

Longlegs 2024 Review - 7/13/2024 2:23 AM - 3:57 AM SPENT IN
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A ZACHMANEAN REVIEW



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From the moment I first heard Nic Cage's insidious weeping torturously peel its way through my cellular speaker as I watched the trailer for his latest emotive extravaganza, I knew that I'd be in for a treat when I arrived to my favorite cinema and forked over a reasonably unreasonable sum for a wonderful bucket of airily extended salt, or popped corn, and strapped in for an hour and forty-one minutes of Oz Perkin's take on Dante's *Inferno*. The film opens with a harrowing yet beautifully captured performance from a visually obscured Cage, portrayed within the frame of antiquated video footage—Perkin's cue that the viewer is being let in on a repressed memory. Maika Monroe plays the psychic protagonist with formidable tact, oozing a deep-seated fear in every teary-eyed stare she shoots into her accursed environment. Every character is acted with undeniable passion, and one is never left wanting for immersive dialogue. Satan, or Mr. Downstairs, features center stage as the transparent glue holding each successive act of gruesome handiwork together like the web of the patient arachnid—plucking the strings connected to the spines of its acolytes in geometrical synchronicity. Because most of the violence is experienced postpartum, the Devil having already given birth to the several crime scenes investigated by the estranged birthday girl Lee Harker, the horror of *Longlegs* shines through its twisted sense of completed evil, uncovered yet unstoppable, outlined in the bright sphere of a detective's flashlight yet darker than it was in isolation. Aside from the unflinchingly supernatural nature of the murders, the film and its villains were surprisingly grounded. There was much less body horror than I expected from a title so monstrous, and this is one of *Longlegs*' greatest weaknesses. The only references to the title that we are granted exist in the form of photos and dialogue—there is no Nic Cage spider creature, not even in a nightmare sequence. Despite this glaring miss of what could have been my favorite scene of the year, Cage's makeup is chilling, and his chaotic execution of the man whose legs reach down to hell is fantastic in a way that only Nic fucking Cage can manifest on the big screen. My favorite scene has to be the driving sequence where the viewer is exposed to the one remaining shred of humanity locked within the bleached skin of the silver-haired spider. Cage's vocal cords are stretched as thin as ever, making for an insidiously gnarly auditory adventure whenever he haunts the shot. Broadsideing the incessant waterfall of sobs and screams is a soundtrack reminiscent of *Disco Elysium* and *Death Grips* all at once. Orchestrated by ZILGI, the score is packed with desolate and drawn out piano clicks, followed by strangled and backward industrial waves. My favorite tracks include *Hell On Earth* and *Blue Eyed Bairn*, and certain elements of the sound design took me back to the greatest horror score ever written: *Hereditary* by Colin Stetson. The plot of *Longlegs* never felt forced, but I believe the story could have benefited from a mystery that lingered for a stretch longer. The frights delivered in the film primarily take the form of instances of epistemic initiation into the blood-soaked web of death and

destruction, yet the few evenly placed jumpscars are extremely effective—due in part to both their disturbing, intrusive nature as well as the emotional attachment fostered for the forlorn seer Lee. Biblical and Solomonic symbolism run rampant throughout the narrative, a quality that severely offended many dogmatists in the row of petty soul gems that is the one star Google reviews section. For the well-adjusted viewer, the primary disappointment will rest in the fact that these themes are not explored deeply enough. The picture of John's beast rising from the sea is an infinitely significant motif, yet the most Perkins is willing to say about the beast is that it's authoritatively evil—and this message is made known solely through dialogue and the Zodiac-esque coded letters of half-baked Biblical reference. Longlegs' letters were building a theme that was ultimately abandoned, or at least not granted the symbolic justice they deserved. Regardless of its thematic shortcomings and underdeveloped mythos, Longlegs boasts a magnanimous ensemble of dis-ease and deliciously diabolical performances crusty head to hellfire-steeped toe, and if one is a fan of the dramatized horrible, especially that which is created with genuine effort and thought, Longlegs (2024) is a sufficient condition to media-induced happiness.

Rating: 8/10

Brother's Rating: 7.9/10

With Peace,

-Blessed and Happy