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Just 7% of films are directed by women - but the work on show at the Edinburgh film festival proves female film-makers are punching above their weight, reports Clare Birchall

Friday August 31, 2007

[The Guardian](#)

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Jennifer Venditti's documentary about a disturbed but inspiring 15-year-old boy, Billy the kid. Perhaps Venditti shares Billy's feelings: "I'm not a very big fan of politics," he confesses. "I don't hate it, it's just not something I want to get mixed up in." Billy is bullied for his emotional and physical volatility, but he dreams of being a rock star, actor or superhero. The film follows him for a week, depicting his idiosyncratic approach to love, heavy metal and martial arts.

The modest aims of this film are misleading, for the story of Billy resonates as that of an American anti-hero: a loner lost in a fantasy world. The boy has a contradictory relationship with the community in which he lives - at one moment he wants to be the local vigilante, at another he describes how a cheerleader made his life "a living hell". Without his mother's level-headed guidance, Billy could easily be a Columbine waiting to happen. Venditti, has made an unexpectedly important film about ostracism and our strategies for coping with it.

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