

Vengeful Cop Hunts Down Psychopath in 'Alex Cross'

Alex Cross is an adaptation of the popular novel series written by best-selling novelist James Patterson. In it, Alex Cross (played by Tyler Perry) is a young homicide detective for the Detroit Police Department with a skill of hyper-observance. Because of his skill set, the FBI wants him and his family to move to Washington, D.C., so that Alex can do profiling for the FBI. This job would be more stable than being a homicide detective.

Everything changes, however, when a psychopath killer nicknamed "Picasso" (Matthew Fox) tortures a young woman to death. It's clear to Alex this was no random murder, but a planned assassination. Also, the murderer left a clue revealing his next target: a wealthy, heavily guarded businessman.

Alex and his team arrive at the target's place of work to protect him, but he assures Alex his security is state of the art. Alex thinks that Picasso is already in the building. While securing the complex, Alex runs into Picasso, who then sets off an explosive and narrowly escapes.

Picasso is livid that Alex foiled his assassination attempt. He sets out to make it personal. **(SPOILER ALERT):** During a date with his wife, Alex gets a phone call from Picasso, who's perched on a nearby roof with a sniper rifle. Alex begins to psychologically analyze Picasso. He guesses what circumstances might have turned Picasso into a psychopath. This angers Picasso, and he decides to take it out on Alex's wife, who is sitting with him. Alex realizes what Picasso is about to do and tries to save his wife, but he's too late. His wife takes a shot and dies in his arms. Devastated, Alex decides to take the law into his own hands to stop Picasso before he murders

anybody else. Of course, this is the classic structure of the archetypal police thriller where the police detective is forced to bend the rules to catch the criminal, whose attacks have become personal ones.

Alex Cross isn't a great story. The characters aren't really believable and the emotion they try to invoke feels forced. The action is exciting and has some intense moments, but it doesn't make up for characters that lack depth. The content is about as rough as a PG-13 movie can get with some gruesome violence (including torture and cutting off of fingers), sexuality and foul language.

To make things worse, the protagonist chooses vengeance rather than justice. Though it is seen as a bad thing, he still chooses revenge and there are no consequences for his actions. This leaves viewers with a humanist worldview with bad ethical ramifications, even though there are a couple minor positive references to Christianity, including prayer and church. Movieguide advises extreme caution for *Alex Cross*.