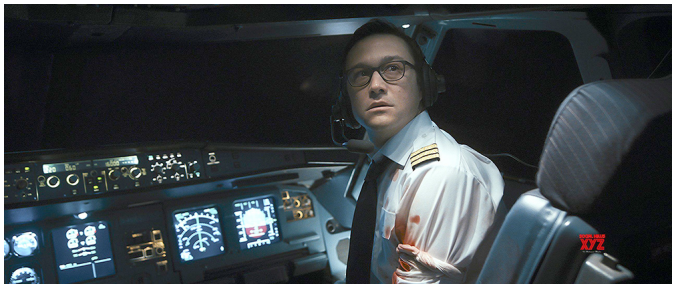

Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time: 94 minutes

This feature from Amazon Prime will be available to stream on June 19.

Movies featuring airline hijackings and terrorist attacks are nothing new, having been the inspiration for countless titles since the disaster genre rose to prominence in the 1970s. Some of these movies qualify as silly and exaggerated action fare, while others have attempted to keep the tone as realistic and authentic as possible. *7500* certainly follows the latter approach. It also attempts to add an interesting wrinkle to the genre, using a new and unique perspective to depict a terrifying situation.

After a montage of airport security footage, we are taken inside the cockpit of a plane readying to journey from Berlin to Paris. Captain Michael Lutzmann (Carlo Kitzlinger) and co-pilot Tobias Ellis (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) go through standard pre-flight procedures and converse, with Ellis mentioning that his partner Gökce (Aylin Tezel) is an attendant on the plane. Shortly after lift-off, a group of passengers attempt to break into the cockpit and take control. The pilots manage to get the compartment door closed, but are wounded in the struggle.

A panicked Ellis is forced to guide the plane down safely while negotiating with the terrorists, who have control of the passenger cabin. In order to prevent further tragedy, the protagonist tries to build rapport with the youngest member of the group, Vedat (Omid Memar).

Many Hollywood epics would be focused on delivering action movie thrills and elaborate special effects of the plane hurtling and veering through the air in stormy weather. However, the filmmakers here are focused entirely on Ellis and the captain. In fact, the camera never leaves the cockpit at any point in the feature. Even early shots pointing out into the body of the plane are photographed from the doorway itself.

Viewers experience everything from the cockpit perspective. Lutzmann and Ellis have a monitor that displays what is occurring right outside the cockpit door, but that is all that they can perceive as they attempt to keep attackers away from the plane controls.

It’s an incredibly tight space to set a full-length feature, but the unusual approach proves effective. This movie feels incredibly tense and claustrophobic. Since viewers are only given visual and audio cues at the same time as the leads, one feels trapped with them. It’s actually a very clever way to get audiences to relate to the pilots and become invested in their plight. The film isn’t graphic, but it doesn’t shy away from having terrible things happen, or depicting its characters in a desperate manner during the evolving situation.

The close quarters make for an unexpectedly engrossing way to tell the story.

None of this would work if there wasn’t a sense of authenticity to the proceedings. Admittedly, the movie is a never-ending barrage of disturbing and tragic occurrences. As such, some will imagine that they might handle a couple of the situations differently, but the excellent cast helps smooth over any rough edges. Joseph Gordon-Levitt’s character is certainly put through the ringer.

Not only is he forced into fighting off invading terrorists, but trying to find common ground with them in order to calm the situation and prevent more lives from being lost (including that of his partner). The movie depends on the actor for much of the running time and he keeps our attention and empathy throughout.

While certain elements of this disaster tale may feel familiar, the twists and new technical elements help set this story apart. In this case, the unique camera techniques do add something

that gives this story a different perspective and feeling. In the end, *7500* keeps nerves frayed and benefits from its original, up-close and personal way of building and sustaining tension through a horrifying event.

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By Glenn Kay
For the Sun