



## REVIEW of *A Tiger in the Subway* by James Abrams

Typically after watching a film and preparing to write a review, I sit and ponder my opening line. Did I like what I saw? Did it speak to me? Rarely do I ever open a review with, "Wow!"

Well, I just watched *A Tiger in the Subway*, a crazy cool offering by James Abrams and Al Nazemian and I'm already preparing for some night terrors.

To start, movies with chainsaws and ghouls just don't do much for me. I do enjoy the odd paranormal flick and was a huge fan of *The X-Files*. But nothing scares me more than the human mind. Life can be precious and beautiful. There's nothing like opening the window in spring and having the aroma of fresh blossoms fill the house. But when something in the brain short circuits, things can go horribly wrong. The human mind can be a horribly scary place to be.

There's nothing more frightening than the idea of being at war with your own thoughts. Abrams' story of an artist plagued with agoraphobia and recalling childhood warnings given by his mother is chilling. As someone that has lived with depression and known people coping with schizophrenia and delusions, I know there's nothing more precious and fragile than mental health.

As a huge fan of Al Nazemian, I was pleased to see him in the principal role of Sid Wilbur, the struggling artist. There's no dialogue, other than Nazemian's narration, which is incredibly effective. Nazemian's facial expressions and body language paint the picture beautifully. We can feel his heart pound while walking through the subway and seeing creatures lurking in the shadows. As his fear heightens, even the people around him morph into hideous monsters. Al gives a master class in how to act without acting. It's his subtle approach and just living the moment that really gives this project life.

Abrams not only wrote and directed this, he also cut it and made a cameo as a bum hanging out in the subway.



Jeff Smith did a nice job as Sid's COP and concerned brother, Gary, who stops by to check in on him. He appears again at the end of the film and finds Sid lying in a pool of blood beneath an open window.

Sam David Zhang did an incredible job choosing the creepiest shots and working with Nazemian to build tension. Patrick Hogue designed crazy, contrasty lighting that gave mood and added to the creep factor.

I especially enjoyed the score, provided by Garret Reynolds. There was a nice pace and flow created between the music, shot choices and Abrams' editing. Nicely done!

What I enjoyed the most about this film is that there was no preaching or tugging at heartstrings. No manipulation at all. Abrams wrote a story and put it into the hands of a great actor and allowed Nazemian to just be in the moment and bring it to life. The rest was up to the team and they obviously met the challenge. *A Tiger in the Subway* is just a glimpse into the mind of someone struggling with mental health. We see them every day on the street and often don't give them a second thought.

Excellent work by all.

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