

Mark Whelan's Movie Picks

Minority Report (2002) Director: Steven Spielberg. 145m Rated: PG-13



Nearly a decade after its release, Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* appears less science fiction and more portent to the inescapable. From bombardments of intrusive advertising to assaults on individual privacy, it captures a frighteningly relevant and disturbing assessment of our seemingly imminent world.

Tom Cruise plays a police chief employed by the Department of Precrime—a crime-fighting establishment situated in a futuristic Washington D.C.—that has successfully eliminated murder. This phenomenon is attributed to three clairvoyants (led by Samantha Morton) holding the ability to detect the assailant, victim and location of an impending homicide. An advocate to the Precrime cause, Cruise is determined to prove its legitimacy as a prevailing weapon in fighting crime...until he is targeted for an assassination he has yet to commit.

Minority Report is the first of two collective developments between its star and marquee director (the other being 2005's *War of the Worlds*). This virtuoso pairing is a superlative vehicle for Cruise's gravitas and Spielberg's scrupulous craftsmanship. The inimitable Janusz Kaminski photographs a dreary and opaque representation of a 2054 Washington D.C.—meticulously realized by production designer Alex McDowell—while John Williams' booming score compliments the intense kinetic vitality of the film.

Minority Report is not without faults.

Screenwriters Scott Frank and Jon Cohen abandon the brevity of Dick's short story for bombast while gurgles of Spielberg-ian sentiment amid such harsh surroundings feel artificial and out of place. Nevertheless, this is an exciting and visually triumphant exercise in social science-fiction from two mega-watt Hollywood icons.



--Mark Whelan, November 8, 2014

