Review: Kathryn Bigelow’s Masterpiece
‘Detroit’ Is The Year’s Best Film By Far

By A.H. Lee

Kathryn Bigelow has been best known for her historical based films including The Hurt Locker which managed to grab the Academy Award for Best Picture, and Zero Dark Thirty about the worldwide manhunt for Osama Bin Laden. Now, her newest film Detroit is not only worth the Oscars, but also something more: nationwide recognition.

Detroit follows the accounts of three main African Americans played by John Boyega (Star Wars: The Force Awakens), Anthony Mackie (Captain America: The Winter Soldier), and newcomer 23 year old Algee Smith, who deserves a Best Actor nomination more than any other actor in this film.

Detroit also follows the extreme racially charged measures taken by three main police officers played by the stunning Will Poulter (The Maze Runner & We’re The Millers), John Krasinski (13 Hours and tv hit series The Office), and Jack Reynor (Transformers:
Age of Extinction). All three actors deserve critic-wide recognition, especially Will Poulter, who delivers a once in a lifetime performance that was expected by no one considering his strange choice of movie characters to portray.

The film opens with a creative and effective animation describing the Great Migration during World War I; Soon, African Americans were moved into segregated communities such as Detroit, causing change to be more necessary than ever.

After the opening, we already get a brief tasting about the riots and the racism that took place in the late 1900s in Detroit. There is violence, raids, arrests, and abuse -- and that is just the start. We then meet Krauss (Poulter) and a couple of his white “buddy cop sidekicks” that are patrolmen ignorantly abusing their power. Need an example? Krauss shoots an African American man with a shotgun who was running after stealing from a grocery store.

Skip ahead hours, and it’s Algee Smith, Anthony Mackie, multiple other African American folks, Hannah Murray, and Kaitlyn Dever trapped inside the Algiers Motel while being interrogated by Krauss, Auerbach, and the white police force after an African American man shot a blank gun from the motel window. All are suspects, all are beaten, and all are discriminated against due to racism and prejudices.

And that’s pretty much the movie. This film is heavy handed, which is a necessity for a film like Detroit. Racism is one of the biggest issue this world still faces today, and unfortunately, it is not showing any symptoms of slowing down. Kathryn Bigelow’s direction for this film is nearly perfection; Detroit punches you in the face, lets you recover only to punch you harder later.

Detroit is jaw-droppingly powerful with everything in it’s bucket: the performances, the emotion, and the way this film comes alive at you. Most of this film takes place at the
Algiers Motel, so you soon feel as though you are at the motel suffering also. Never does *Detroit* feel cliché or stereotypical for a film about the ongoing issue of race. Unlike other respectable but imperfect films such as *42* or *Race*, Bigelow’s film doesn’t use the tactics of mean random white guy spits on African American guy’s face only to have the African American rise up and prove everyone wrong. Unfortunately, that is not the way things are in real life. *Detroit* addresses the topic of racism respectfully and appropriately, while still managing to get it’s point across more than you would expect it to.

Despite the cursing, the yelling, the shooting, and the blood, *Detroit* leaves you feeling inspired. Even though audience members will feel as though they were suffering too during 1967 thanks to the performances and the script, people will have their eyes widened to recognize America’s history, the way people behave back then and now, and the pain felt by millions. Audiences will feel the need to reflect on the type of person they want to be, and how they want to help others.

If there is any film in 2017 that you need to see, it’s *Detroit*. This film punches you in the teeth with it’s presence and relevance -- but based on society today, that is what many people need. *Detroit* may not be anyone’s “favorite” film of the year, but it definitely is the best film of the year.

★★★★★