



FILM: **THE GIFT**

FDG RATING: 3.9

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Joel Edgerton: *Director*

Joel Edgerton: *Actor: Gordon*

Jason Bateman: *Actor: Simon*

DATE: Sept. 20, 2015

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **THE GIFT**

The news is constantly telling us about some tragic event surrounding young victims of bullying ranging from suicide to lashing out in violent ways including mass shootings. So it's interesting to see a film about an adult who very believably still resorts to bullying to further his success and to see the victim of his high school bullying still harboring enough resentment to want a resolution, presumably at first, an apologetic acknowledgement and then as other events unfold, the scope of resolution escalates.

It's an eerie premise and the film craftily conveys an uneasy sense of suspense drawing on (and giving homage to) haunting scenes from other thrillers such as the shower scene in *Psycho* and the unsettling obsession in *Fatal Attraction*. As both the director and lead actor, Joel Edgerton, gives a convincing performance as stalker Gordon, (nicknamed "Gordo the wierdo" in high school), perfectly balancing his somewhat pitiful, slightly odd, socially inept persona with a controlled creepiness possibly capable of inordinate evil. And Jason Bateman is the cocky, still preppy, sales exec Simon, who has his eyes set on a plum promotion after moving with his designer, pregnant, wife, Robyn, (nicely played by Rebecca Hall) back to his hometown in LA where they have moved into a luxuriant home in the Hollywood Hills. It seems more than a coincidence that Gordon bumps into Robyn and Simon at the Shopping Mall, and so their lives begin to intrude on each other and the old high school modus operandi ensues with even more at stake.

We applauded the strong performances and most of us found the film exceptionally entertaining although some of the typical thriller genre scenes could be considered as borrowed movie tricks. The juxtaposition of the two male characters played with our sympathies preventing us from aligning with a specific character. We shift between feeling sympathy for the bullied victim and then fear that his vengeance could turn the tables making Simon and his wife the victims. The story kept most of us guessing. The film edged toward above average ratings from our resident critics resulting in a cumulative score of 3.9 on a scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best)



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See you at the movies!

Adriane Dedic, adedic@pacbell.net, Film Discussion Group (FDG) organizer