

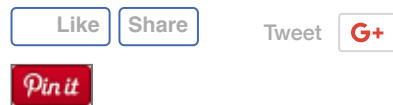


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## INTERVIEW

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By *Erica Abeel* ([Http://Www.Filmjournal.Com/Taxonomy/Term/93](http://www.filmjournal.com/Taxonomy/Term/93)) Jul 13, 2007



### Reviews

In one of cinema's more irritating bits, two characters tell each other off, then seem unable to separate. This cliché recurs throughout *Interview*, a misfire by Steve Buscemi, and the only thing worse than the characters' joint entrapment is that of a viewer trapped along with them in what feels like real time.

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Based on a Dutch film of the same name by Theo van Gogh, Buscemi's version kicks off a project called "Triple Theo," which aims to remake three of the late director's films in English, with a New York City setting. All three share a stripped-down style developed by DP Thomas Kist, using digital cameras running at all takes, with one camera trained on each character, and another camera capturing middle and master shots. The films are all two-handers that explore the murderous impulses between men and women, once known as the battle of the sexes. To judge by the first entry in the trio, August Strindberg need not worry about surrendering his franchise.

Pierre Peders (Buscemi), a serious journalist accustomed to covering world events, finds his boss has assigned him to interview ravishing blonde Katya (Sienna Miller), a brand-name celeb famed for her roles in slasher movies and soaps. Pierre's ill-concealed contempt for both Katya and his task (he hasn't even bothered to Google her) instantly pisses off a diva used to fawning hacks. After a bit of implausible business throws the pair back together, they square off for a five-alarm combat set almost entirely in Katya's high-end, funky loft.

Theoretically, this improvised-feeling film aspires to peel away the elaborate defenses two damaged people have erected to get through the day. At its best, *Interview* presents the mutual "revelations"

the couple share as a devious--and dangerous--game in which neither can guess whether he's getting conned.

The trouble lies in the clichéd nature of the character's confessions. Pierre's past is littered, predictably, with abandoned ideals and the bodies of the people he's failed, while Katya surprises only by marshaling an ugly cunning you would not have attributed to the airhead she appears. Bottom line, when you get to the bottom of these two, you wish you hadn't.

The film is further hobbled by coarseness and a lack of wit, which may have gotten lost in translation. In what passes for humor, Pierre addresses Katya as "Cuntia." The ring tone of her cell-phone barks like a lap dog. "So why don't you rape me now and get it over with?" she says. And the best insight Pierre can dredge up about his adversary is that old chestnut, "You're good at lying to yourself." Over the years, Buscemi has honed a unique and amusing gloom-doom persona, but in this film he mainly comes across as whiny. It may come as some surprise, but easy-on-the-eyes Sienna Miller can also act. But her deft portrait of the trashy Katya mainly begs the question: Why should we care about this person? At film's end, we happily say adieu to a pair who deserve each other more than they imagine.

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