



THE
SILENT
PARTNER

MARCO KASSAR AND ANDREW VAJNA PRESENT A JOEL B. MICHAELS, GARTH H. DRABINSKY, STEPHEN YOUNG PRODUCTION

ELLIOTT
GOULD

CHRISTOPHER
PLUMMER

SUSANNAH
YORK

IN
"THE SILENT PARTNER"

ROGER EBERT:

- a thriller that was not only **intelligently and well acted** and very scary, but also had the most audaciously clockwork plot I've seen in a long time. **"Silent Partner's"** plot, indeed, has such ironies and reversals and neatly inevitable triple-crosses that **it's worthy of Hitchcock**.
- **"Silent Partner,"** ...drifts into some very deep waters of **loyalty, blackmail, eroticism and poetic justice**. I won't describe any more of the plot, which unfolds with a clockwork precision. **What's also fun about the movie, though, is its characters:**

- **Where did "Silent Partner" come from?** I can only speculate. It has opened here without much advance notice, with little advertising, with a set of good New York reviews that are six months old because the movie didn't do much business in New York and couldn't get many bookings elsewhere.
- what we're left with is **a small but wonderful gem of a thriller: A film in which complicated people and a very complicated plot come together** in a mechanism that leaves us marveling at its ingenuity.

From CRIME READS

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- **FORGET 'DIE HARD'—
THIS CHRISTMAS, WATCH
'THE SILENT PARTNER'**
- **The 1970s neo-noir Christmas heist film you need this year.**

- Look, far be it from me to begrudge anyone their enjoyment of as great a movie as *Die Hard* or seek to deny its status within the canon of Yuletide cinema, but...
- there's a whole host of equally great, but far lesser seen, action and crime thrillers that take place on or around Christmas just waiting to be discovered—foremost amongst them, the 1978 neo-noir masterpiece *The Silent Partner*.

- it actually went on to enjoy **mainstream acclaim** in its home country, (Canada)... **Stateside**, the film didn't see quite the **same success**, although it did receive overwhelmingly positive reviews from American critics ...
- Since its initial release, *The Silent Partner* has attained the status of **cult classic**, although it remains woefully underseen.
- It's hard to imagine anyone with an interest in crime and suspense won't be immediately won over by *The Silent Partner*. On a pure craft level, it's **as good a thriller as has ever been made:**

Along with the script, *The Silent Partner's* greatest asset is its cast.

- **The naturalistic Gould is ideally suited to play both the wily criminal mastermind as well as a slightly awkward everyman who people consistently underestimate.**
- **Plummer,...** playing a creature of pure, unbridled malevolence and simmering rage whose demonic visage and serpentine body language announce him as an immediate and unmistakable threat. **Reikle (Plummer's character) is one of the all-time great sadists of film noir,**

- It's the film's penchant for terror that *really* puts it in a league of its own. Ebert was on the money with his Hitchcock comparison and *The Silent Partner* shares much in common with one Hitch film in particular: his deliriously twisted adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's *Strangers on a Train*.

- *The Silent Partner* is also notable for being one of the very few films to have a score composed by jazz great [Oscar Peterson](#), and for featuring an early big-screen appearance by [John Candy](#).
- *The Silent Partner* is a remake of the [Danish film](#) *Think of a Number* (*Tænk på et tal*) from 1969 based on a Danish novel.

- According to Gould, after the film was completed, executives wanted Daryl Duke (the Director) to add a very specific scene that would shock the audience and he refused, so he was removed from the film. Gould shot it with another director. "I was not happy about it," said the actor. "Daryl really did a wonderful job."

RECEPTION

- ***The Silent Partner*** did well in Canada both critically and financially, winning several [Canadian Film Academy Awards](#) including Best Picture and Best Director.^{[9][10]} **The film was a sleeper upon its US release**, with Brendon Hanley of the film database [Allmovie](#) noting that the film "...stands out as **one of the best sleepers of the late '70s**".
- **The film was written by Curtis Hanson** who went on to direct many big pictures, most notably ***L A Confidential***.

From *Cinapse*

- Literally **everything about *The Silent Partner* is good**. The peak capitalism setting of a thriving shopping mall and bustling Canadian bank branch during a busy Christmas season is perfect for the total disregard for morality its characters display.
- ...**an intelligent, crackling thriller** populated by complicated human beings which escalates at a perfect rate for maximum tension and character development.

The Actors

- **Elliott Gould is a beguiling lead who projects an outward nerdiness but contains multitudes** which are shown to the audience through his actions and performance, not told. **Christopher Plummer is somewhat of a revelation here**, if only because he's his typical fantastic self, but so much younger than this reviewer is used to seeing him. It's worth noting that Plummer is an extremely attractive man in 2019, but **his youthful virility here translates into a menace I've never seen from him elsewhere in his career.**

- It's a terrifying portrayal of a madman bolstered and intensified by the protagonist's (Gould) seeming inability to comprehend how deep of a threat Reikle (Plummer's character) truly is.

- It seems *The Silent Partner* is interested in exploring the proximity of sexuality and danger in a gloriously 1978 fashion.

Ultimately that's precisely what makes *The Silent Partner* stand out as one of the greatest thrillers I've ever seen: it forces us to reckon with matters of conscience, morality, and our nascent capability to go down dark paths at the blink of an eye. It explores not just the thrills and vices that can tempt us to do wrong, but also, as in Cullen's case, the seeming lack of any real reason why we take a dark path in the first place.

What to consider while you watch this movie

- As you watch the lead character, Cullen (Elliot Gould), ask yourself: why is he doing this? What's his motivation?

- *The Silent Partner* comes with the highest of recommendations. As a thriller it's an all-time great. It's perhaps meaner, nastier, and more nihilistic than many casual moviegoers might be prepared for.

- Elliott Gould and Christopher Plummer engage in a bout for the ages, and all talent behind and before the camera deliver in top form. Play the game *The Silent Partner* wants you to play; on the other side you'll find the self-reflective brutality that 1970s American cinema was so good at delivering, but **you will most certainly also be entertained.**

CRITICS' COMMENTS from the Bonus Features on the DVD

“A thriller that performs like a horror film.”

- “Thrillers often fall apart in the third act; this one soars.”

Elliott Gould's comment:

- **“Almost a perfect script.”**

Reikle (Plummer) to Cullen (Gould):

- **“One night when you come home, you’ll find me on the inside and that’ll be the night you’ll wish you’d never been born.”**

BEFORE THE MOVIE STARTS



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- On the left side of the page, click “Class Information,” and then click on “Class Notes and Presentation.”
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ADDITIONAL INFO

- The film was the first to be produced by [Carolco Pictures](#) and one of the earliest films from within the country to take advantage of the Canadian government's "[Capital Cost Allowance](#)" incentive plan, which gave production companies tax inducements to make commercial films in Canada.^[2] It has been called "**one of the few truly good films to come out of the tax-shelter heyday of the 1970s.**"

- **Filmed in Toronto** in 1978
- **The film is all about relationships**, the roles we play in life. Miles Cullen (Elliott Gould) is playing a role. It's not who he is. The characters are very complex. Plummer's character (Harry Reikle) is attracted to Cullen.
- "Nothing is what it seems."

ROGER EBERT's review

- Background

What to consider while you watch this movie

- As you watch the lead character, Cullen (Elliot Gould), ask yourself: why is he doing this? What's his motivation?

PARENTAL ADVISORY

- **Nudity** – 3 scenes
- **Brutality** – 2 scenes:
 - 1) Gymn scene ca 22 minutes into the movie;
 - 2) Apartment fight near the end

AFTER THE MOVIE



What to consider while you watch this movie

- As you watch the lead character, Cullen (Elliot Gould), ask yourself: why is he doing this? What's his motivation?

- Cullen's nail-biting crime and flawless execution of a cat and mouse game opens him up to the thrills of the criminal life which he's never experienced before, **but there's no grand purpose or realization. He's just a complicated guy who's willing to manipulate those around him and shrug off horrendous violence simply to win a game.** *The Silent Partner* ruminates on this without beating you over the head with it. We're capable of terrible things even if we have mild exteriors. **Some of us are more resourceful than others, but have no real code with which to use our skills to benefit humanity.** *The Silent Partner* keeps us on the edge of our seat, rooting for Miles Cullen to pull off his heist, despite the total vacuous emptiness of the payoff.

- It's the film's penchant for terror that *really* puts it in a league of its own. Ebert was on the money with his Hitchcock comparison and *The Silent Partner* shares much in common with one Hitch film in particular: his deliriously twisted adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's *Strangers on a Train*.