

A few things came to my mind before and as I saw this. One, this was pretty much a DEVS reunion, which included everyone from Mizuno to Offerman and even Spaeny as well as McKinley Henderson, which not only gave it a more welcoming vibe but made it easier to atune ourselves with what Mr. Garland had in store for us if we saw the former. This especially since the movie, much like the TV series, really grounds itself in a more open-minded, if not for the faint of soul, view of the present in a way that expands what we usually expect from the medium. The obvious difference being, of course, that while DEVS is more about exploring these concepts episode by episode, Civil War is already an angle guided by the aftermath, and the grisly hypothesis of this reality, by playing it straight yet still ingeniously blurring the line between dystopia and

unsettling possibility. Another thing is that, surprisingly enough, Civil War is a film that is the least reliant on fantasy/science fiction elements (considering how even Men, without spoiling too much, goes into certain subgenres of horror by the end) by choosing to simply base itself on that same hard post-apocalyptic fiction that anyone with strong constitutions can access. But what really caught my attention, of all things, is how the director followed Godzilla Minus One's approach and did more with the modest budget allotted. Not just because it was fairly standard compared to the productions that have cost many times more than these films put together, but because it made sense for this sort of concept. Godzilla is an IP that has existed since the 50s, and, by choosing to return to the 40s we were able to immerse ourselves better in the

terror the first film was initially supposed to represent. Civil War, however, while taking place in both America and the future, is the director's way of telling us that not only was there never a "farm" where Fido is going to but that we are even given a chance to see how he is "put to sleep" if we don't just want to know the truth. Some could see it as a wake-up call while others could feel it hits too close to home without getting into that many details. But one thing that I couldn't help but accept despite resenting it is that it shares a notion I've always been proven right throughout time: cynicism does a better job at predicting the future than optimism. It's not that one shouldn't strive their ass off to maintain their optimism somehow, but even if we neither like it nor want to prove it wrong it doesn't make it any less cynical in nature. In fact it almost

coincides with the director's views on determinism in DEVS, despite it being based more on logic than emotion. But even as Civil War was devoid of both optimism, if not also sentimentality, that didn't mean its characters were one dimensional. If anything they were too realistic (considering how some of them don't even make it by the end) and the argument could as far as be made that Mr. Garland understood horror the most in this film even as it was not entirely pertinent to the genre unlike his previous two films (though at least half of the film did somewhat bring Bones and All to mind in terms of a classical atmosphere, and landscapes, married with the soundtrack, despite the plot). But even as I haven't really read that many of his books to judge I'm pretty sure Garland embodied the kind of dissident world building J. G. Ballard

was known for albeit updated. Certain scenes, from the ones taking place near JC Penny (that disturbingly, albeit subjectively, recalls the fate of K-Mart chains) to the dress store, and even one involving a forest fire, can't be put to words except these: everybody who has ever lived in America misses something from it.

Something that, like gas prices in the 90s, felt was too ridiculous now, which might be why it's never coming back.