**Unknown**

PG-13

113 Minutes

Rating: ****

Dr. Martin Harris doesn’t have any reason to doubt his sanity. He’s a respectable scientist who, along with his beautiful wife, Elizabeth, has just arrived in Berlin to participate in a research conference. But when the taxi he is riding in is blindsided and knocked into the cold river, Martin’s life is turned totally upside down. He comes to days later, only to find that Elizabeth, who was checking them into their hotel while Martin was having his accident, doesn’t know who he is—or at least won’t admit it. Even worse, Martin himself has been replaced—by another Dr. Martin Harris. Martin’s doctor assures him that mental trauma, including amnesia, is common following a serious accident, but Martin knows who he is. Doesn’t he?

*Unknown* isn’t the most original movie ever—the basic plot has been recycled several times, from *Total Recall* to *Salt*—but it is nonetheless a remarkably well-executed thriller that in many ways surpasses its predecessors. The great Liam Neeson is terrific as the confused and at times panic-stricken Martin, and even as it becomes clear that he may not be what he—or the rest of us—thought he was, Martin remains an intensely heroic protagonist. January Jones is well-cast as Martin’s inscrutable wife, and Diane Kruger is a real standout as Gina, the cab driver who happens to be driving Martin around when he is knocked out and nearly drowned. Gina, an illegal immigrant with plenty of her own problems, saves Martin’s life and then disappears into the crowd. Martin knows she could be the key to whatever has happened to him, and sets out to find her. Neeson and Kruger have a great chemistry, and their relationship develops believably from the maze-like story, in which new secrets are hinted at around every new corner. Aidan Quinn, a very underrated actor, is solid as the “new” Martin Harris, as is Bruno Ganz as a German private investigator Martin turns to for help.

*Unknown* is a complex, suspenseful roller-coaster of a film that boasts a sophisticated script and polished direction. The world of the film is engrossing, as is Martin’s quest for the truth about himself and everything he knows. The winter streets of Berlin, cold and flecked with snow, the streets dark and gloomy, provide a perfect *film noir* setting. If *Unknown* isn’t original, it is still excellent.