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Movie Reviews

'Dusk For A Hitman' Review – Slow-Burn Drama Delivers High Stakes And Brash Violence

By Lane Mills April 22, 2024 No Comments

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Dusk for a Hitman, right off the bat, appeals to cinema's collective retro sensibilities and likings... and it sucks you right in. Nothing particularly sticks out about the opening scene, especially for a film with "hitman" in the title. Tasteful orange credits roll over a shot-reverse-shot sequence of two men cruising in an antique down the highway. You've got a leather interior, vast, unbothered plains, and a gun. Welcome to the show.

The pace quickly picks up as the first scene falls away and the plot starts to roll. The film follows a hitman (in case you had any doubt) on a deeply personal journey, inherently set on violence and pinned with personal stakes. Lead man Éric Bruneau makes his case in the first few scenes as someone you wouldn't wanna mess with, but you quickly learn to sympathize with the beating heart below his cold demeanor.



[L-R] Éric Bruneau as "Donald Lavoie" and Rose-Marie Perreault as "Francine Lavoie" in the action/thriller, *DUSK FOR A HITMAN*, a Saban Films release. Photo courtesy of Saban Films.

Bruneau is the effortless captain of a ship swarming with style. *Dusk for a Hitman* looks tremendous; Bruneau is often framed by old American denim, steely reds, and bleached yellow. The film's retro proclivities are at their fiercest in the visual regard, and do a great deal of work in helping tell the story beyond the page. The camera moves intentionally, with clever compositions consistently worming into the reliable viewpoint that provides the basis for the majority of the experience. Scenes develop with a prodding efficiency; conversations breathe heartily and gazes linger as long as grins.

Yet this consistency bolsters the surprises, which are sporadic and always well-placed. The story does tend to crawl as a result of the former, but the latter ensures that you're never really off the ship. Just when you may start to doze, something kicks things back into high gear, from title cards and needle drops to instantaneous revelations.

It takes a while for the film to fully realize what's going on, but the idea, at least, is worthy of the build-up. Of course, it's inherently difficult to watch a careless killer and care about his story of survival, but the work done here to not only draw that line, but to walk it, is respectable.



Joakim Robillard as "Serge Rivard" in the action/thriller, *DUSK FOR A HITMAN*, a Saban Films release. Photo courtesy of Saban Films.

There are a few moments where some folks will inevitably fall off either side; *Dusk for a Hitman* doesn't shy away from being unashamedly graphic in more ways than one. Some of these moments work better than others, but their regularity furthers the uniform nature of the whole thing that much more.

What *Dusk for a Hitman* does better than most is maintaining an aura (vibe, feeling, aesthetic) that'll separate it from other films in your memory from here on out. Some of it is due to the superb cinematography and intense gratuity, but some films manage something beyond that; it's almost as if it's borne in the production stages and seeps into the film over time, staining it with a specificity only found therein. *Dusk for a Hitman* is one of those films.



Simon Landry-Desy as "Carl Lavoie" in the action/thriller, *DUSK FOR A HITMAN*, a Saban Films release. Photo courtesy of Saban Films.

This one could catch a lot of viewers off-guard, so familiarize yourself going in, but don't temper your expectations. *Dusk for a Hitman* is going to work for multitudes. It should sway audiences looking for a steeper exploration of the R rating, as well as those partial to slow-burn stories with time to kill. Others, quite fairly, may let their minds wander somewhere throughout the 106-minute runtime. This is a film that, if you're going to watch it, you have to commit to it.

Dusk for a Hitman delivers on the promises it makes on the surface: this is a well-made, excessively violent film about a troubled and terribly flawed man for hire who has to choose between familial loyalty and simply staying alive. If that sounds like it's up your alley, it'll likely be a worthy endeavor.

***Dusk for a Hitman* is currently available on Digital platforms and On Demand courtesy of Saban Films.**



7.5

GVN Rating 7.5

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Lane Mills
Movies, long drives, and mint chocolate chip ice cream.

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