

Hello everyone! Thanks so much for taking the time to watch my thesis film. I'd really appreciate any thoughts/reactions/criticisms you may have -- it would be extremely helpful. Please leave your comments below.

Some questions for you to consider addressing:

- Did anything take you out of the viewing experience?
 - Did you understand what happened?
 - Were you invested in the protagonist? What about the mystery?
 - What did you think of the music? Did it elevate or distract?
 - How would *you* have told a story like this?
 - What did you like? Dislike?
 - Etc.
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Bobo

Some questions for you to consider addressing:

- **Did anything take you out of the viewing experience?**
No! If anything, I *really* enjoyed some of the stuff that you included that made it seem very relatable -- e.g. the podcast ads for Calm, or the way the protagonist Google stalked the couple in question. Loved it! The only unrealistic part: at 00:47, who doesn't finish the burger when there's like two bites left!!
- **Did you understand what happened?**
My sense is that even though Emily/Dahlia thought the wife was a victim (which would parallel the story told in the podcast), she was actually the killer! Unfortunate that Andrea did such a sloppy job -- she clearly didn't listen to the podcast first heh
- **Were you invested in the protagonist? What about the mystery?**
Yes, and I was a little surprised since it was such a short experience!
- **What did you think of the music? Did it elevate or distract?**
Elevated for sure. I really liked how, in the first scene, the shot cuts from the mailbox to the house just as we hear the second note. Similarly, in the scene where Dahlia is googling, the strings sound super duper ominous. Great job, honestly.
- **How would *you* have told a story like this?**
Badly.
- **What did you like? Dislike?**
Absolutely wild stuff, Brooks. It is crazy that you created this. Sincerest congratulations. That was incredible!!

Anna

Hi Brooks! This was SO good!! The cinematography was stunning; everything was so crisp. Your shots were varied and well-executed, and seamless. And I really liked the music: both in the piece and at the end. It definitely added! I have two tiny edits: 1) the transition near the beginning (when Dahlia is looking at the letter in the car at night, then it swipes upwards to where she's reading the letter at the desk) felt almost slapstick-like and inconsistent with the rest of the film, and it was the only one that pulled me out of the story. 2) I would have liked to have had the text of the letter and of the wedding announcement stay on screen for a little longer; I was rushing to read them both and ended up going back and pausing; it was a bit stressful. Overall: I was engaged the whole way through the film. WHAT HAPPENS at the end?? We'll never know, I guess. Do you have an answer to the question "Is she really on to something, or has she just been listening to too many true crime podcasts?" I couldn't discern it, if so. Maybe you don't want to have one, which is perfectly good too. Great job!!

Joe Ort

This was awesome, Brooks! The story, production value, music, all the little details—seriously impressive stuff. I found myself 100% invested in Dahlia's sleuthing, and I loved how small, seemingly mundane physical objects (the package for Stanley, the envelope, the tire, the mailbox) conveyed far more sinister goings on. The aesthetic of the snowy, rural community was also perfect for the premise (very much gave me Bruce Springsteen "Nebraska" vibes, which incidentally also features a song about a murderer). I'm curious where you actually filmed it!

- Did anything take you out of the viewing experience?
 - It was superb, I'll just echo what was said above about showing the text of the letter for another second or two
- Did you understand what happened?
 - I think so—Andrea killed Stanley! It was a great inversion and really played with the viewer's expectations
 - The only detail I was confused about was why Dahlia used a hot teakettle to open the letter but gave up on the letter opener alone—does steam help open an envelope without making it obvious that it's been open/read? Probably something obvious here that I'm just missing
 - Did the travel magazines have to do with Andrea having more money to go places now that Stanley was out of the picture? Regardless, not important at all to the film
- Were you invested in the protagonist? What about the mystery?
 - Definitely!
- What did you think of the music? Did it elevate or distract?
 - Music was a big hit, no critiques here

FABULOUS work! Great title too.

Dylan Fox

I feel that the strange and inescapable suspicion of everyone around us that permeates our society is really well represented well here. We are constantly suspicious of everything and everyone around us. Your main character is normal, but also has shades of Travis Bickle. Her obsession with murder and her isolation make for a compelling character. I only wish you would have continued that narrative to a logical conclusion. Your story essentially ends at the second act. What would have happened if the woman had invited the protagonist in? This is why I feel your ending and the dramatic music found therein are manipulative and unsatisfying. It feels like the beginning of a story rather than a beginning.

Milan

Lovely, Brooks! I thoroughly enjoyed your film. I really liked the 'postal worker Dahlia turned Marge Gunderson from Fargo vibe'. The postal worker turned sleuth worked well, especially since most of us probably assume the postal workers aren't paying attention to us. Although, I wonder what this dynamic is like in a smaller town. Is there a chance Dahlia could have known Stanley or Andrea? The shots of Dahlia peeking into the mailbox were super engaging and I thought trying to stuff the hard drive in was a nice touch of humor. I could see how other viewers might have been confused though since it most likely would have been delivered inside of another box. Another potential moment that could maybe go either way is when Dahlia has something on her hands after she opens Andrea's mailbox. Since it seemed to be raining, it could have rinsed away. But then again, I'm not an expert on how blood behaves on a mailbox during a drizzle. As a whole, I thought the cinematography was brilliant and crisp. The music definitely elevated the story and was not overly overbearing. Similar vibe for the sound effects. They helped to set the scene in a way that didn't take me out of the story. I was a teensy bit distracted by the room/outdoor? tone, especially when switching between shots. A part of me is wondering what would have happened if Dahlia had seen Andrea check the mail too. Not necessarily to cause her to confront Andrea, but to wrap up her suspicion. Overall, super job! Great prop and set design too!

It's difficult being a white male artist. -Brooks Eikner; May 4, 2021 6:39pm