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Aubrey Plaza As Emily The Criminal Steals The Show At Sundance

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Another day, another terrific independent film. Aubrey Plaza, a stalwart comedic actor, tweaked her repertoire with a dramatic performance as Emily in the John Patton Ford directed, 2022 Sundance Film Festival feature premiere, *Emily The Criminal*. Plaza is also credited as a producer as she found the script and presented it to Ford. As impressive as that is, itâ??s Plazaâ??s performance onscreen leaving audiences open-mouthed. To say Plaza is oozing with talent is not an overstatement.



Aubrey Plaza, portrays, Emily, in the action thriller, Emily The Criminal.
(Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute)

As the film opens, Emily is mired in student debt and is facing a human resource person reminiscent of the 1990s as he pumps Emily for attention with a request to hear her story of an assault charge on her

record. Plaza is demure, edgy, and very pensive until she realizes sheâ??s not even close to getting hired. Her sharp delivery as she exits the office sets the tone for her character, Emily.

Emily The Criminal is well crafted, strongly written, and has the look and feel of a Safdie Brothers film (*Uncut Gems, Good Time*). Itâ??s dark, edgy, and the acting is excellent. As mentioned Plaza portrays the lead character, Emily, and delivers a well-crafted, highly compelling performance with vivacity and vibrancy, not before seen from her previous roles. Theo Rossi delivers a powerful performance as Youcef, a Lebanese gangster, becomes involved with Emily romantically. Youcef is conducting illegal business activities with his conniving cousin, Khalil, portrayed convincingly by Jonathan Avigdori.

Emily the Criminal is an action thriller providing social commentary on the challenges young individuals, saddled with five-figure student debt and a minor criminal offense, face. Living in shared accommodation, facing judgment at almost every turn, Emily decides to pursue a line of work involving illegal activities. Plazaâ??s Emily continues to make efforts to find proper work. Her â??friendâ?• Liz sets her up for an unpaid internship with her design company. Gina Gershon portrays the designer Alice. Gershonâ??s chops are spot on as Alice interviews Emily. Plazaâ??s reactions as Emily sends sparks flying as discovers sheâ??s being interviewed (eventually offered an unpaid internship) and judged for her past minor criminal offense.

After the interview, the criminal enterprise floodgates open as Emily realizes her options are limited. From here Ford tightly keeps the filmâ??s focus on Emily. Wise decision. The action and plot deepen and darken keeping the viewer engaged. Admittedly, the twist at the end left me wanting more. Much more.

Emily The Criminal is an excellent offering. Four stars.

Category

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Tags

1. Aubrey Plaza
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3. Gina Gershon
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