

Film Review: Mark Wahlberg's 'Contraband' Steals Half Justice From Icelandic Conquest

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on January 14, 2012 - 3:46pm

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CHICAGO – One way to craft an unforgettable, undeniably adept film is to make a new one. Hollywood views that as financially risky, though, and it often doesn't happen without being based on a book with a built-in audience or a film that's already an international box-office success.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

Just like the Swedish smash hit "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo" was recently remade for U.S. audiences by David Fincher of "The Social Network" fame, producer and star Mark Wahlberg found financial worth – and he'd sell you on artistic, too – in the international remake route. He's hoping he'd earn U.S. assurance from what recently worked in Iceland.

While U.S. audiences were well aware of Fincher's hijacking from Sweden, "Contraband" being a U.S. remake of Iceland's "Reykjavík-Rotterdam" is lesser known. That film most Americans can't pronounce is one of the biggest-budget Icelandic films of all time and it features an all-star cast of Icelandic cinema. The original film's lead actor, Baltasar Kormákur (a successful director in Iceland), interestingly took on the role of director for "Contraband".



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"Contraband" couldn't have had a more predictable plot evolution. Guy (Wahlberg) has a skill (smuggling cool stuff), but he's sworn no longer to use it because of its ramifications. Smoking-hot wife (Kate Beckinsale) doesn't approve of said guy's skill because it doesn't prove a good role model for the kiddies or mark him as a buttoned-up guy to bring home to mommy. Best friend (Ben Foster) pretends he's a trusted partner in crime, but shockingly, he's a double crosser.

And, of course, "Contraband" justifies its "A"-list status because our hero's said skill is forced to be put to use even though he's promised to said smoking-hot wife that he's given it up for good. But it's OK, folks, because he's only doing it "one last time" and it's in earnest since it's for his smoking-hot wife's naughty, amateur smuggler brother. We're made sleepy by this "protagonist must do his dirty work once more to save his family from the bad guys" plot.

"Contraband" stars Mark Wahlberg, Kate Beckinsale, Giovanni Ribisi, Ben Foster, J.K. Simmons, Diego Luna, Robert Wahlberg, Lukas Haas, Jaqueline Fleming, Caleb Landry Jones, William Lucking, Monica Acosta, Michael Beasley, James Rawlings and Connor Hill from director Baltasar Kormákur and writers Aaron Guzikowski and Arnaldur Indriðason. "Contraband," which is rated "R" for violence, pervasive language and brief drug use, has a running time of 110 minutes and opened on Jan. 13, 2012.



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Mark Wahlberg stars in "Contraband".
Image credit: Patti Perret, Universal Studios

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