



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 1, 2010

## Edge of Darkness

Hell hath no fury like that of a father scorned! At least that is one premise of Mel Gibson's newest movie *Edge of Darkness*. When Thomas Craven's daughter (Bojana Novakovic) is murdered on the front steps of his home, Craven (Mel Gibson) is thrust into a world of government collusion, secrecy, and deceit.

Thomas Craven is a veteran homicide detective for the Boston Police Department. When his daughter is murdered, the police and Craven himself assume the bullet was meant for Thomas. Once he discovers a handgun in his daughter's possession, licensed to a man named Burnham, however, he pursues the lead and soon learns that his daughter was entrenched in a convoluted government coverup that led to her death.



In this elaborate and at times confusing movie, Northmoor, a fictional private agency affiliated with the U.S. government, proves to be the enemy. Also mentioned is a real-life government agency called DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Project Agency), whose shady handiwork in the movie makes all things possible. When Craven's daughter learns that Northmoor, the company for which she works, is illegally manufacturing nuclear weapons for the government, she joins a group called the Night Flowers, whose purpose is to uncover this and other unnamed government conspiracies. When the government and Northmoor learn of this troublesome group of tree-huggers, the movie's body count begins to rise. Hired by Northmoor, Jedburgh (Ray Winstone) is called in to clean up the messy situation, but proves to be more of a hindrance to the organization than a help.

Aside from Mel Gibson, who typically plays a believable character seeking both the truth and vengeance, the acting in this film is sub-par. The crooked Senator Jim Pine and corrupt government operatives are cliché, one-dimensional characters. Jack Bennett (Danny Huston), the evil CEO of Northmoor, is such a trite depiction of a "bad guy" that he is literally filmed on more than one occasion as standing smugly in a room of windows, smiling at the view. All he needed was a cat in his lap to stroke and a classic evil laugh to be an exact replica of the villain from *Inspector Gadget*.

It is difficult to ascertain the underlying message of this film — by now moviegoers should recognize that every movie has some agenda. Often the message coming out of Hollywood is anti-capitalist, anti-traditional values, and even anti-American. In *Edge of Darkness*, the government's secret proliferation of nuclear weapons through a private industry may be interpreted by many viewers as a jab at capitalism, which may seem disconcerting for a Mel Gibson film. However, one can argue that the movie is indicting not free-enterprise capitalism but corporatism where government and government-favored private interests become partners and do each other's bidding.

In the case of the fictional Northmoor, the company is obviously showered with government money to



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fulfill classified government contracts. Those contracts include producing weapons appearing to originate from the Middle East, not the United States. And the company does the government's bidding, claiming it cannot divulge the nature of its work for — you guessed it! — national security reasons. Would the government actually do this in real life? And if so, how would the weapons be used? We do know that the U.S. government has in the past helped unsavory Middle East interests — the support provided to Osama bin Laden by the American CIA during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan being a prime example.

Throughout the film, viewers will find themselves torn between their desires to reach for a tissue during the particularly heart-wrenching scenes involving Craven's memories of his beloved daughter, and covering their eyes during the bloodshed.

If you have not yet grown tired of the government conspiracy movie genre, this may be the movie for you. As usual with these types of movies, the script leaves a lot to be desired, particularly in the dialogue between Thomas Craven and Jedburgh. When Jedburgh elusively avoids answering any of Craven's questions in lieu of quoting F. Scott Fitzgerald, you may have to suppress the urge to throw your popcorn at the screen. I mean, do government operatives really talk like that?

Despite everything, it is good to see Mel Gibson in front of the camera again. The thrills in this movie pale in comparison to similar films like *Taken*, but moviegoers will find themselves reasonably entertained and at times caught off-guard, always a plus in any movie.

The movie is rated R for violence and language. This is not a movie for anybody with a weak stomach, since at times the blood in the movie flows like wine. However, it is no worse than any other movie of this genre.



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