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## buzz

## MOVIE REVIEW

# 'Revenge in Kind' casts critical eye on current issues

## Bailey's debut film brings to light issues of violence, assault

BY MARK TOLEDANO  
STAFF WRITER

They say revenge is a dish best served cold.

For the characters in "Revenge in Kind," this is an understatement. Writer-producer K.C. Bailey, a University alumna, showcases her talent in her debut film, a psychological thriller rich with twists and surprises.

Embattled police detective Chris Coxon (Chad Halbrook) takes on the case of a serial killer who preys on unsuspecting women. As the hunters wind up hunted themselves, Coxon falls head-over-heels for the police department's new criminal profiler, Sarah Scott (Sasha Higgins), a brilliant woman of mysterious origins. But does she have something to hide? Does he? As the two crack the case together, revelations into both of their personal lives open up new angles that lead to a shocking finale.

The opening of the movie sets the mood throughout. Confusion overwhelms the characters as they are introduced. One by one, they are thrust onto the screen with terrified eyes, throbbing hearts and blistering fury. We don't need to know their backstory to understand their pain; their desperation is palpable.

Role reversal is central to



Chad Halbrook is Detective Chris Coxon on the set of "Revenge in Kind." Director K.C. Bailey's debut film casts a critical eye on current hot topics, including violence against men and women.

the film. Victims become victimizers and perpetrators are perpetrated. Fans of Quentin Tarantino will quickly identify with other revenge films like "Inglourious Basterds"

and "Death Proof." But unlike Tarantino's style, "Revenge in Kind" does not present bloody carnage just for the fun of it. The violence in the film is raw and necessary. Characters

clearly display the harm that is inflicted upon them. Women are victims. Men are victims.

"Violence is not gender-based," Bailey said. "It is a

human phenomenon, not just a gender phenomenon."

The timing of the film is just right. The subject matter — dealing heavily with sexual assault against women —

coincides with the #MeToo movement. In one scene, a lawyer asks a job applicant to "walk around a little" after he prods her on what she would normally wear to work. Such scenes of workplace harassment bring to mind the sexual misconduct scandals that took down the careers of powerful men like Harvey Weinstein and Roy Moore.

It is refreshing to see a film enter the political conversation without being preachy. There is no doubt that the events in the film were inspired by real social issues. But, like all good political films, "Revenge in Kind" does not give straightforward answers to complicated problems.

Take the scene where a serial rapist breaks into a woman's house. She grabs her gun for protection. What happens next plays out exactly like you think it would. Some people would read this as the empowerment women obtain by arming themselves; others might view it as a commentary on gun violence. All opinions aside, the fact is Bailey has brilliantly woven together two issues dominating the national conversation in a way that forces us to think critically about both.

Skillfully crafted, Bailey's film begs questions. It is the type of movie that encourages its audience to connect the events in the film to society at large, the fictional characters to real people living real lives. The beauty of indie films like "Revenge in Kind" is they are more personal and relatable due to their lack of special effects. The issues raised in the film are important ones that cannot be ignored.

**buzz factor:** ★★★★★

markjt2@readbuzz.com