



Microfilmmaker Magazine

Film Critiques



Short Film Critique: *Girl with Gun*

Director: Russ Emanuel
Expected Rating: PG-13 due to violence
Distribution: No Exclusive Distribution
Budget: \$20,000
Genre: Action/Adventure
Running Time: 14 minutes 53 seconds
Release Dates: January 19, 2006
Website: <http://gwg.russem.com>
Trailer: <http://gwg.russem.com/trailer.html>
Review Date: November 15, 2006
Reviewed By: Monika DeLeeuw-Taylor

Final Score: 7.7

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Gwen Hunter (Tracy O'Connor) looks like any normal twentysomething. Blonde, attractive, with a great big smile; she has a smartly-decorated apartment, a married best friend, and a perfect boyfriend. But what no one knows is that Gwen has a secret life. She is known as the Nightingale, and it is her mission to go in where others will not; to take out the worst of the worst, and still make it home in time for dinner.

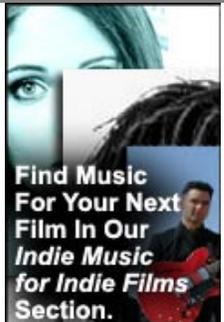
Content

This was an interesting story; sort of like *Alias* meets *La Femme Nikita*. The acting was very good, the story was concise, and there were moments of drama, tempered with comedy. Perhaps my favorite moment is when she ditches her boyfriend in the middle of dinner to take out her next target; returns with a bloody nose, fat lip, and multiple bruises; then tries to re-join the middle of the conversation as if nothing had happened.

However, I left the film rather confused. It seemed almost like a teaser for a much longer film, something like Alex Ferrari's experimental short film [Broken](#), which we reviewed at Microfilmmaker this past January. Fifteen minutes isn't nearly enough time for concrete character development, at least in an action/adventure type movie, which is why the audience might leave this film with the attitude of, "That was cool, but why did they make it?"

In addition, there are really a lot of clichés to this film, and I had a hard time trying to figure out whether they were on purpose or accidental, let alone whether I should be laughing at them or not. First of all, The Nightingale's black leather jumpsuit is a little played up – from Diana Rigg's famous Emma Peel of *The Avengers*, to Uma Thurman in both the 1998 movie remake, and then her yellow version of the same outfit in Tarentino's *Kill Bill*. I was half-expecting Gwen to pull out a katana and start speaking in Japanese; especially when she gets her butt kicked by a ninja with a purple headband.

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Although Gwen Hunter doesn't appear all that different...



...She is actually a skilled assassin known as the Nightingale.

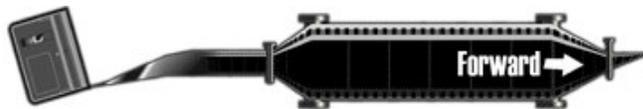
Visual Look

There were some really great special effects in this movie. My favorite was the very first shot – a close-up of a gun in slow-motion with some very beautiful-looking smoke curling off of it. The blood special effects weren't overdone, and looked very realistic, as did a drug lab setup at the beginning. I also liked the blocking of the opening scene, which was shot and cut in such a way that you couldn't see the main character's face at first.

The camera shots were very smooth and well-set up, and the color saturation and white balance was excellent. Very briefly at the beginning of the film, some artifacts can be seen on the video, but this doesn't occur anywhere else in the film.

The biggest fight scene in the film, a scene where Gwen fights with the ninja was very well put-together. Its wire-based choreography was a little over the top, with a *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* meets *Power Rangers* feel, but was edited together well with some interesting camera angles so as to not look overly clichéd.

Visually speaking, this film has a really great look; it's very impressive to watch.



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