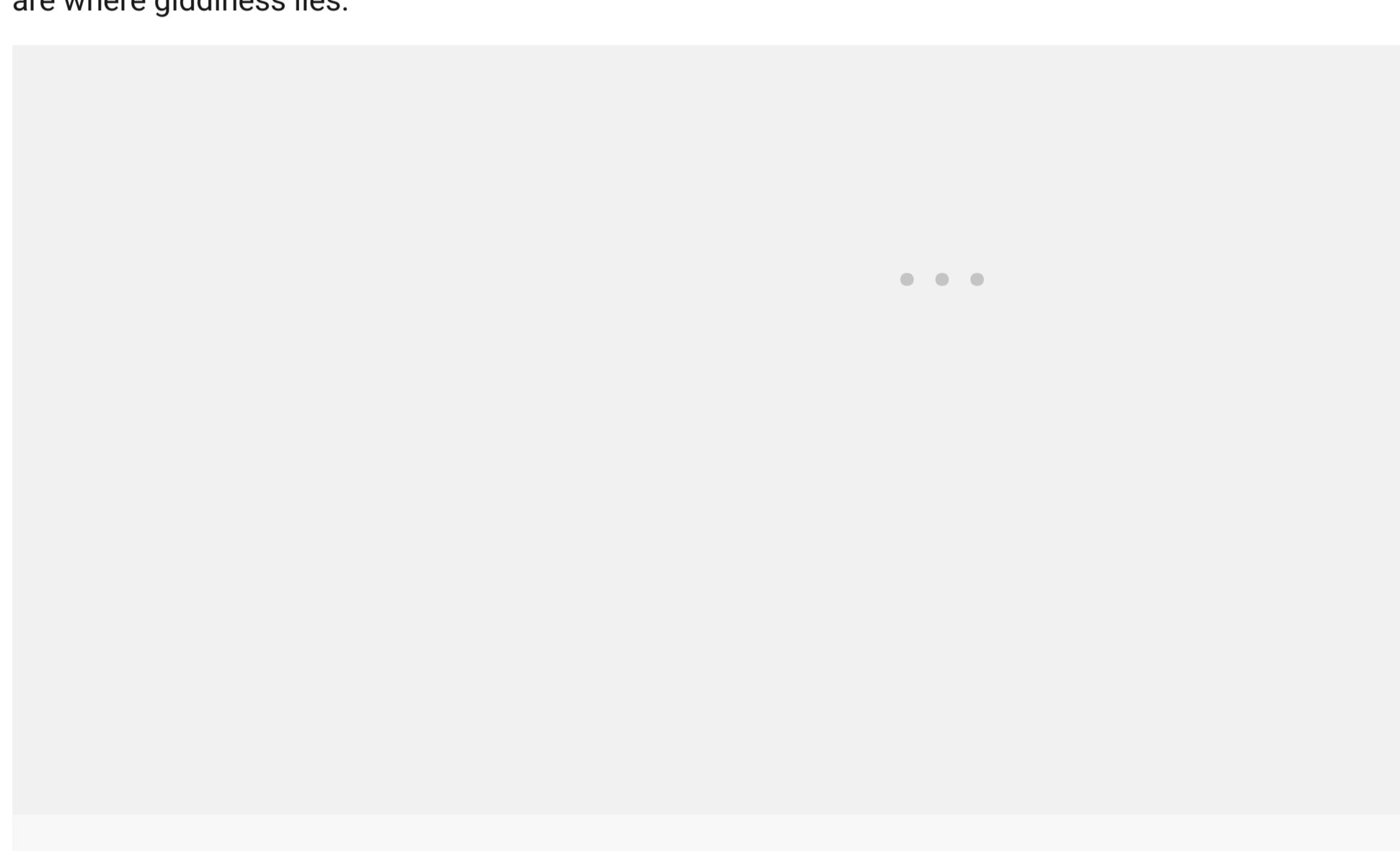


Dusk For A Hitman radiates the spirit of 1979 with the force of a thousand burning discos. The nosebleed seam between the decades is resplendently recreated with nicotine-stained majesty. Nearly all the men are coifed in dick sheath haircuts; all combed over in the style of a *That's Incredible* host. It is a leisure suit sky with mustaches for stars. Art director Marie-Helene Lavoie captures this rare atmosphere with an informed authority, producing an aura as lost and delicate as a pull-rod cigarette vending machine.



"...looking for work with the Dubois mob, but his brother puts his foot down, as Carl is too loose a cannon."

The way 1980 started to rapidly tarnish the chrome of the 70s is mirrored in the script by the tragic downfall of the protagonist, as the party can't go on forever. The fact that this party is sustained through murder is as succinct a comment on the excesses of the decade as I can think of. It will also be this death party that will hold your fascination, as the cinematic favors are plentiful. The film dives deep into reptilian back and forth of the bloody day-to-day of organized crime, where the real meat is. The plot turns are textbook tragedy, so these scenic views of Hell are where giddiness lies.



Bruneau is excellent in his building a glacial wall of evil around Donald. With each act of annihilation, he becomes more frozen for all to see the emotional numbness that makes up Donald. Landry-Desy makes an exceptional human labrador, retriever, so eager to please while messing up. Perreault does a lot of heavy lifting in the silence, letting her expressions speak for her displeasure at the direction of things. Best of all is crime boss Gouin, who is perfect as the evilest bastard in the cosmos. He has a sinister demeanor that could send the devil himself into a pants-wetting shiver. We need heavy villainy like this, especially as everyone in this picture is a villain to some degree (don't underestimate the toddler).

Dusk For A Hitman is a high-powered retro ride into oblivion with the floorboard on fire. It will hook even the most casual filmgoer, as it has that same transgressive pheromone found in *Casino* and *Scarface*. The degree of ruthlessness that is achieved is stunning, as the skin of the nightmare of the assassination trade is pulled back.



DUSK FOR A HITMAN (2024)

Directed: Raymond St-Jean
 Written: Raymond St-Jean, Martin Girard
 Starring: Eric Bruneau, Benoit Gouin, Rose-Marie Perreault, Simon Landry-Desy, Sylvain Marcel, Agathe Ledoux, etc.

MOVIE SCORE: 8/10

"...has that same transgressive pheromone found in *Casino* and *Scarface*."

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