

passage of time by having Sugita pass the baton of the role of Kirishima to Furutachi in a dreamlike moment of reflection; similarly, a Buddhist monk version of Kirishima coaches himself through the worst moments of despair as even this turn to religion can't make him forgive himself for the lives he's taken. These are moments of casual, wistful surreality that match neither Adachi's former intense didacticism nor the formal extremes of his previous digital works, but they nevertheless work to break away from the visual monotony of a man speaking to himself in his room.

One of the biggest strengths of Adachi's recent works is his willingness to prod the legacies of his fellow radicals without resorting to comfortable, trite compromises about the legacy of political violence. Here, Kirishima is not simply receiving his just desserts for going "too far" in his activism as Judd Hirsch and Christine Lahti do in Sidney Lumet's *Running on Empty* (1988). Instead, at all times, his escape is paralleled with religious imagery, his solitude and celibacy equated to a devotion to a greater power. If there's suffering involved, it's the same suffering shared by the wayward monk or the doubtful anchorite who give in to the all-too-human instinct to wonder if even this higher spiritual existence is enough to cleanse oneself of worldly sin (and indeed those dead weigh heavily on Kirishima's mind). *Escape* is neither a simple valorization of Kirishima's legacy nor a boring lecture about the deleterious effects of a life dedicated to radical politics. Adachi is concerned with the projections on the ceiling and walls; he is focused on history — his own, Kirishima's own — as near-spectral events that continue to haunt in low-lumen light, even in a lonely apartment. ♦

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ABOUT THE FILM

A contemporary of Nagisa Ōshima and Kōji Wakamatsu, Masao Adachi has spent more than six decades as a revolutionary figure on both cinematic and political stages. These personal histories are brilliantly distilled in his biopic of Japanese terrorist Satoshi Kirishima, who, as one of the country's most wanted men, successfully evaded capture for nearly 50 years before revealing his true identity on his deathbed. Kirishima's remarkable, often troubling life—from anarchist activities to a new existence under an assumed name, all the while driven by guilt for failing to fulfill his vocation—is told through a dazzling mix of archival footage, staged recreations, and outright fantasy that allows Adachi to trace a history of resistance and terror in Japan. The performances from Kanji Furutachi and Rairu Sugita convey lifetimes of idealism and regret. *Copresented by the Yanai Initiative for Globalizing Japanese Humanities.*

TRT: 114 min

Escape by Zach Lewis

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In 1974, the East Asia Anti-Japan Armed Front (henceforth EAAJAF) followed in the footsteps of the Japanese Red Army by committing several terrorist acts in order to shake up a conformist Japanese society that refused to acknowledge, much less reckon with, the sins of its immediate past. Like the many leftist organizations of the 1970s (and honestly, in perpetuity), the aims and credos of the Red Army and EAAJAF were not entirely aligned and suffered from internal internecine splits. The EAAJAF particularly espoused an anti-Japaneseism that targeted Japan's mistreatment of its minority populations (especially the Ainu and the Ryukyu) and its war crimes against its East Asian neighbors. Its main targets were the corporations complicit in Japan's many war crimes and the symbol of imperial Japan, Emperor Hirohito himself.

While a planned train derailment plan to kill Hirohito was foiled, some cells of the EAAJAF did successfully bomb the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries headquarters, accidentally killing eight people after those inside dismissed the group's telephoned threat. It's no surprise that Masao Adachi, who just two years ago made a film about Shinzo Abe's assassin, would take an interest in the story of the last surviving member of this group who managed to escape capture until his death just last year: Satoshi Kirishima.

Yet, like in *Revolution+I*, Adachi seems uninterested in the terrorist violence itself. *Escape's* concern with Satoshi Kirishima's (while young, played by Rairu Sugita; while older, played by Kanji Furutachi) and in his days in the Scorpion cell of the

the EAAJAF are relegated to the first 15 minutes of the film. A test bomb exploding in the woods, a clandestine meeting with some of the other cells, and a short segment of the long-haired radical evading immediate capture after members of the Wolf cell are arrested are the only glimpses into Kirishima the romantic radical. Instead, most of the film looks to the interior life of a man who saw his painful, necessary solitude as a continuation of his values. Avoiding capture is now his true calling, the humiliation of the state's detectives being his final mission of the EAAJAF, so, with monk-like devotion, he faces the pain of what can hardly be called a life. If he doesn't even live under his own name, can even this eremitic excuse for a life truly be called his own?

Shortly after the botched mission, Kirishima cuts his rockstar locks and takes a contractor job, working alongside foreigners (including one boisterous Korean-Japanese) who can also only take under-the-table money and housing. Yet, when his coworkers start a bar fight, instead of staying to defend his new minority-status friends as his left-wing values might dictate, Kirishima bolts, afraid of possible capture. Ashamed, he finds that even small friendships are not possible; he joins another contracting company and keeps a low profile for decades. Of course, temptations arise — he's a barfly at the nearby rock club in Fujisawa, where his presence can be made anonymous and his pent-up frustrations can be relieved, yet even this safe haven contains the threat of real, meaningful love.

Adachi crosscuts these vignettes of Kirishima as Christ in the desert with a dying Kirishima in a hospital bed, recollecting his life before he admits to the hospital staff and the detectives he's long evaded. He had lived his life as Hiroshi Uchida, a name he had made up on the spot; he now wishes to die as Satoshi Kirishima.

Though much of this film rhymes with Adachi's previous work, the roughshod prosumer DV camerawork that defined the look of *Revolution+I* is here mostly eschewed in favor of a more standard handheld realist look. DP Yutaka Tamazaki (a favorite of Hirokazu Kore-eda and Naomi Kawase, and even once hired by Adachi for his legendary *AKA Serial Killer* as well as his 2016 *Artist of Fasting*) matches Kirishima's constant paranoia by shooting handheld, behind-the-shoulder sequences. Meanwhile, stable medium shots of Kirishima in his apartment center Furutachi and Sugita's naturalistic performances of the nervous revolutionary — checking the news, polite but curt refusals to continue conversations, and many subtle tics that signal discomfort in social situations and in isolation.

These formal techniques, borrowed from postwar neorealism, would normally signal a vérité portrait of Kirishima, but not in an Adachi film. The director makes frequent use of an incredibly cheap special effect, a consumer-grade projector, which casts images of Kirishima's memories onto the hospital ceiling and glimpses of misguided terrorism (the Aum Shinrikyo subway attack), major world events (the 2011 Tohoku earthquake), and continued struggles of the world's subaltern (Gaza — a topic special to Adachi who faced prison time after his time in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) adorn a younger Kirishima's walls as he wallows in his inability to help. Adachi announces the