

Surveillance: Lies R US!

Written by Dave Howard



Let's say you are a Fed hot on the trail of a pair of killers and interviewing the only surviving witnesses. The hitch is two of the witnesses are lying to you to cover their own crimes.

That's the premise of, "SURVEILLANCE;" a new fucked up thriller by Jennifer Lynch (daughter of David Lynch).

Two FBI agents (Bill Pullman and Julia Ormond) are called to rural B.F.E. to investigate a series of grisly murders. The only witnesses are Jack Bennet (Kent Harper) who lost his partner (a fantastic turn by French Stewart) in the carnage. Also, there is Bobbi (Pell James), a coke whore and a traumatized eight year old girl (Ryan Sympkins) who lost her whole family. The three start relating their versions of their experiences. The cokehead claims to have been out on a job interview (really a drug deal), the cop had been investigating tourists with flat tires (that he shot out for fun to harass the drivers). The only real lead they have is the young girl who can only accurately communicate in crayola images. The three met on the highway through a series of coincidences. The agents unravel the stories one by one leading to one of the most shocking conclusions in recent memory.

The first act is a dry, cliché ridden set up. However, the second and third go into overdrive, charged with intensity. This is a VERY dark rural town we have discovered, one where no one is truly innocent. While it does have a few gallons of blood thrown in for good measure, the genius moments are in the lead up to this violence. Without trying to spoil too much, the two bored cops enjoy tormenting passing tourists. This is taken to an extreme and while there is no blood, one can't help but feeling their innerds being twisted. Considering the history of cops abusing their power, this puts you right into the middle of it. The result is an intense, skincrawling episode that is enough to tempt you into running up the aisle.

Performances are top notch, with the haunting Harper and Stewart leading the pack. Stewart, usually cast as the clown, shows some real chops and you may be seeing him frequently as the heavy from now on. Even the normally vanilla Pullman ignites during the climax to show a range uncommon in his previous roles.

Check out "Surveillance" this weekend, it is a strong alternative to Summer Blockbuster fare. Oh, and Transformers sucks.