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## FILM

Posted: Wed., Jun. 6, 2007, 8:18pm PT

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Tribeca

### Take

By RONNIE SCHEIB

A Crux Entertainment presentation of a Telos production. Produced by Chet Thomas. Executive producers, Tyler Measom, Brady Whittingham, Ryan Oliver. Directed, written by Charles Oliver.

**With:** Minnie Driver, Jeremy Renner, Bobby Coleman, David Denman, Adam Rodriguez.



Minnie Driver is a grieving mother in Charles Oliver's 'Take.'

Another in a long line of death-row redemption sagas, tyro helmer-scribe Charles Oliver's "Take" works best as a thriller, as victim and victimizer approach salvation from opposite sides of the fence. Pic zigzags between two timeframes -- the time the crime took place, and the time of the punishment -- and between two initially unrelated protagonists. But the fragmented past is far more dramatic and suspenseful than the present-day story of retribution, which creates a sense of imbalance and spiritual anticlimax. Still, dynamic action sequences and intense perfs mark Oliver as a director to watch.

Pic takes place on two days, several years apart. In the past, Ana (Minnie Driver), totes her learning-disabled 7-year-old son Jesse (Bobby Coleman) around with her as she hunts for a job that will allow her to spend more time with him. Concurrently, Saul (Jeremy Renner), a somewhat shiftless young man sharing a joyless existence with a bitter father, reluctantly joins a robbery that quickly goes south. When Ana and Saul's paths intersect, tragedy ensues.

In the present, Oliver fixes on the day of Saul's execution. While Saul engages in theological discussions with a priest (Adam Rodriguez) about God's plan or lack thereof, Ana drives across the desert to witness Saul's death, consumed by hatred and apt to hallucinate apparitions of her dead son in the backseat.

Oliver sets up four separate blocks of action, each containing one character in one timeframe and distinguished by a different color palette and tonality of light.

Somewhat in the manner of Steven Soderbergh and Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's temporal juggling, Oliver navigates the four blocks freely, sometimes intercutting rhythmically to increase suspense, association or contrast, sometimes letting scenes unfold in unhurried fullness.

This constant time travel almost succeeds in granting the same impetus to all parts of the film. The action sequences flow kinetically, bouncing off the emotional horror of the protagonists, unable to control the unwilled events sweeping them along.

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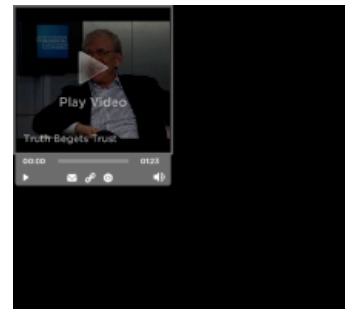
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The talky redemption element, however, ultimately feels artificially tacked on. While Driver's character physically passes through the landscape of her loss, Renner's Saul has to rely on the hoary old minister-in-the-cell chestnut to mark the progressive stages of his absolution.

Tech credits are accomplished, Andrew McAllister's cutting lending a certain fluidity and elegance to the chopped-up proceedings.

Camera (color, widescreen), Tristan Whitman; editor, Andrew McAllister; music, Roger Neill; production designer, Luke Freeborn; costume designer, Jayme Bohn; sound (Dolby Digital), Mark Gringas. Reviewed at Tribeca Film Festival (Discovery), May 3, 2007. Running time: 99 MIN.

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