

## ***“Sicario: Day of the Solado”***

By Helen Lutz

It’s impossible to watch any news channel without being bombarded with stories about our border with Mexico and illegal immigration into our country. It’s interesting to hear the many reasons people want to enter our country. Some are looking for work and a better life. Some are escaping the gang warfare, drug cartels and the violence engulfing Central American countries. Some plan to infiltrate our society and cause us harm. Some work through proper legal channels, while others look for any means to achieve their goal.



So what do we do about immigration and our very porous border? It’s a problem which has plagued our lawmakers for decades – none of whom really want to step up to the plate and make the difficult decisions. I actually heard Senator Gillibrand from the state of New York (a long way from the Rio Grande River) say that she supports open borders; we’re a country of immigrants. Nice idea, highly impractical since many of the desperate immigrants currently stopped at the border are fleeing horrific violence in their home countries and looking to live in a land of safety and law.

In the new film “Sicario: Day of the Solado” violence reigns supreme at the U.S.-Mexican border with the powerful drug cartels trafficking people, drugs and terror across our borders in a myriad of ways. Matt Graver (Josh Brolin) and Alejandro Gillick (Benicio Del Toro) are summoned to the office of the Secretary of Defense. Terrorists are making their way into the U.S. in nefarious ways using a series of tunnels which pockmark our southern borders. After some discussion, it is decided that Matt, Alejandro and their band of hand-picked ‘agents’ will travel to Mexico and abduct the teenage daughter of one of Mexico’s most powerful drug kingpins while making it appear that a rival cartel is responsible. The plan – create a drug war and let the warring factions take care of one another keeping our hands clean. What could possibly go wrong?

It’s unfortunate that once the border is crossed, it’s hard to tell the good guys from the bad guys. We see evidence that the local police are easily corrupted providing transportation and safe passage to smugglers. The federal police aren’t much better as their protective detail turns on our merry mercenaries while the Secretary disavows any knowledge of anything or any activity; hmmm, somewhat reminiscent of the Department of Justice’s Fast and Furious debacle.

Director Stefano Sollima takes us on a non-stop thrilling ride as we accompany the good guys, but always looking over our (or their) shoulders wondering what will blow up or who will start shooting next. And when things go awry, what’s going to happen to poor Isabel Reyes (Isabela Moner) the drug lord’s daughter? Is she actually just collateral damage?

We also catch a glimpse into the creation and cultivation of a gang member when Miguel Hernandez (Elijah Rodriguez), a Texas teen, is lured by his cousin into the world of human trafficking. ‘Easy money’ is very enticing, especially at first. As Miguel’s story evolves we see him hardened into a killer, barely resembling the young man to whom we were first introduced.

Sicario: noun; a hit man or hired killer (especially when referring to Latin American drug cartels). Alejandro is one of the best and deadliest (for good reasons if there could ever be good reasons) and his meeting with Miguel sets us up for the next installment of a bloody, but fascinating “Sicario” franchise film. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “Sicario: Day of the Solado” TWO 1/2 HARTS. It’s not easy to watch when it comes to blood and gore, but shares an interesting perspective as to just what and who we are fighting to keep our country safe.