Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time: 114 min.

Recently, word came out that Liam Neeson was retiring from performing in tough guy action movies like *Taken* and *Run All Night*. Based on the new film *The Foreigner*, Jackie Chan is attempting to step in and fill the void. This is a grittier, heavier feature and an unusual role for a performer known more for his genial demeanor and good-natured kung fu flicks. The results are imperfect, but compelling enough that one wouldn’t have an issue seeing the performer delving into this type of part again in the future.

Chan plays Quan, a seemingly mild-mannered immigrant living in London with his daughter. After a tragic bombing by a faction fighting for Northern Ireland independence, the protagonist demands that the British government find the parties responsible. Sympathies are returned, but little progress is made. Little do they know that Quan once served in a special military unit and possesses a particular skill set. Devastated and seeking retribution, the protagonist begins to apply serious pressure to government bureaucrat Liam Hennessy (Pierce Brosnan), who previously held ties to the organization responsible.

Again, this is a much darker role for the lead and does offer Chan the ability to develop his acting skills a little more, even if it only allows for a downcast appearance and series of pained expressions. Brosnan appears to be having some fun as a main foil with contacts within the villainous UDI organization (although if you follow the lips of the actors, they’re clearly saying IRA and have had these bits of dialogue rerecorded). The part provides opportunity for some

scenery chewing as the official begins to lose control of the situation. Hennessy’s frustration at his men’s inability to take out Quan starts to boil over, adding some compelling material.

While this is more of a thriller than a true action picture, Chan is offered the opportunity to flex his chops on a few occasions. Director Martin Campbell (*Casino Royale*, *The Legend of Zorro*, *Goldeneye*
) is experienced at shooting sequences and when Quan is forced to come to blows or defend himself, the movie really springs to life. There’s a dynamic little battle in the confined space of a bed & breakfast that showcases the star tossing foes down the stairways and leaping through tiny windows. There are a few scenes like this that really display the actor’s physical expertise.

As the movie progresses, the film does begin to shift focus away from Quan to Hennessy. There are insights revealed about the character’s motivations as well as conspiracies occurring within the faction, but it does feel like an unexpected turn. In fact, it takes at least a half an hour to deal with all of the infighting and political maneuvering within the UDI organization... and none of this actually involves Quan. It’s intriguing material, but viewers will no doubt begin to wonder where the protagonist of the film disappeared to.

In the end, *The Foreigner* has a compelling and agile protagonist and provides an entertaining heel. It’s a bit bumpy in sections and gets lost on a few tangents, but the fisticuffs are well handled and exciting to watch. This is a decent little B-picture thriller that will entertain those still longing for action reminiscent of the recent output of Liam Neeson.

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