

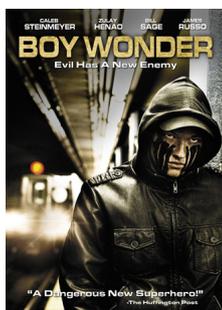
“BOY WONDER” (DVD Review)

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
Tuesday, 08 November 2011 16:48



In many ways, Michael Morrissey's debut feature **BOY WONDER** (on DVD today from Inception Media Group) shares plenty with the rash of '70s and '80s vigilante films by the likes of William Lustig, Michael Winner, Abel Ferrara and Paul Schrader, which many of us hold dear. Mind you, it's not on the level. In fact, it's nowhere near, but it veers much closer to those titles than recent fare like **KICK-ASS**, which **BOY WONDER**'s marketing and even special-feature discussions are trying to ride the coattails of.

The title is most readily evocative of **Batman and Robin**, and if there are any superheroes the protagonist does have parallels to, it's the **Dark Knight** and his, well, boy wonder. Sean Donovan (Caleb Steinmeyer) has lost his mother in a brutal murder, and nine years later, he's still reeling. Socially awkward, he spends his time at the police station trying to make progress on the now cold case, training vigorously and taking down criminals. His efforts start coming to a head, however, when newly high-profile detective Teresa Ames (Zulay Henao) begins to get close.



Sean never actually seems to be making an attempt at superheroics, and the incidental criminals he does come across or hunt down feel like training for his hypothetical showdown with the man who killed his mother. None of this takes away from the film, which is actually much more successful as the grim, psychological affair it truly is, especially in light of the

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genuine New York City/Brooklyn locations used to great and authentic effect.

Morrissey and cinematographer Christopher LaVasseur bring an immense amount to this low-budget affair, elevating the proceedings with the visuals—an aspect you wish the rest of the content matched. There’s a point in BOY WONDER’s behind-the-scenes featurette when one of the actresses remarks that she doesn’t think the writer/director knows what he wrote, and she couldn’t have hit it more on the head.

The biggest disappointment of BOY WONDER is that its characters are much more complex and nuanced than its cast and dialogue can often live up to, with both frequently feeling clunky, stiff and not as layered as they should be. The closest the film comes to total success is with Sean’s father Terry (Bill Sage), a reformed alcoholic openly trying to fight back his own dark tendencies and connect with his very obviously disturbed son.

The sole extra included, the aforementioned making-of, is often bland, spending too much time addressing themes that don’t come across and showcasing the basic roundtable of compliments. The most interesting potential subject (and one that probably could have been most useful to aspiring directors)—how they got such great use out of New York City subways and other settings—is unfortunately barely even touched upon.

MOVIE: 🍷🍷🍷👤

DVD PACKAGE: 🍷🍷🍷👤