The Dark Knight Rises

Reviewed by Ian Betts July 2012

There is a terrorist on a plane. While he and his devoted followers murder its passengers, he shows no signs of remorse, nor fear of reprisal. Explosions dismember the hull and as the metal carcass of corpses falls to the ground, the terrorist escapes promising to wreak only greater havoc.

His name is Bane.

A hulking sociopath of immense will and strength, he is the villain in **The Dark Knight Rises**,

the final instalment of director Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy. While you may not be familiar with the character and his comic book origins, the opening scene of the film's depiction of aerial terror plays on our memories of the September 11th attacks, and thus Bane's assault on American society triggers very real and immediate fears.

As I write reports have been published of a shooting at a screening of the film in Denver , and questions must be asked about how and why this occurred. It would be insensitive and wrong to speculate about this event, but it is fair to suggest that there is something in this film that has touched a nerve in American society, whether it is the mass-marketing surrounding such a block-busting release, or the depiction of brutal violence in a film marketed to teenagers; for whatever reason that may emerge, the film has become entangled with the politics and social issues of the nation it depicts.

And while Nolan and his crew have already been quick to deny pursuing a political agenda in order to distance themselves from
the Occupy Wall Street campaign
and following
protests about Mitt Romney's Bain Capital company
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The Dark Knight Rises
is filled with the political and social issues of our time. In fact, his brother and co-writer Jonathan Nolan has compared the work to Dickens'
A Tale of Two Cities
suggesting that he wanted to explore
the collapse of society
in '
a civilization that completely folded to pieces
'.