

Killing Them Softly

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#) 5 Aug 2013

Killing Them Softly is a provocative film filled with suspense and intrigue that will definitely change your views on what happens in the underbelly of society.

Based on George V Higgins' novel Cogan's Trade, Killing Them Softly was adapted with heartfelt insight by John Dahl, who believes that crime dramas are "essentially about capitalism", and succeeds in showing the "capitalist idea functioning in its most base form". When Brad Pitt plays the charismatic hero he is idolised by the masses. In Killing Them Softly, Pitt the actor brilliantly brings a psychopath from hell to life, allowing us to swoon for his charisma, but fear his retribution.





Delivers on all levels

If you are looking for a film with magnificent performances, *Killing Them Softly* delivers on all levels, with Richard Jenkins in top form as a lawyer and the go-between the hit man hired to investigate a heist that we down during a mob-protected poker game. Ray Liotta is great as the nice bad-guy who's in charge of the card games, with sturdy support from Vincent Curatola and Scoot McNairy as the daredevil duo hell-bent c becoming brainy criminals.

Dominik took us into the souls of criminal minds with *Chopper* and *The Assassination Of Jesse James By The Coward Robert Ford* (also starring Brad Pitt in a great performance), and with *Killing Them Softly* he delivers a hard core and intimate journey into the world of vengeance and violence, where the ruthless rule and the reckless suffer the consequences of their foolish actions. Dominik's skilful direction and powerful screenplay are amplified by his astounding vision; this is the art of filmmaking action, brilliantly captured by cinematographer Greig Fraser (*Zero Dark Thirty* and *Now White and the Huntsman*), with richly textured production design by Patricia Norris (*Blue Velvet*).

In the tradition of films like *Killer Joe*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, and *The Place Beyond the Pines*, *Killing Them Sof* is an intimate encounter with dark forces that destroy the fabric of our humanness. It is through its well defined and vivid characters that hatred and retribution are fully explored. This dark journey into an abyss c despair is laced with a dark sense of absurd humour. It offers discerning cinema-goers a potent crime drama that explores characters tainted by corruption and driven by greed.

Behind the scenes

"I saw a film populated by people in pursuit of a buck, who had absolutely no idea how unhappy they were, who found their jobs to be a total drag, who were victim to indecisive, incompetent bosses, anesthetising themselves with drugs, sex, and alcohol," said writer-director Andrew Dominik. "I contacted Brad and explained the basic idea by text; I was trying to gauge his interest before I moved on. I assumed at the time that he had bigger fish to fry and wouldn't be interested in doing a modestly budgeted movie at such short notice, but he responded immediately and, 45 minutes later, he had not only agreed to do it, but we had a deal hammered out. Hollywood is a crazy town and if you try to do someone a favour there, they are likely to run away screaming. The rest was pretty straightforward."

Read more at www.writingstudio.co.za/page1037.html.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and television journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za View my profile and articles...

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