

Only Murders in the Building: a love letter to true crime aficionados

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A shocking murder, an intriguing mystery and a host of engaging characters trying to untangle the plot - these are the things every true crime aficionado longs for. With a rare 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and an 8.1/10 from IMDb, Only Murders in the Building delivers all of the above tropes in spades.

Starred in and produced by veterans Steve Martin (as Charles Haden Savage) and Martin Short (as Oliver Putnam) as well as Selena Gomez (as Mabel Mora), Only Murders in the Building is a true-crime comedy satire about a true-crime podcast. Set in a classic NY style Upper West Side apartment complex called The Arconia, the plot centres around a murder in the building and three unlikely crime podcast fanatics putting on their sleuthing caps to solve it.

Despite all the makings of a typical murder mystery, Only Murders in the Building is still so much more through its lively characters, layered nuances, sharp wit and comic timing. The series works on multiple levels - the masterful creation of

two comedy veterans, a tale of friendship overcoming the generation gap and a feel-good story of outcasts learning to experience life again.

From Steve Martin as a socially isolated actor, Martin Short as a grandiose and financially-strapped director to Selena Gomez as a young, closed-off artist - the unlikely trio, though out-of-place in any other setting, blend right into the vintage New York apartment complex. The protagonists bond over their love for true-crime podcasts and soon band together to create their podcast about solving the mystery of a neighbour's murder.

Just like the titular podcast, the investigation starts as a hilariously haphazard endeavour- digging through trash to light breaking, all of which soon gains traction with thrilling plot twists, red herrings and plenty of betrayal along the way. Taking multiple fourth-wall-breaking pokes at the love for true crime and podcast culture, the series shows its awareness of the viewer's true crime addiction as they try to solve the murder

from beyond their screens.

Where the series truly triumphs is through the characters. Separate peculiarities and backstories paired with a collective sense of podcast glory make for a captivating team that draws in the audience right from the start. Instead of limiting the narrative to the main three, the series doesn't shy away from handing over the centre stage to the supporting characters. From a true-crime wary police detective to the deaf son of the podcast sponsor (in a nearly dialogue-less yet deeply absorbing episode) to the point of view of podcast superfans, Only Murders in the Building gives the audience plenty of change in perspective. And that clever gamble pays off well when all the threads come together at the end.

Beyond the plot and acting, Siddhartha Khosla's melodic score for the series is hauntingly dreadful while at the same time fondly nostalgic. Paired with the setting of a vintage courtyard complex in modern-day New York, the ambience gives off a sense of belonging

and familiarity. The characters are peculiarly eccentric and yet relatable to city-dwellers living close still miles apart emotionally. And therein lies the subtle message of Only Murders in the Building - people being separated by their own lives coming together as parts of the whole.

With stellar ratings, three Golden Globe nominations and binge-worthy episode durations, Only Murders in the Building is a treat for lovers of true crime who don't mind the laughs while the greater puzzle is pieced together and justice is served.

A triumph of casting, scriptwriting and quirky meta-layering, the series is a gem of a show that can deliver a serious message without breaking away from the playfulness. It can draw you in with the silliness and also push you out with self-reflections on modern-day loneliness. With a cliffhanger of an ending setting the stage for another season, Only Murders in the Building is a must-watch for true crime aficionados.

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