“UP IN THE AIR” – Decisive exploration of Flights of Fancy (& Casual-ty Problems) =

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- Film Reviews & Interviews [2]

“UP IN THE AIR” – Decisive exploration of Flights of Fancy (& Casual-ty Problems) =

Quotes: " Companies don’t have the balls to sack their own employees. "
"[Drink] some gingko, & let the photos burn. "
" My little road warrior. "
" My dog could fire Ned! "
" I’m like my mother: STEREOTYPE— it’s faster! "
" I type with purpose. "
" We’re here to… make Limbo possible. "
" It’s like firing someone over the INTERNET. "
" Did I make you feel CHEAP? "
" I tell people how to AVOID commitment. "

Question posed: Did you read the book “Velveteen Pirate”? 
" It’s pretty powerful stuff. "
"[I’m the] same guy— just ONE address. "
" Everybody needs a co-pilot. "
" That’s my family! That’s my REAL life! "
" You are… a parentheses… "
" Termination engineer. "
" You [have] yet to hit 10 million. "

MY rating: 9 of 10 stars (based on an advance preview of a 109-minute film scheduled to open 12-04-09 in limited areas & then in wider release later in December).

Normally, I have just a handful of “Quotes” I write down— but this film had so MANY intriguing and clever ideas & well-written bits of dialogue, I just kept jotting away again & again! I think the Quotes above will give you an interesting “overview” of the film & its tenor, & I’m now gonna work to “fill-in” some more about it:

… Ryan Bingham (GEORGE CLOONEY) is what I early-on described as a “TERMINATOR”— a guy working for Career Transition Company who’s hired by outside firms to tell their own workers they’re “THROUGH” as employees. (Later in the film, they mention the job-description title I used above, & then how they learned to purposely “revise” it to a line I put in the “Quotes” section)...

… George has learned how to do the firing in a hidden, purposely “NON-SPECIFIC” way: the personnel are told they’ll get a “package” that purportedly explains how they’re going to supposedly be “helped” to find some unclear “FUTURE” work that’ll presumably provide great “satisfaction” for them (purposely NOT telling them that it’s likely to be found beside the great “Pie in the Sky” —seemingly to be encountered close to the “12th of NEVER”)...

… George LOVES his job of flying around the country to visit other companies (to the tune of like 150,000 miles a year): it allows him a massive level of “FREEDOM”, an ability to periodically give well-paid motivational SPEECHES about how to “travel” thru life, lets him live a “CASUAL” lifestyle (relationship-wise), & especially helps him get closer to his big “goal” of achieving 10 million Frequent Flyer miles with a certain [often-product-placed-in-the-film] airline company (represented by a Captain played by SAM ELLIOTT).

… George’s boss Craig Gregory (JASON BATEMAN) wants to save money in this “down” economy, & hires a sharp young Cornell grad Natalie Keener (ANNA KENDRICK) who’s come up with a way to deal with employees of their client firms over the INTERNET rather than having to pay for a lot of long-distance trips to see them in person...

… George DOESN’T LIKE the idea of giving up his frequent traveling, & is firmly AGAINST the new plan. Jason thus decides to send concieved know-it-all Anna on trips WITH him to better “learn” how things had been done & to “field-test” her new program…

… As they flit around the nation, George shows the feigned “compassion” he’s mastered in eliminating employees over the years. We’re shown numerous examples of his work & the various usually-depressed RESPONSES he’s learned to deal with, from people such as Steve (ZACH GALIFIANAKIS), Bob (J.K. SIMMONS), & numerous unfamiliar faces...

… As Anna takes over, she learns how HARD it can be to deal with people whose lives have been shattered, fears & threats they express, etc… And, she eventually meets a heavy-travelling lady FRIEND George has made, Alex Goran (finely played by VERA FARMIGA), who’s as keen & easy-going as George is (& as in-love with frequent-spender perks)... They both have to COMFORT Anna when a personal problem arises in one of her own relationships...

… In the midst of the fore-mentioned ongoing story lines, you also have George making efforts towards attending the wedding of his youngest sister Julie (MELANIE LYNSEY), & is encouraged by older sister Kara (AMY MORTON) to try to “help” things by talking with her intended husband-to-be Jim (DANNY McBRIDE)…
Will the wedding come off hitch-less?… Will Anna's internet program be ADOPTED by George's company?… Will George have an expanding relationship with Vera?… What will “BECOME” of George?!

This is an exceptionally WELL-DONE film, with sharp & charming performances, a wonderful “His Girl Friday”-type quick-“patter” between George & Vera, a slew of thoughtful “commentaries” on today’s working-world atmosphere, & just a deep PLEASURE to deal with. (While George & Vera might well be worthy of Oscar nominations for their work, since it involves an often-serious subject having some periodically-“comic” overtones, that might be a “difficult” combination to be “accepted” by the nominators)...

In any case, I heartily RECOMMEND the film for its exceptional level of quality work…

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