

## Source Code: Making the leap from the moon to parallel universes

The new Duncan Jones film “Source Code” starring Jake Gyllenhaal is an all-around good movie. The second film by Mr. Jones, the first of course being the superb “Moon,” Source Code almost picks up where Moon left off. Both films deal with unrealistic technology, both films have a “twist,” which isn’t saved for the last two minutes, but is integrated beautifully into the plot, and both films force us unknowingly to care for characters that are not what they seem. A distinct thumbprint is being created in Jones’ work, one that is refreshing, clever and provides us a new way of telling stories. Not one minute of Source Code is predictable, despite half the film replaying an altered version of the same sequence again and again and the film does a wise thing by not limiting itself to being a love story. There is a charming girl, yes; there is flirtation, but no love, only the potential for love, which allows the rest of the film to operate on a clear, concise course, satisfying all the curiosities the viewer creates during the first act of the film. Most movies begin strong, start to lose steam around the middle and then deflate fully at the end, manufacturing us a chase sequence or a confession of love so we can all go home dumb and happy. This is not the case in Source Code. Duncan Jones seems to have complete control over his material, not feeding into the temptations of providing us easy, routine climaxes, but he also doesn’t try and confuse us. He provides us enough information to satisfy our questions, but the information given is challenging and almost brilliant in a way. Of course, you must suspend belief when watching a film like Source Code, for realism is never part of the equation, nor should it be. A world is constructed for us and we believe it seamlessly, almost magically being transported to a world that looks like ours, sounds like ours, but ultimately isn’t and that observation comes very close to the basis Source Code is founded upon.

There is no use trying to explain the technology used in the film, but the plot deals with a military helicopter pilot being sent back in time (sort of) for a period of eight minutes. He is put on a train, which exploded earlier that morning, killing everyone onboard. He must locate the bomb and find the identity of the bomber within those eight minutes or he must repeat the entire process. The performance by Jake Gyllenhaal is extraordinary, reminding us that behind his good looks there is a real actor. It would have been very easy to keep his character a vague outline, but instead the filmmakers and Gyllenhaal took the time to fill in the blanks. An example of this is the character’s relationship with his father, subtlety dealt with, giving us a window into the character and adding so much to the film overall. There is another character in the film that remains ominous, but sort-of becomes a quasi-villain toward the end. What Source Code does is make this character’s change three dimensional, we see his point of view as well, and it maybe is the right view, who knows? It gives us the choice to decide. This concept is reminiscent of Stanley Kubrick’s work, which never made itself easy on the audience, but always contained a duality, allowing the viewer to make up their own mind. This element is what makes Kubrick’s works so enduring. Jones’ Moon has been compared to Kubrick’s “2001: A Space Odyssey,” and you can definitely see the influence. In Source Code, the reference is much more subtle. The wide, smooth helicopter shots of Chicago in the opening of Source Code are similar to the famous opening shot of “The Shining,” and the seriousness and commitment to the subject matter is the same. It’s safe to say Duncan Jones is a bold new voice in cinema, Source Code confirming what was started with Moon, both all-around good movies.