

"BLIND" (Fantastic Fest Review)

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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South Korea has been one of the strongest contenders in the world when it comes to contemporary genre, exporting electric films we find it hard to shake post-viewing. Unfortunately, this fact may just be what brings the perfectly fun BLIND down.

Aside from incorporating impressive visual flourishes that aim to rope us into the affliction of its main character Soo-ah Min (an excellent Ha Neul-Kim), Sang-hoon Ahn's (ARANG) latest is simply a well-made thriller who's lack of being overtly striking or startling, especially in the face of the aforementioned wave of South Korean cinema, just doesn't lend itself to necessarily being a must-see.

The film begins as Soo-ah loses her eyesight in a car accident in which her brother also dies. Blaming herself, she's expelled from her police academy and left to begin a new life, disabled. A few years on, she runs directly into an active serial killer (Yeong-jo Yang) disguised as a taxi driver. Convinced he's struck down an innocent girl in a hit-and-run, she saddles up alongside a detective and young delivery boy (Ho-yoo Seung) to track him down.



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The most engaging parts of BLIND consist of actively and excitingly following along as Soo-ah uses her deduction skills through her handicap. Instances in which she spells out how she figures height from the sound of one's voice keep the audience actively into the procedural process and put a fun spin on the affairs at hand. It also serves to craft a strong, independent lead in Soo-ah. Kim does a great job as the resilient, but often frustrated amateur sleuth.

BLIND doesn't necessarily go wrong at any point. Yang is definitely convincing as a cold, precise killer, but it definitely becomes fare we've all seen before. Yang's serial murderer is in the medical field, of course, and the relationship that develops between Soo-ah and young Si-geob Kwan as an obvious callback to the loss of her brother is schmaltsy and not entirely heartfelt. While the final act is tense, it becomes little more than a chase around the house and it's eventually realized that BLIND is essentially a popcorn movie from a country in which we're used to seeing more offbeat work.

