



Photo courtesy of press.warnerbrothers.com
 "Edge of Darkness" is a criticism of large corporations that has the audience on the edge of their seats.

'Darkness' grips viewers



BY KEN DUSOLD
 Reviewer

"Edge of Darkness" hits you like a hard, blunt object you did not see coming. Mel Gibson's newest flick will keep you very awake, no question. Just minutes into the film, you might find yourself gripping the armrests, a feeling you will get accustomed to during the course of the movie.

The film begins by setting the location and introducing the two protagonists. During the opening scenes, it becomes apparent we are in Boston from Gibson's accent, which is slightly better than adequate. Some emotion and light banter between Detective Thomas Craven (Gibson) and his daughter Emma (Bojana Novakovic) gives way to a non-stop thriller — complete with car chases, fist fights and corruption that might trickle up the social hierarchy.

Emma's murder is the movie's inciting incident. The murderer, wearing a ski mask and sporting a shotgun, screams "Craven," shoots and runs. Despite the suddenness and rush of the scene, Gibson manages to show the emotion and mindset of a man who has just witnessed the only person he has in the world being brutally killed before his eyes.

His fellow detectives immediately assume the killer was aiming for Thomas, not Emma. They set out to track down the monster, promising to keep Craven safe and updated throughout the

case. However, Thomas Craven is not like other bereaved parents. Like Gibson's characters in "Ransom" and "The Patriot," Craven does not want to be emotional. He wants vengeance. Sure, he has no enemies, and realizing he knows nothing about what his daughter did for a living, he begins researching Emma's life and acquaintances. From here, the hunt begins.

Much of the film is a criticism of big companies and their intentions in society. It is no secret that the goal and legal responsibility of a huge corporation is to make their stockholders tidy sums of money. Director Martin Campbell takes this idea

Northmoor has done or is plotting to do — except in relation to Craven. The use of a McGuffin in this movie should make suspense fans happy and remind young filmmakers how well something as simple as leaving out unnecessary details can make the difference between an effective thriller and a joke. Bravo, Mr. Campbell.

British actor Ray Winstone supports Gibson and Huston. Winstone plays the mysterious Jedburgh, whose job requires that he "fix" things for wealthy clients, without anyone knowing he exists. Jedburgh tells Craven that in an investigation, when one cannot find a straight line connecting point A and point B,

he is the guy that disconnected them. Although he has no history or personal life, Jedburgh is perhaps the most likable guy in the movie, thanks to Winstone. Indeed, his encounters with Craven are the most enjoyable moments in the entire film, laced with humor and

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a deep bond between two men with nothing to lose.

"Edge of Darkness" is lacking in several areas. The plot is rather predictable, or at least familiar. It does not take long for one to make a fairly educated guess as to possible endings to the story. The CGI is a little rough, unfortunately. It is obvious that Campbell and Gibson did not consult James Cameron on visual effects. But the film still works, with tremendous stunts — and an intensely fast-paced story.

If you love suspense-thrillers, then you have to check out "Edge of Darkness."

Darksiders brings Zelda to mind



BY ALEX CARLSON
 Reviewer

What happens when you mix Zelda, God of War, and the apocalypse? You get Darksiders for XBOX 360 and PS3. This bloody action-adventure game might not have creativity on its side, but what it takes from other games ends up being one of its greatest strengths. It's a mature dive into post-apocalyptic Earth that actually manages to be challenging and engaging, despite its lack of originality.

In Darksiders, the angels of Heaven and the demons of Hell are battling, leaving humankind trapped in the chaos. Enter War, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, to bring order to the pandemonium that cursed Earth. War discovers the balance between Heaven and Hell has been

broken by "The Destroyer," and it's up to War to defeat him and bring the ongoing battle of good and evil to a conclusion. The story is interesting at first, but the characters, even War himself, seem flat and don't add much to the otherwise grandiose tale.

Darksiders shamelessly borrows from other video games. War's exploration of dungeons and gaining new puzzle-solving abilities is an element straight from the Legend of Zelda series. The first item that War obtains is practically identical to the Boomerang from Zelda. The player gets a mighty steed to ride, one unquestionably similar to Link's horse Epona from Zelda. Many of the dungeons involve using the new weapon to defeat a boss, who usually has a significant weakness to the new weapon itself. Again, drawing a similar concept from Zelda.

Despite all of these Zelda trappings, Darksiders manages to be challenging. The puzzles are clever and intuitive enough. There also is a commanding sense of accomplish-

ment after bloodily taking out a monstrous demon. Darksiders is nowhere near unique, but the elements it takes from the Zelda series don't lose their charm even in this dark, apocalyptic world.

Darksiders' combat is also shamelessly taken from other games, more specifically the God of War series. Throughout the game, War must tackle waves of enemies to progress. The goal is to slice the enemies to gory bits. The bloody explosions are fun (in a guilty pleasure sort of way) but they get repetitive quickly. To be fair, War gets new abilities and the occasional new weapon as the player progresses. Sadly, though, these don't remedy the repetition and staleness of the combat in Darksiders.

The world of Darksiders is represented in typical post-apocalyptic fashion, with zombies and monsters roaming the earth. The presentation is good thanks to some solid world designs, which are shown spectacularly in the dungeons themselves. The sound design is captivating,



Photo courtesy of gamespot.com
 Released Jan. 5, Darksiders steals ideas from other successful video games to create an enjoyable gaming experience.

with big-name voice actors like Mark Hamill giving great performances. The music is composed with strong scores that permeate the game with epic battle themes and gloomy isolated compositions.

The dungeons and puzzles in Darksiders are well-designed, demanding both reflexes and thought to reach victory. Sadly, the combat doesn't possess the over-the-top fluidity of God of War. You can easily take

out a slew of enemies by button-mashing. The style that Darksiders possesses is powerful and engaging, even if the characters themselves lack any sort of soul. Overall, Darksiders is worth a rental.



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