

FILM CENTRAL

THE VERDICT ON
HONEST THIEF



BORAT REVIEW

The verdict on the latest Borat
movie: is it worth your time or money?

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BAD BOYZ OF HOLLYWOOD

FEATURING DEVEN POWERS AKA MR. HOLLYWOOD



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FILM CENTRAL



CONTENTS

5 Meet FilmCentral Magazine's top 10 most promising actors of the month:

- 6 Kadir Yeles
- 10 Kae-Mitchell Simms
- 14 Emma Barratt
- 16 Daria Varlamova
- 18 Matthew McKenna
- 20 Dylan Reeves-Fellow
- 22 Maddy Leane
- 24 Jody Lee Harris
- 26 Kirsty McKenzie
- 28 Lambert Majambele

30 Cover Story: One on one with Deven Powers aka Mr. Hollywood

36 The verdict on Borat Subsequent Movie Film: Is it worth your time and money??

38 Movie Review: The Honest Thief starring Liam Neeson

FILM CENTRAL

TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH



TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: MEET
KADIR YELES

Kadir Yeles is a 25-year-old actor who originally based in Melbourne and who's known for playing dramatic roles. Having the experience of being on TV and in-field film, as well as theatre, Kadir has built a solid foundation as an actor. He recently starred in a short film as the lead role of Hamish who has a split personality which truly highlighted Kadir's ability to unleash his talent as an actor. Kadir has also starred in various commercials for high profile companies such as Chemist Warehouse and Panadol and appeared in TV shows such as Channel 10's Blind Date.

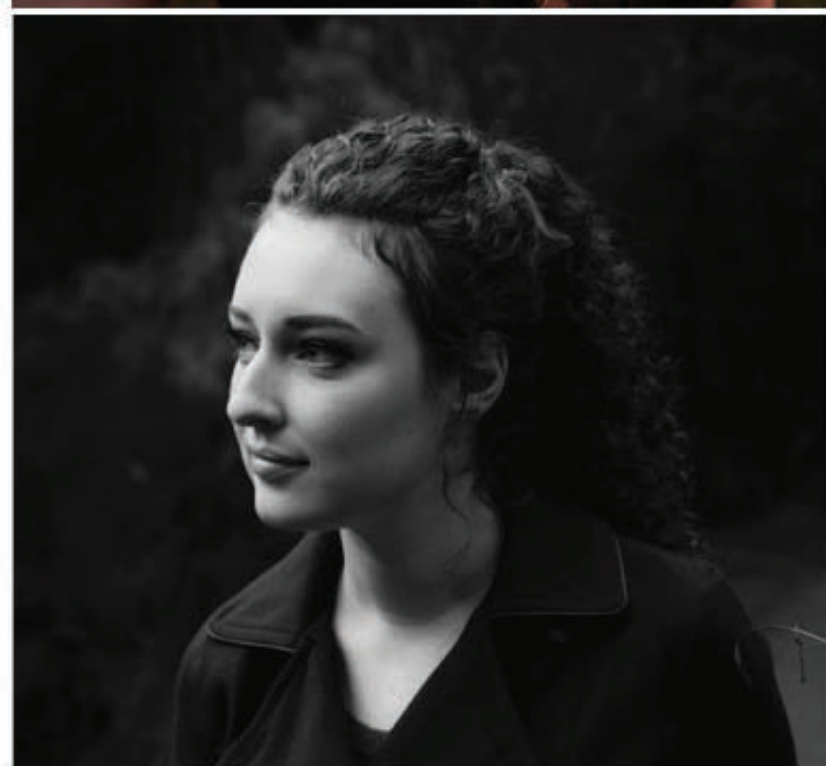
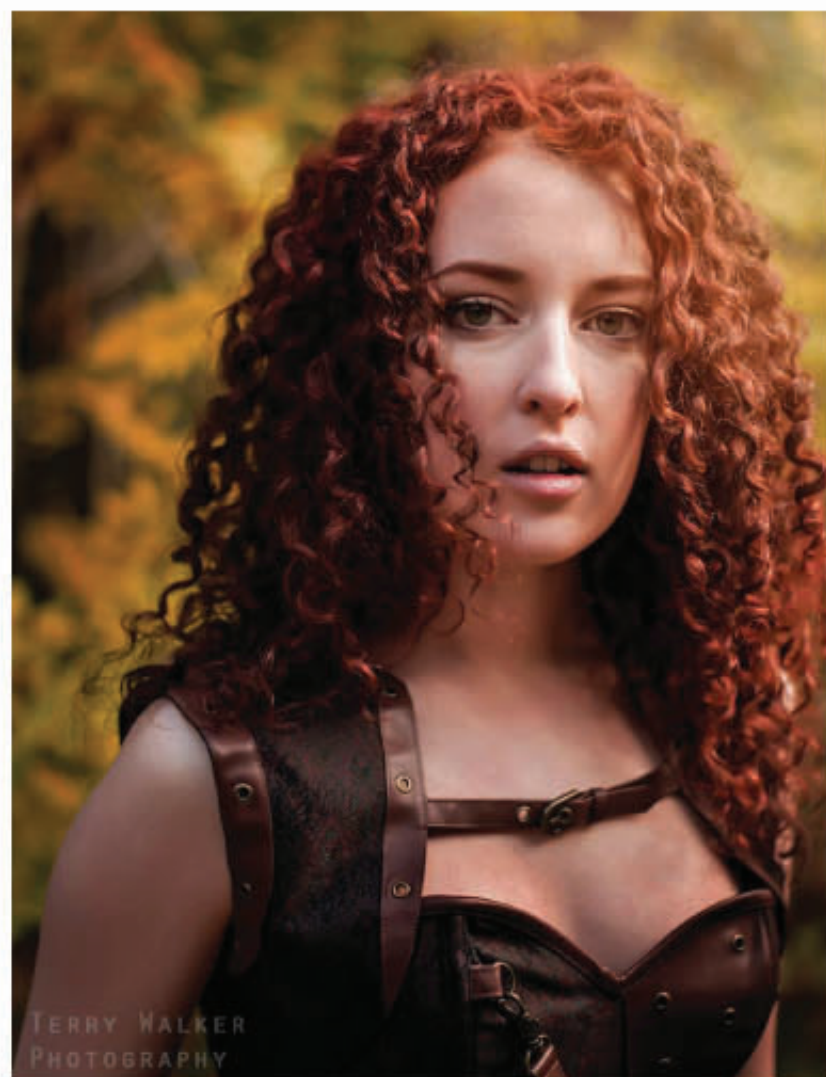


TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: GET TO KNOW KATE-MITCHELL SIMMS

Currently studying screen-acting at The Australian Film and Television Academy (TAFTA), Kate-Michelle Simms has only recently begun pursuing a career in the acting industry. However, that has not stopped the ambitious 26-year-old from already building a strong reputation for herself on both the stage and screen. Kate-Michelle first fell in love with the craft of acting through her involvement in community theatre and has had the honour of playing many diverse roles on stage including Bella Manningham in "Gaslight", Alice Tinker in "The Vicar of Dibley", and Amy March in "Little Women". In 2017 she made her screen-acting debut in the recurring guest role of Sophie on the Aurora Community Channel's cult hit "Pete Boone, Private Eye". Since then she has also appeared as an uncredited school student in the Australian feature film "Book Week" and portrayed roles in several short films currently in post-production. These include the lead role of Candice in "You've Got Me" and the supporting role of Pandora in "The Tame Painter".

Kate-Michelle first fell in love with the craft of acting through her involvement in community theatre.





TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: MEET EMMA BARRATT

Emma Barratt has been an actress since 2016. She fell in love with acting from a young age but suffered severe anxiety around any of the performing arts. After taking a small step into the technical theatre, she then took a massive leap into screen acting by moving to Ireland and studying at Bow Street and the Irish Film Academy. She's currently studying the Meisner technique with the Actor's Pulse. She's been in four short films, a feature, many commercials, live theatre, and even appeared as an extra on the latest season of *Rosehaven*. She has also been a freelance model since she was 18 and has been blessed to do many solo shoots as well as *Country Girl* Management and being a finalist for Miss World Tasmania. She took a short break due to the Coronavirus pandemic and a medical condition that made her forget years of her life (similar to Drew Barrymore's condition on *50 First Dates*) but she has been recovering well thanks to an amazing psychologist. She's now co-producing a feature film in Tasmania with her partner Michael Ballard. Acting is what she aspires to do more than anything else, as she has stories that need telling and people have hearts ready to listen.

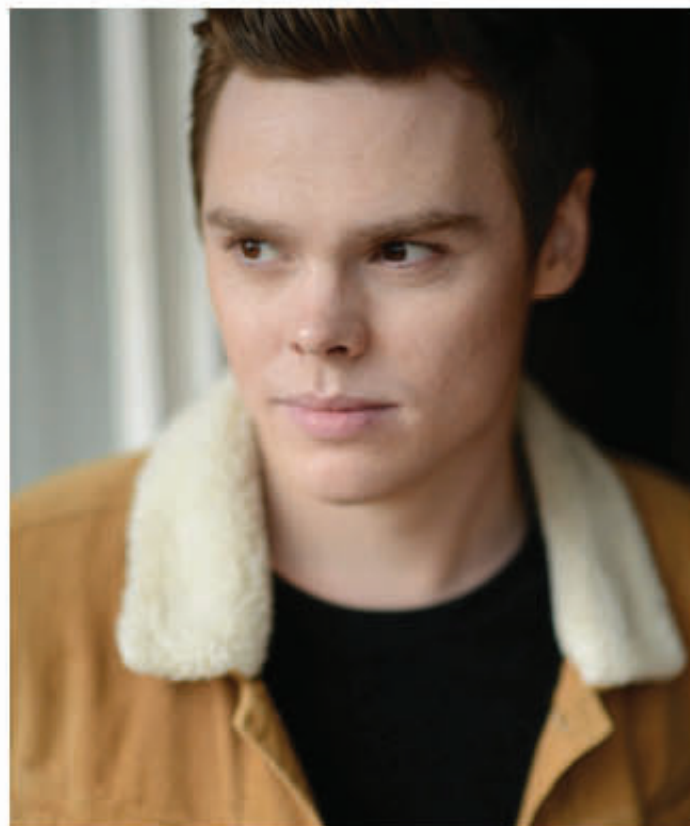


TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: MEET DARIA VARLAMOVA

Daria Varlamova is a Russian-born, Perth-bred, now Melbourne-based actress. She has been a performer from a young age. She first discovered her love for the arts when she put on her own musical theatre performances and she charged her neighbours to see the shows. She vividly remembers dressing up her little brother in drag, having cast him as Cleopatra, much to his dismay.

She attended John Curtin College of the Arts, a performing high school in WA - she was in the dance and drama program. She moved to Melbourne in 2017 to further pursue her passion for acting and the film industry, having appeared in multiple short films, music videos, and most recently a detective TV series on the ABC. She's currently writing and producing a comedy web series and an independent drama feature film, both of which she plans to feature in. The industry can be volatile and there are more actors than work at the moment, so she believes it's important to stay on top of your game and create your own content.





TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: GET TO KNOW MATTHEW MCKENNA

At 24, Mathew McKenna has a decade of acting experience up his sleeve, which is accompanied by experience in various facets of the entertainment industry. At 14, his interest in acting began, and the point when he unequivocally knew that entertaining was what he wanted to do was as soon as he started performing stand up comedy in Sydney at the age of 16. In recent years, he has starred in several short films that have done well on the festival circuits, as well as produced two of his own shorts in 2018. One of those shorts was created for YouTube's Creators for Change initiative, which Mathew was involved in due to his substantial YouTube following. Currently, he has over 25,000 subscribers and amassed a total of almost 3 million views across his videos – he is using this platform to further launch his film career, with a feature thriller film in the works that incorporates YouTube and YouTube culture into the themes. Alongside the thriller feature, he has a documentary feature in pre-production and, last May, he began shooting the third short film he's starred in this year.



TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: GET TO KNOW DYLAN REEVES-FELLOWS

There are multiple lessons that aspiring actors can learn from Dylan's continued success. First, he has a very positive attitude. He views auditions as a chance to challenge himself and explore his character within a scene. Though, not getting selected for a role can make him question his ability, which is one of the worst parts of the acting process. Thankfully, he has a strong support network to encourage him. His parents have been instrumental in encouraging him and allowing him to foster his skills. Thus, Dylan remains grateful for every opportunity that he receives. Though he might only get a small amount of screen time in the finished project, he has still learned a lot from the experience. This will allow him to improve his performances for future roles.

One of the many challenges of being in the acting industry is that people can judge other people based on their outward appearances. This can make it easy for people to get self-obsessed. Thankfully, Dylan has been able to resist this, keeping himself grounded. He does this by focusing on the feedback he receives after each role and constantly trying to improve his performance for the next role.

Dylan Reeves-Fellows is one of the fastest rising actors in the movie industry, consistently delivering great performances. Dylan intends to continue his acting career and finish his Economics and Finance degree at the same time. He also wants to continue building his credits by appearing in a range of projects.





TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: MEET MADDY LEANE

Maddy Leane is a 19-year-old film and television actress who's currently residing in Melbourne, Australia where she is represented by Victoria Jackson Management. Maddy has been acting from a very young age, she started taking classes when she was 8 years old and hasn't stopped since. Although she has been acting since 2008, she has a limited amount of credits, this, however, is all about to change. After spending part of 2019 in America where she completed an acting course in Los Angeles (AAFTA's LA Experience), Maddy created an entirely new outlook on her career. From her amazing teachers and mentors, she learned more about acting, herself, and what she specifically wants from her career and she is now in a position where the world is at her fingertips. Currently, Maddy is taking classes, saving money in order to make the move to Vancouver and she's currently in pre-production for a short film she has written, and co-produced with fellow actor Nelson Blattman, and is set to star in.





TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: MEET JODY LEE HARRIS

Originally from London and now residing in Melbourne, Jody has many years' experience in leading roles within independent films. Jody's credits include the AACTA and Logie award-winning ABC TV Show 'Utopia' in which Jody starred opposite Rob Sitch. She also worked on the re-voicing for the popular Hotel's Combined Australian commercial which was sent to the UK audience. Jody completed NIDA's Screen Actors Studio 1 Year program in 2017. Last year she played Brittney in Benny Goldman's upcoming film 'Mission Control', in which he changed the character to a female to have her in the film. She recently worked on the new Miss Fisher & the Crypt of Tears feature film, supporting with voice acting for post-production. In her spare time, Jody likes to see films at art house cinemas and enjoys going to the theatre.





TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: MEET KIRSTY MCKENZIE

Kirsty McKenzie is an actress, with Scottish blood, causing mischief in Sydney with an accent that no one can place. She was originally supposed to be a veterinarian – possibly even a surgeon/doctor or a scientist. However, starting her adventure in Sydney changed all of her plans, and she has never looked back.

After literally stumbling onto the set of *Mad Max Fury Road* as a featured extra, she discovered a world of creativity and limitless imagination and she has been hooked on film ever since. She has won acting awards (Best Actress for *Rearview* and Best Supporting Actress for *Brainless Killers*), completed two indie feature films, survived as a lead in a Shakespeare stage play and she's even had her ass kicked in stunt and fight training (more than once). Through it all, she has been rejected, she has been accepted, and she's made the most incredible friends and have experienced things she never thought possible while constantly being amazed at opportunities she didn't think existed.

What she lacks in skill, she makes up with an endless tenacity and a thirst for knowledge (as well as a dark sense of humour). She has been so incredibly lucky in her acting career and she's grateful to all of those who have been part of the adventure thus far.

TOP TEN ACTORS OF THE MONTH: GET TO KNOW LAMBERT MAJAMBELE

Lambert is an actor, model, dancer, and writer born in Burundi in 1993 and moved to Tanzania at age of 3. He moved to Brisbane Australia at age of 14 and he's now living in Sydney, Australia since 2019 to continue pursuing his dreams.

He landed his first extra job at age of 19 For Mako: Island of Secrets (2013). Ever since then he's been involved in feature films such as Thor: Ragnarok (2017) & The Family Law TV (2017), Unlisted TV (2019).

Entertainment is a feeling that has always been part of Lambert's heart and all he wants is to express that feeling. To achieve that dream he's goals are, always participating and undertaking any work necessary, challenging to be the best version of himself, and always looking forward to work on future projects.



“My strong points as an actor are my work ethic and my ability to jump into character at the drop of a dime.”

Photo Credit: Andrew Hornsli
Arrows Media and Entertainment

RISING STAR SPOTLIGHT: GET TO KNOW DEVEN POWERS

Born Deven Lavale Purifoy on February 27th, 1983 in San Bernardino California; Deven Powers aka "Mr. Hollywood" is the 10th child out of 14 children. His father was a pastor and his mother is an amazing gospel singer. Deven started playing the drums at just 9 years of age, and at the age of 13, he was given his very first drum set by a member of the legendary Gap Band. At age 13, he also became California's state drummer in his church congregation. When he became a freshman at Rancho Verde High School in the city of Moreno Valley, California, Deven joined the marching band which eventually went on to win several championships.

Fast forward to today, Deven Powers aka "Mr. Hollywood" is currently the host of the LA Live Film Festival from 2018 through to 2020. He's also the founder and CEO of the Black Film Festival in Los Angeles. When it comes to the high life, Deven is definitely living up to it, hence you can catch him on the cover of High Life Magazine's highly anticipated Hollywood issue. When Deven's not gracing the cover of magazines or hosting red carpet events, he's hosting the "Mr. Hollywood TV show" which airs on AT & T, channel 99 in U-Verse, and channel 32 in Charter Spectrum.

FilmCentral Magazine recently caught up with Mr. Hollywood to discuss his journey in the entertainment industry and here's what went down:

Can you tell us more about yourself? How did you get started in the entertainment industry?

My name is Deven "Mr. Hollywood" Powers. I was born and raised in Southern California and my father was a pastor and my mother is a Legendary Gospel Singer. I got my start in the entertainment industry doing 'extra' work in Hollywood for various TV shows, movies and commercials.

What do you like most about acting?

I love the challenge of jumping into different roles.

How different is it to act in a movie and to act in a TV series? And which one do you prefer?

Well, it's very different. You see, acting on a TV series is more on the spot with less time to prepare and get into character... In movies, you have more time to prepare and practice the script and perfect the character to nail the scene spot on. I love acting in movies because I love to take my time to execute the part given to me perfectly!

What are your weak points when it comes to acting? How do you try to improve them?

My weak point is the fact that I'm a perfectionist and because of that I get over-anxious and this anxiousness can lead to anxiety. It's kind of a gift and a curse. I want everything that I do in life to be done perfectly. What I do to improve them is the fact I'm learning to become more patient through prayer and meditation. As an actor I'm pretty versatile - I can take on any character and any role at any given moment.

What are your strong points as an actor?

My strong points as an actor are my work ethic and my ability to jump into character at the drop of a dime.

What have you learned from the directors that you have worked with throughout your career?



Working with directors in Hollywood, I've learned first, and for most that you have to have tough skin working in this business; you have to develop a strong unmovable belief in yourself. Regardless of how many doors get closed, you have to move on and still continue to progress.

What are some of the difficulties of the acting business?

The limitations others try to put on you... Sometimes casting directors try to typecast you and say you only fit this type of a role. Another difficulty actors and artists in general run into is finding the right agent and manager.

What's challenging about bringing a script to life?

The only difficulty I find about bringing the script alive is catching the beat of the character and the rhythm of the script. Once I get a feel it's game over - I can basically get creative and make this character real.

What do you do when you're not filming?

Well I'm an artist so when I'm not filming I'm writing movie scripts, recording music, writing poetry, working out, and I'm contemplating new business ventures.

What has been the most memorable experience of your career so far?

I would have to say working on the Bad Boyz of Hollywood working alongside Khalil Kharraz if you guys get a chance go check out his latest movie "Redemption Day" where he did the entire fight choreography for that project along with The Bad Boyz of Hollywood.

Who have been the most interesting people you've met so far?

That's a great question. Definitely my friend Khalil and I would have to say my business partner and my team at Big House LA.

If someone is going to make your life into a movie, who would play you?

I would have to say either Jamie Foxx or Michael B Jordan either actor would get the job done.

What are your future plans? Inside your career or out of it.

Well, I plan on taking over Hollywood and the music industry in 2021! Outside of that, I plan on starting a Street Basketball League this Summer called the NSBA TOUR. I also plan on building our Bighouse LA brands Discover My Music Radio, Black Film Festival Los Angeles, Mr.Hollywood Magazine, and Ms.Hollywood Magazine not to mention the Mr.Hollywood TV Show that's coming soon to Amazon.





Editorial credit: Everett Collection / Shutterstock.com

Movie Review:

BORAT SUBSEQUENT MOVIE FILM

2020 has been a miserable, horrible year and one section that has been struck with countless complications and delays is the movie industry. With so many big titles sidelined to streaming services or just getting outright pushed back further and further, there have been very few pieces of cinematic scraps for theatergoers to appreciate and attend. The world needed a pick me up and bad. Luckily for us and much to our surprise, Sacha Baron Cohen had secretly filmed and completed a sequel to his polarizing persona, Borat; entitled "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm." Very few knew this film had been made and its release on Amazon Prime took everyone by surprise. Despite his crass signature brand of humor, Cohen's resurrection of his iconic 2006 role may be just the comedic shot in the arm everyone quarantined at home needed.

This time around, Borat returns to the America with his daughter Tutar Sagdiyev (Maria Bakalova) in hopes of offering her as a "marriage gift/proposal" to Mike Pence in order to improve his image with his homeland country of Kazakhstan. What transpires is Borat's return to the public eye and learning to adjust and foster his unique brand of comedy/public exploration skills in a world ravaged by a pandemic, a presidential house rife with controversy and all around; trying to bring a few smiles and laughs in a movie that no one asked for, but turns out, we all actually needed.

"Borat," much like Cohen's specific brand of humor, is an acquired taste to say the least. His polarizing characters have generated controversy and comedy alike and this new film is no exception to either. While most of the gross out nudity and sexual humor from the first film is still present, it's been toned down quite a bit and successfully uses it without relying on shock value to deliver the brunt of the gags. Most of the "story" relies in hitting on point political and social issues that have been dominating our society since Trump became president, and have since escalated in wake of the all-consuming pandemic crisis. Never have the jokes hit more perfectly nor have they felt so deliciously well timed than in this gloriously immature sequel. To even speak or describe most of the film's side splitting jokes would ruin the punchline and dampen the enjoyment experience for anyone curious to give this film a much needed look.

Even one of the most well-known characteristics of the character of Borat (mocking/fearing the Jewish community) is given a serious and more respectful lens by film's end, which is something I was not expecting in the slightest. The standout scene stealer is actually not Cohen himself but his "daughter." A newcomer to the scene who has remarkable comedic timing and creates an absurd and amusingly occasionally touching dynamic with Cohen in some of the most unusual daughter-father bonding moments. But really, it's the wild reaction and ugliness in certain circles that Cohen exposes that really amplifies the humor and awareness in our society; even during times as stressful as these does this prove how effective humor can be.

My only slight criticism would be the slight feeling of having the father/daughter issue being forced for the sake of making a cohesive story seem sensible. The original Borat film made no effort to disguise the film as anything else than Cohen in a costume and weird accent obtaining wild reactions on tape. Even when the original film did try and craft a story, it was always and rightfully sidelined for the physical and adult humor you expect and hope to see. At times the story elements can feel so absurd (as intended) that their earnest take on it works to the film's advantage, but sometimes, it drags on too long and lingers a bit more than it needs to be. You should always stick to your talents and not strive to be something else, especially when you're making a mockumentary parody film from a character from over 15 years ago.

Overall, "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm" is an early Christmas present that the world can and should enjoy if you happen to have the means of seeing it. All of the flaws and fumbles of the original film have been toned down or updated with far better, more on point relevant humor that perfectly encapsulates people's collective thoughts regarding this year's disastrous turnout. It hits practically every mark, reflecting so much back at us through an ingeniously crafted comedic lens and even manages to grow and expand beyond the limitations of its predecessor. The sappy family story didn't need as much attention as it thought it did but it's a minor gripe at best. Love Cohen, hate him, trash his movies; whatever you want, this one is no joke.

Rating 4/5 Stars

Movie Review:

HONEST THIEF

With so many big tent pole movies getting shoved off to be released god knows when or reduced to a measly direct to streaming service, my local theater could only offer re-showings of classic films or whatever slim pickings was left to put up. Usually I know about movies years in advance due to my diligent research but lesser, small sized films tend to slip through my radar and I end up not knowing much about them when they come out. This year, I barely knew anything about majority of the movies being released; to the point I didn't even watch their trailers and decided to roll the dice and go in blind without knowing anything about the film. "Honest Thief" was my first experiment with that and thankfully, it proved to pay off in the end.

Tom Dolan (Liam Neeson) goes by the name "The In and Out bandit." Over the course of several years, Tom has successfully stolen 9 million dollars from small time banks and has never been caught or identified. But now he's decided to turn himself in to the FBI. He's found love in Annie (Kate Walsh) and wishes to confess and be an honest man spending the rest of his free life with her once he's released from prison. Unfortunately, things get complicated when he tries to turn himself over to two FBI agents (Jai Courtney and Anthony Ramos) and they end up double crossing him and trying to kill him so they can keep the full 9 million for themselves. Now Tom is on the run with the FBI thinking he's fleeing from FBI custody and has to prove his name before he and Annie end up locked up or worse.

Some people go into films with high expectations and some go in with very low expectations, and then you get the people who have zero expectations and just plan to walk in and see what happens without even knowing what the movie is about. Normally that latter strategy is one I avoid as I feel it's important to know what I'm putting my money into before committing to it. "Honest Thief" feels like another run of the mill Neeson lead action flick where he runs around being a middle aged bad ass; proving to be a modern Stallone/Schwarzenegger style star when most of those guys were pulling back when they were Neeson's age. In some ways, this film is pretty predictable for Neeson's standard fare, but with slim to zero expectations, I found myself really enjoying this film even though there wasn't anything truly special here.

Similar in how Disney's "The Mandalorian" approaches storytelling, they take a very simple bare bones concept and make it work with its stellar characters, writing and action sequences. "Honest Thief" is by no means on "Mandalorian's" level but the same principle stands: sometimes simple works and that can make for an entertaining film without being overly complicated. Once Neeson goes to turn himself in, everything goes up in the air and the film launches into a tense, continuously amped up thriller that manages to remain low key but still gripping and surprising. Nothing is grand or outrageously wild but the gravitas and emotional weight of Neeson's story and performance carry the heart and weight of the film effortlessly.

It was a cat and mouse game juggling different lives and characters; constantly keeping you guessing when the other shoe will drop and how it will play out. The chemistry with the FBI agents felt natural, chaotic and understandable; they played off each other and Neeson well. Though some characters (and most of the people who've seen the film) trivialize the aspect of someone turning their lives around for love, I found this to be a very sweet and simple, honest and effective motivator for the events that played out. I'm genuinely pleased to see people still acknowledging that love is not a cliché but a meaningful component of our lives and stories. Kate Walsh was adorable and I loved her onscreen, my biggest problem comes from her romance with Neeson felt rushed and I don't feel she or Robert Patrick got enough respectable screen time.

Overall, "Honest Thief" was a pleasant surprise I was happy to be blindsided by. A lot of how it plays out is by the numbers and certain areas get rushed where they should have taken their time, but the quality of the tension, action and pace kept the movie from being anything but boring. Neeson kills it as always; never delivers a bad performance. Courtney makes a great villain and the simple but sweet story works just enough to make this an enjoyable experience despite the bumps along the way.

Rating 3/5 Stars



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