

Film Review: *Nobody* (2021)

"*Hutch*" *Mansell* (Bob Odenkirk) lives a quiet, unassuming and monotonous life managing a metal fabricating company owned by his father-in-law. His life changes abruptly one night when two burglars invade his home as he and his family sleep upstairs. Awakened by noises, he ventures downstairs only to have a revolver stuck in his face by one of them. Suddenly, *Hutch's* teenage son *Brady* (Gage Munroe,) grabs hold of the other burglar, distracting the first one, and affording Hutch the opportunity to dispatch them both with a handy golf club. When *Hutch* declines the opportunity, *Brady* is violently struck in the face.

His failure to act causes his wife *Becca* (Connie Nielsen) and *Brady* to lose respect for him. The **humiliation** he experiences from being perceived as a **coward** by his immediate family is multiplied when his father-in-law and brother-in-law hear of it. He recognizes that he has failed in his most important role as a man, that of protecting his family from harm. His humiliation and loss of respect **generate rage** in *Hutch*, and as any man would, he immediately sets out to right some wrongs. In this, the film borrows a theme from the classic 1953 Western, *Shane*.



Unbeknownst to his family, in an earlier life *Hutch* was an "auditor" for the U.S. intelligence community. In the vernacular of that secretive society, he was a professional assassin who dispatched bad guys that those "three-letter agencies" couldn't deal with in a conventional manner. He retired from his unique profession because he recognized that even criminals lived happier and more fulfilling lives than his own.

His slumbering skills are soon awakened by several drunken members of the Russian mafia, who learn a harsh lesson after they forcibly board the bus in which *Hutch* is a passenger. After intimidating another passenger, these mobsters menacingly approach an innocent young girl who was also on the bus. *Hutch* says to himself, "*I hope these ass-holes like hospital food*" before he kills three of the five, including the younger brother of ***Teddy Kuznetsov*** (Aleksandr Pal,) a psychopathic Russian mob boss. *Hutch* now has the war against bad guys he's longed for since his humiliating home invasion. The next day his son asks, "*What happened to you?*" He responds jokingly, "*You should have seen the other guys.*"



***Hutch* Hanging Around With A Russian Mobster**

In *Shane*, the film's protagonist tells *Little Joey* that **"A man has got to be what he is, Joey. You can't break the mold. I tried and it didn't work for me...there's no going back for me..."** One uniquely interesting feature of the film is the soundtrack of famous songs that accompany its more violent scenes. Thus, as a prelude to *Hutch* dispatching the five menacing Russian mobsters on the bus, the soundtrack echoes *Shane's* sentiments with **"I've Gotta Be Me,"** made famous by Steve Lawrence, Sammy Davis Junior, and many others.

Likewise, in the film's *denouement*, *Hutch* recruits his father **Mark** (Christopher Lloyd) -- a retired FBI Agent -- and his former CIA controller to help slaughter legions of Russian mobsters who pursue Hutch to his metal fabricating company where he has improvised many explosive devices. During the slaughter, the soundtrack plays **"You'll Never Walk Alone"** from the musical *Carousel*. These musical accompaniments add a slightly comedic element to each scene, which helps to temper the gore and blood-letting.



Hutch With His Father and Former Controller

So-called "*revenge films*" like *Nobody* are very popular, at least with men, and there have been many over the years, including three versions of *Death Wish*, *Man on Fire*, and Steven Segal's films. *That's* probably because they provide what psychologists call a "*catharsis*." As a society, we have strayed so far from the likelihood of harsh sentencing of violent criminals that the threat of punishment no longer successfully deters them. The appeal of *revenge films* lies in the fact that at least in these, the bad guys get exactly what they deserve. They sure as hell did in *Nobody*.

--- by Earl P. Holt III