

Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me ★

Year of Release: 1992

Review by Randy Parker

Country: USA

Verdict: Skip It

When I arrived in Paris in June, 1992, I was surprised to find France plastered with posters for *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, since the movie wasn't scheduled to open in the U.S. until late August. Happily, the film—the prequel to David Lynch's cult television series—was playing in a fancy, THX theater. Unfortunately, the theater was far more impressive than the movie, which absolutely stinks, much like a French lavatory. Worse, actually.

Fire Walk with Me (directed by Lynch) will be completely incomprehensible to anyone who has not seen the TV series or read "Laura Palmer's Secret Diary." For "Twin Peaks" junkies, like me, the movie is only marginally improved. The plot is jumbled and illogical, not to mention excruciatingly sluggish. The first 30 minutes, which have almost nothing to do with the main story line, feature Chris Isaak and Kiefer Sutherland as FBI agents investigating a murder in Portland, Oregon. The movie then stops in Philadelphia for a nonsensical cameo by David Bowie and a BRIEF appearance by Kyle MacLachlan as Dale Cooper. Lynch then drops this plot strand altogether and abruptly shifts the setting to Twin Peaks, Washington—one year later.

Ah, Twin Peaks: "familiar territory," you think to yourself as Angelo Badalamenti's distinctive

musical score chimes in. Wrong! The movie proves that you really can't go home again, or at least Lynch can't. Only about a quarter of the characters from the TV series appear in the movie: Leland Palmer, Bobby Briggs, James, Shelly, Leo, the log lady and a few others—mostly in meaningless cameos. The rest of the "Twin Peaks" cast is nowhere to be seen, and consequently, Lynch fails to recreate the spirit and flavor of TV's most enigmatic town. Cast members Michael Ontkean, Sheryl Fenn, Piper Laurie and Richard Beymer are sorely missed, not to mention Lara Flynn Boyle, who has been replaced by lackluster Moira Kelly in the crucial role of Donna.

The movie concentrates solely on Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee) as she suffers through drug abuse, prostitution and incest, during her miserable last seven days on Earth. The night of Laura's death, which is truly terrifying, is the film's only remotely effective sequence. We finally get to see exactly what happened to Laura after she jumped off James' motorcycle and ran into the woods at that lonely traffic light in the middle of nowhere. Her murder unfolds just as Agent Cooper reconstructed it in the TV series, which is gratifying for faithful "Twin Peaks" viewers. But it's an awfully small reward for sitting through a painfully awful movie.