

# Watching Watchmen

*Watchmen* is a very entertaining, interesting, and very graphic take on the world of superheroes. The movie is adapted from a one shot 12-issue comic series released in the 1980s. The setting is an alternate world circa 1985 in which President Richard Nixon is still in office (apparently, the 22nd amendment was appealed). Instead of the disgrace of Watergate, Tricky Dick's actions concerning Vietnam painted him a hero.

The masked heroes of the piece are in danger of being outlawed by order of the president. One of these, the Comedian, is murdered. The rest of the members of the disbanded group of characters, known collectively as the Watchmen, investigate to determine who was behind the death of their fallen comrade.

During the movie there are flashbacks which delve into the past of each hero. Silk Spectre, Nite Owl, and Ozymandias are the supporting heroes but it is the mysterious Rorschach and the tragic Dr. Manhattan who held my fascination throughout. Rorschach wears a mask that continuously changes revealing different ink blots (his own personal Rorschach test, yes?). Dr. Manhattan started life as a physicist but following a catastrophic nuclear accident was transformed into a blue, glowing mutant with several powers (oops... and for the most part, naked with glimpses of all his outer extremities... not enough to warrant anything but the R-rating). Some of the good guys are so conflicted that it is difficult to say that they are indeed heroic or just as evil as the people they fight.

As I touched upon, there is a lot of graphic violence here. Lots of crunching bones, blood, and slo-mo action. One scene involves a baddie having his henchmen's arms sawed off his body. Definitely not for the young or squeamish. Plus, the nearly three hour film could turn off some people, but I

enjoed it. A very different comic hero film.