

“Unhinged” is a 21st century Hitchcock “Psycho”

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Alfred Hitchcock took suspense to a new level rarely seen today.

“Unhinged” is decisively modern, and I dare say will leave you a bit unhinged, too.

There are two things about this movie I suspect you will not soon forget, both of which come at the right time today, and I will share those at the close of this review.

The violence is tame compared to “Gladiator,” another Russell Crowe hit movie and for which he earned the “Best Actor” Academy Award. There and in his role in “Robin Hood,” Crowe disappears seamlessly into the movies’ characters. In “Beautiful Mind,” Crowe portrayed the true-life story of mathematician and Nobel Laureate John Nash who was afflicted with clinical paranoid schizophrenia—there too, an oddly dangerous unhinged man.

In “Unhinged,” Crowe is an overweight worker who lost his pension and goes psycho.

In my unchristian youth, I saw a few horror flicks, and today I radically oppose them. “Halloween,” “Saw,” “Texas Chainsaw Massacre,” et al, splatter blood and guts simply to try to scare the viewer. I do believe the gratuitous and gruesome violence degrades humanity and needlessly desensitize youth, the primary audience, and should be outlawed like the XXX movies.

I saw a preview of the new “Friday the 13th” coming out, yeah, on Friday, Nov. 13, 2020, making this about the 13th movie in the franchise, and it competes with “Halloween” for the horror industry creations of endless sequels.

I felt the need to separate “Unhinged” from those horror movies I despise. This is not a remake of the 1982 slasher movie of the same name. It is not a horror flick.

Yet, I do not ... do not ... recommend this for a family outing.

If I do not see it again, it is because it unhinged me.

This modern Hitchcock suspense unfolds rich characters in masterful editing. As expected, the experienced Crowe disappeared into his role.

A hectic mother stuck in traffic honks her horn, and the already unhinged Crowe turns to pursue her. She needs a lesson, as he reminds her, and soon her entire family is involved.

Hitchcock’s 1960 “Psycho” did not have gratuitous violence and was not a horror flick as we know them today. The suspense of an innocent pursued drew one inside the twisted mind of Norman Bates and the now infamous Bates Motel. So much so, “Bates Motel” has entered the lexicon as the last place anyone wants to spend the night, or the place where the proprietors were the worst hosts imaginable. Ms. Everywoman was real. Her scream rattled the mind. The knife was so very scary, much more intestinally moving than any sword in “Gladiator.”



You saw more violence in “Gladiator,” and the blood was no surprise in the Colosseum. Furthermore, you have seen much more blood in dozens of war movies you likely saw a couple of times. Certainly in “Tora, Tora, Tora,” “Saving Private Ryan,” and “Pearl Harbor.”

“Unhinged” has a few violent scenes that surprise and shock just as Hitchcock would have designed, only in the setting of Everyday, USA. One scene, oh sure, you saw that coming, yet still uniquely, and each suspense was crafted to explode further Crowe’s mania and raise the terror of the besieged single mother. What can she do?

Road rage—you’ve heard the term, and you will never think of it the same.

I do mean masterful in drama and editing.

Two things will affect you like no other movie.

One, for a month after you will wonder at honking your horn in traffic. Truly, who has not honked at someone taking too much time at a traffic signal? Wake them up. Or been honked at, as you yourself have daydreamed. Who has not been the victim of some road rage, whether it is the angry middle finger or someone cussing out their window?

Perhaps, come on now, it was your finger.

This may seem trite but is not. I do believe you will think about honking your horn in traffic, at least for a while after this movie. Oh, and not so much because of actual fear of a psycho, but because of how this movie unfolded, and then closed.

Honk that horn, and you *will* remember!

“Unhinged” is not just about a psycho, it is about how this movie unhinges the viewer.

Two, I guarantee you a new view of police officers. In this sad and I do pray temporary era of some wanting to defund the police, this movie’s Hitchcock-style suspense will pull you in and tug your heart.

You will be rooting for the cops!

The producers could not have foreseen today’s mayhem. Though certainly a subplot in the movie, today’s madness elevates the relevancy. You will not want to defund any police. And because of today’s mayhem and madness, once gripped, you will want more cops.

And at one point, your insides will be screaming for the cops: “Hurry, hurry, hurry!” Seriously, you want the cops to get there ... and then there ... and quickly.

I want to say more. The dynamics of the family, the mother going through a divorce, the son’s compassion about the mother’s chronic lateness, the running low on gas, crimony, the poor mother was so typical of many single mothers with enough already on her freaking plate. Then she meets up with psycho road rage and the drama takes her heart and yours for a ride.

Any Hitchcock fan would dare not spoil further.

Prepare to be unhinged!



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