First Binge of 2023: Severance



Severance Season 1

I was looking for a good series to binge after *White Lotus* and someone at my gym suggested *Severance*. I got a real “Lost” vibe from the show right from the start, some behind-the-scenes mysterious group controlling both the characters and us, the viewers – a common trope in contemporary drama. What are these employees doing? What is *really* happening? The Jim Carry movie *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* was top of mind as well: how removing individual memories unravels the consistency that is the hallmark of the Self.

First off, as someone who appreciates cinematography, some of the location shots were pretty spectacular, the parking lot and the building interior were quite beautiful, allowing the architecture of the public spaces freedom as opposed to the claustrophobic spaces of the offices and the hallways that the workers inhabit. Like that hallway to the break room that John Turturo paints, the tightness of the working space is palpable.

I didn’t know that Ben Stiller directed but I noted he directed most of the first season. The characters unfold through the story until each revelation adjusts your understanding of what is “really” going on: whether cleaning the ocean, a more mundane experiment by a ego fueled billionaire, anonymizing state sanctioned killing, or some other mysterious earth saving initiatives (that was one of the connections that I had with the cultish Dharma Initiative on *Lost*), I am sure that we won’t ever know.

And malicious because of the hidden aspect of the work. Much like how the Milgram shock experiments showed the corporate banality of evil expressed by Hannah Arendt, hiding what each individual does, even to themselves, allows evil. Abstracting humans into data is bad enough.

I also didn't know that Christopher Walken was in this so a big surprise when he entered the frame. His work at *Lumen* is as bizarre as the others and his presence adds even more weight to each scene that he inhabits.

What is up with that brother in law? Why do I get the impression that he is more behind this cult then we are led to believe? He reminds me of Patrick Swayze's character in *Donnie Darko*. And why do I keep thinking about his explanation for the three beds in the kids room and its connection with the process of severance itself?

Not a lot of traffic about this show on Reddit but I did learn that they started filming season 2 a few months back so I eagerly anticipate its launch. The Guardian has a good season 1 wrap up from February 2022 here.

Source: https://www.idonthaveacoolname.com/first-binge-of-2023-severance/