

Animal Kingdom

Australia 2010

Director

David Michôd

Written by

David Michôd

Cinematography

Adam Arkapaw

Original Music

Antony Partos

Cast*Janine 'Smurf' Cody*

Jacki Weaver

Joshua 'J' Cody

James Frechville

Andrew 'Pope' Cody

Ben Mendelsohn

Darren Cody

Luke Ford

Sgt Nathan Leckie

Guy Pearce

Welcome to 2012 and our first offering of this Olympic year! And we've got a scorcher of a opening film to get us sitting on the edge of our seats!

There's enough in *Animal Kingdom* for a whole mini-series' worth of sweat and apprehension. He packs a lot in – it's a writing-directing debut with a thousand ideas and no intention of saving them for later. We've barely been introduced to this tight-knit clan, the Codys, before they're skittering towards ruin, much of it at each other's hands. Pungent scene by scene and bracing in its cumulative impact, Michôd's movie suggests what Aeschylus might have had in mind, if the House of Atreus had been fond of seafood barbeques. Weaver's Oscar-nominated performance is gold here, and Michôd knows it: he sneaks her in around the edges, then hands her all the juiciest scenes on a plate in the last third. Michôd could get away with calming down a little on his next project, and applying his trancey sound design less like an all-purpose ambient blanket to knit the plot together, but you wouldn't want to curb this quicksilver ambition too much.

Tim Robey, Daily Telegraph

A kingdom of wounded and dying animals – that is, animals of the most vicious, dangerous kind – is what director David Michôd portrays here, and this is maybe the nearest we're going to get to an Australian *GoodFellas*. It is a tense, violent and supremely watchable crime drama, set in the bluecollar-gangland of Melbourne, reviving memories of Eric Bana in *Chopper* and Scott Roberts's Australian heist thriller *The Hard Word*. The tone of Michôd's film is perhaps set by the strange, dreamy montage over the opening credits: a selection of security-video stills of bank jobs in progress. Blurry and contorted in the scan-lines of the computer screen, they look like insects or underwater creatures in a nature documentary, perhaps in the throes of some evolutionary crisis which will wipe them out. The sequence detaches the activity of bank-robbing from the traditional context of drama and thrills, and instead invites the viewer to see bank robbing as a desperate, hopeless activity, like something the damned would do for ever in hell. I wonder if Michôd isn't tempted, like art cinema practitioners, to experiment with installations of photos or paintings of these robbery-in-progress pictures. They certainly have a hypnotic quality.

Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

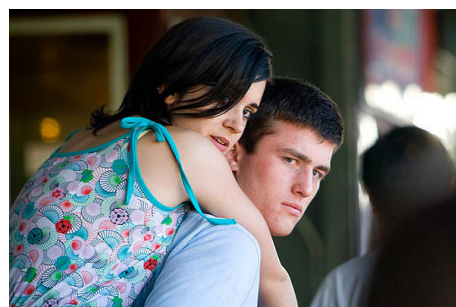
Our next screening...

Life Above All (SA)

Tue 24 January 2012

Dir: Oliver Schmitz

Powerful drama exploring family life in modern Johannesburg.



Voting for *Micmacs*: A-38 B-15 C-8 D-2 E-1 Attendance: 79 Rating: 83.9%