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Sons of Anarchy's Robin Weigert 'Kills It' in the Indie Film *Concussion*

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Murder and mayhem may be all in a days work for Robin Weigert on *Sons of Anarchy*, where she plays Ally Lowen, the brotherhood's smart and savvy lawyer. Yet in *Concussion* a new must see indie film written and directed by Stacie Passon, she is absolutely stunning, delivering a killer performance that's gritty, raw, and sexy -- and so damn beautiful that you may just fall a little bit in love with her.



Weigert takes you deep into the deliciously complicated, and yes as the movie goes on, increasingly sex-filled world of Abby, a 40-something stay at home lesbian mom who is having a midlife crisis, leading up to her becoming a high end lesbian escort. As you may suspect, it all starts with a "concussion", although frankly it could have been any event, that sparked Abby's realization that something is missing from her life and her marriage. While she loves her wife and her kids, Abby is hungry -- hungry for sex and freedom.

Once her desires are awakened there is no going back, so she hires a seriously sexy escort. It's a scene you have to see for yourself because it starts out as awkward as a first date, and becomes an erotic and emotional turning point for her and us. One that sets Abby free, and is a bit like watching a starving woman eat for the first time in a very long while. She may have been in sexual lock down, but Abby is very good in bed, and through a series of twists and turns she starts taking on a steady stream of clients, and we're in for one hell of an emotionally and sexually charged ride.

Abby lives a double life, one full of women, secrets and contradictions, all the while keeping up her marriage, because in many ways this film is as much about marriage as it is about her quest to find herself. "I love playing characters who are becoming someone else" says Weigert, and this is very much the case with Abby, who is as complicated as they come.

At times she is tough, even badass, and then incredibly vulnerable and unsure, while in other moments she is pacing like a caged tiger, and still later very much the mom utterly thrilled by her kids. As you may have guessed, Abby gave Weigert a lot to work with, "she is as contradictory and complicated as humans are -- playing her was a treat" she says. Frankly watching her weave her brand of cinematic magic was a treat too.



Concussion is the first time Weigert, who is very much an actor's actor, has been the lead in a movie or series, or for that matter has ever had a sex scene. Having spent a decade making a name for herself in NYC on Broadway before taking a leap of faith, and moving to LA. From that point on she was cast in some of my favorite movies and series, including HBO's *Deadwood*, for which she earned a well deserved Emmy nomination for her role as Calamity Jane.

Weigert loved acting from the moment she was cast as the witch in Hansel and Gretel in grade school, and after some detours she landed in NYU's graduate acting program. While some thought she should have a back up plan just in case acting didn't work out, Weigert had other plans. "I wanted to hold my feet to the fire" she says. It turns out she didn't need an exit strategy, and she brings that same insight and intensity to *Concussion*.

Weigert knew from the start that this film was special, so much so after reading the script and talking with Passon, a first time director, she was all in. She also brought some of her friends on board, including Maggie Siff, her castmate from *Son's of Anarchy*. Siff is pretty amazing as Sam, a hot neighborhood mom, who unlike Abby is happy with her sex life and marriage, because she and her husband have an understanding.



Siff and Weigert have some amazing on screen chemistry, so no matter where you fall on the cheating or escort spectrum, you may find yourself actually hoping they have a tryst early on in the film, and feel really satisfied when they finally do. Weigert attributes some of that on screen chemistry to the fact that they both graduated from the same acting program, giving them lots of common ground. Yet for her it's also about Siff's style "Maggie's wonderfully open and not self conscious. She's very present and available -- and without judgment." she says.

Frankly I love it when Weigert talks, not just because she is incredibly intelligent, articulate and

passionate, although all of those of things are most certainly true, it's really the fact that she's refreshingly honest, and extremely thoughtful, almost vibrating with empathy and compassion. All of which makes her intriguing as a woman and an actor, and perhaps why she is so damn good at slipping into the skins and lives of the characters she takes on, and bringing them so beautifully to life.

Part of breathing life into Abby included lots of physical prep, because as you may expect there are lots of sex scenes. Yet all that diet and exercise prep was not necessarily just for vanity sake. "I was afraid that my fear of being self conscious would get in the way of my performance" she says. Plus, Abby is a workout junkie, so to get ready Weigert ate less, cut out sugar and carbs -- and dramatically upped her workout. While she looks gorgeous in the film, the most interesting aspect of all of this was the effect it had on her -- she was hungry, so hungry she didn't feel it any more, because she had starved the hunger out.

The bio-chemical changes that hunger creates actually helped her get into the right head space for the role. Muting her "usual technicolor-ed" world, and bringing her into Abby's rather flattened day to day landscape in the suburbs. She kept that going throughout the film, breaking her diet on the last day of filming, feasting on pasta and other Italian treats with the cast and crew. "I ate my dish, and picked off three other people's plates too -- it was fantastic" she laughs.

Robin Weigert's Oscar worthy performance, the onscreen chemistry of the cast, and a killer script, along with a seriously beautiful soundtrack, all come together to create a fun, sexy and thought provoking ride, one you need to experience for yourself -- but be warned you might just end up being hungry for more.

Concussion is out in theaters and available on VOD.

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