

Animal Kingdom (2010)

There are several things that make *Animal Kingdom* a great crime drama.

- Is there a better title for a movie about a crime family slowly tearing itself apart than *Animal Kingdom*? Truthfully? If you can think of any I would be very curious to hear them.
- Guy Pearce is still making movies! Just back in Australia! And surprise, surprise they're the best movies he's been in since *Memento*!
- Jacki Weaver's character is as vicious as everyone is telling you she is. She's a mother who will kiss your cheek while stabbing you in the back, all to protect her boys.
- *Animal Kingdom* features one of the best soundtracks I've heard in a while. It uses what is not much more than a hum, sometimes barely noticeable, to create a tension that is sure to break in a horrible fashion. It's not an overly manipulative use of music, more just a reflection of what's simmering just under the surface of this family we're watching.
- Last, but maybe the most fantastic, is the use of violence. It's not stylized or romanticized or, as the box suggests, an Aussie-*Goodfellas*. The violence generally happens in a very domestic context. It happens on a suburb street, in a grocery parking lot, or in a bedroom. There is no special set up for it, it just happens without warning. Interestingly enough, and something I didn't realize till I was thinking about the movie after watching it, you never actually see anyone get shot. All you see is the blood spatter. There are no cathartic blood baths and no one riddled with bullets in this crime movie. It's an interesting choice and the reason why this movie lived in my head for a few days after watching it.

Find *Animal Kingdom* in the library catalog.

Posted by intern on March 3, 2011

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