

Munich: The Edge of War

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Based on the novel of the same name by Robert Harris, *Munich: The Edge of War* follows British diplomat Hugh Legat (George MacKay) and German diplomat Paul Hartman (Jannis Niewöhner) in the years leading up to the Second World War, as Hitler (Martin Wuttke) plans to invade Czechoslovakia. Once close friends at Oxford, the two fell out over their political opinions, but when Hartman discovers Hitler's true intentions, he and Legat must put their differences aside to try and avert tragedy.

The story does a decent job at establishing a constant sense of tension in its political drama, while managing to maintain a compelling narrative, despite the looming inevitability of tragedy and war. Since the conclusions of the various political interactions are already known to its audience, *Munich* focuses on that dramatic irony, taking time to explore the nature of politics and war in its storytelling.

With a runtime of 129 minutes, the film can feel a little long at times, losing some of the suspense and momentum of the plot, but for the most part the narrative is compelling enough to compensate for a few narrative lulls.

With strong political personalities and the complex relationship between Legat and Hartman being important parts of the whole, *Munich* needed a lot of support from its cast to hold up the script, and, thankfully, the performances here serve to elevate the scripting and direction. MacKay and Niewöhner share great chemistry, running the full gamut of emotions from the idealism of their Oxford days to the anger and upset at the socio-political climate in which they find themselves.

Jeremy Irons also puts in a strong performance as Neville Chamberlain, representing him as an idealistic but flawed leader, and Wuttke is a very intense Hitler, playing the role in a more subdued and chilling way than in his portrayal of the dictator in *Inglourious Basterds*.

Munich: The Edge of War is a solid political thriller, not particularly exciting or groundbreaking but delivering a competent and engaging cinematic experience, supported by a talented cast. It's not the most gripping of experiences, but achieves what it aims to intelligently and with style.