

STUDENT LIFE

Zodiac turns true story into suspenseful entertainment



Jake Gyllenhaal and Robert Downey Jr. star in the new movie "Zodiac."

By **Scott Muska**
student life editor

In the 1970s and '80s, newspaper cartoonist Robert Graysmith became obsessed with one of the most notorious and popular serial killers of all time. This murderer dubbed himself the "Zodiac Killer," and his story has drawn the attention of the masses for nearly 40 years because of one reason: he has never been caught.

Graysmith wrote a number of books about the Zodiac killer, and these were the main basis for director David Fincher's new film, "Zodiac." Jake Gyllenhaal was cast to play Graysmith in the movie, and he did not disappoint. Just as in his previous work, "Donnie Darko," he expertly forces the mindset of his complex character onto the audience and makes them understand in a way that it becomes almost reasonable.

During the movie, Graysmith's obsession with the killer starts out rather small while he is working for the San Francisco Chronicle as a small-time cartoonist and attempts to solve one of the puzzles, or ciphers, that the "Zodiac killer" famously sent to police and newspapers in the California area. Through the killer, he forms a friendship and bond with the Chronicle's acclaimed crime writer, Paul Avery, an eccentric drug and alcohol abuser that *smokes incessantly and is played very well by Robert Downey Jr.*

The two newspaper employees begin their own investigation into the mystery of the killer's identity, while police all over California remain stumped, namely Mark Ruffalo's character Inspector Toschi, who becomes the other main character in the film alongside Graysmith.

The movie is based solely on the pursuit of the "Zodiac killer" and it focuses on the deterioration of the relationships and lives of the men that

became obsessed with finding him. Toschi and Graysmith both develop issues that strain their formerly very strong and intimate relationships with their wives, while Avery becomes entwined in a downward spiral of drug and alcohol abuse that ultimately results in the loss of his job.

What may be recognized preemptively before seeing the movie is the longer-than-usual run time of about three hours, but Fincher uses all of the time in a captivating way that has rarely been done. The movie is very easy to sit through, and at no point does it become dull. Fincher has done it again, achieving cinematic brilliance through a very unique film experience, just as he did with "Fight Club," "Seven," and "The Game."

When I went to the viewing of "Zodiac," I took my most trusted movie-going philosopher, assistant news editor Lenny Smith. He is the Roeper to my Ebert, and as usual he agreed with me that the movie was an overall success. He did, however, feel that the movie was longer than appropriate or necessary. "I really applaud Jake Gyllenhaal's acting in this movie, and Downey Jr. wasn't too bad either," said Smith.

"Zodiac" was one of the most anxiously awaited movies of the year so far and it does not disappoint. Fincher adapted a non-fiction novel into a movie almost flawlessly, and told a true story thoroughly in an engaging and entertaining way while staying away from the boring set-up of a documentary. He captured the time period and the hysteria that ensued during the Zodiac's reign of terror in the California area, and conveyed this to his modern day audience. "Zodiac" is a cinematic success because of a great storyline, above average acting, and amazing directing. If you enjoy murder mysteries, this adaptation of a real-life one will keep you entertained and in suspense until the ending that brings it all together.

"Top Five Greatest Living Songwriters"

By **Chris LaFuria**

5. Thom Yorke/ Johnny Greenwood (Radiohead)
4. Jeff Tweedy (Wilco)
3. Cat Stevens
2. Conor Oberst (Bright Eyes)
1. Bob Dylan



*Honorable Mention: Sufjan Stevens

"Top Five Chillest Songs"

By **Andrew McLachlan**

5. Ben Folds- "Jane"
4. 311- "Amber"
3. Incubus- "Echo"
2. Bob Marley- "Wait"
1. Jack Johnson- "Traffic In The Sky"





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Box Office Breakdown

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- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1. 300 | \$32,877,328 |
| 2. Wild Hogs | \$19,058,871 |
| 3. Premonition | \$17,558,689 |
| 4. Dead Silence | \$7,842,725 |
| 5. I Think I Love My Wife | \$5,674,802 |

* Statistics courtesy of BoxOfficeMojo.com

"Top Five Superhero Movies"

By **Scott Muska**

5. Batman & Robin
4. Spiderman 2
3. The Punisher
2. Batman Begins
1. Spiderman

