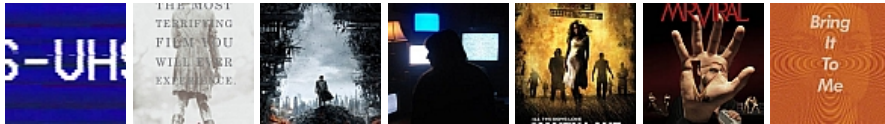


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FEROCIOUS Delivers A Great Slow Burn Thriller [Review]

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Celebrity can be an ugly thing. It can make bad people good and good people bad and the public might never know the truth. **Ferocious** considers the lengths that one woman will go to in order to secure not just her fame but her brand.

Amanda Crew stars as Leigh Parrish, an actress on the verge of hitting the big time. Her image is that of a "good girl," a small town girl who made good in Hollywood but Leigh is hiding a secret. When she was still a waitress working the local dive bar, she got herself mixed up with some less than favourable people and after a particularly ugly encounter, she split town leaving everything and everyone behind. Now she's returned to see her family for the holidays but it's all just a guise because while her manager spins the promotion

machine, touting Leigh's return to her small town roots and making her a local superstar, Leigh has her own agenda.

Dodging her manager, Leigh returns to the seedy bar, now even seedier than before, where she confronts her ex boyfriend Eric and Maurice, the man who holds a piece of blackmail that could bring down not only her career but her entire life. Things go sour almost immediately and before we know it, Leigh is forced into a far worse situation than when she arrived.

Ferocious isn't the kind of thriller that's going to appeal to everyone. There aren't any jump scares and there's very little in the way of screams and people running around hysterically. It's an experiment in control and one that works to great effect. Crew keeps a tight lid on her emotions and with each push into the corner she fights back harder. Tess (Katie Boland) is more reminiscent of the common horror movie starlet in that she often does and says the wrong thing and routinely falls into hysterics but there's more to her as well and Boland does a fine job of suggesting that there's more to "poor Tess" than what's on the surface, a suggestion that becomes a grim reality in the film's final scene.

Kim Coates isn't new to playing the bad guy but the veteran actor pulls out all the stops here, delivering a performance that puts his greasy bad guy well above any other in recent memory. What's particularly creepy about his interpretation of Sal is that on the surface, he's all polite niceties but there's an edge to him, one that is played up by Eric who is scared stupid at the very thought of calling him. When Sal and Leigh finally have a face to face confrontation, the idea of Sal has saturated every shadow and it feels like it's the world against Leigh. For their parts, neither Boland nor Michael Eklund as Eric are eclipsed by Coates' performance, each of them shining in their own right.

Ferocious is more than just a slow burn thriller, it's one that floats around some interesting ideas about celebrity and how people can wear multiple faces but it also ruminates on ideas of guilt and sacrifice and the lengths we are willing to do to save ourselves. In short, **Ferocious** is a thinking person's thriller, one that, much like its central character, far surpasses its humble roots.

Ferocious opens in limited release today and expands to other Canadian cities on March 15.

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