

Film Review: Funny, Political ‘The Dictator’ with Sacha Baron Cohen

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 15, 2012 - 7:47am

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CHICAGO – Ali G, Borat, Bruno and the Stationmaster Guy in “Hugo” is now “The Dictator.” Sacha Baron Cohen puts on another character mask and produces his usual style of cheap laughs with a surprising sense of political sharpness. Anna Faris and Ben Kingsley go along for the ride.



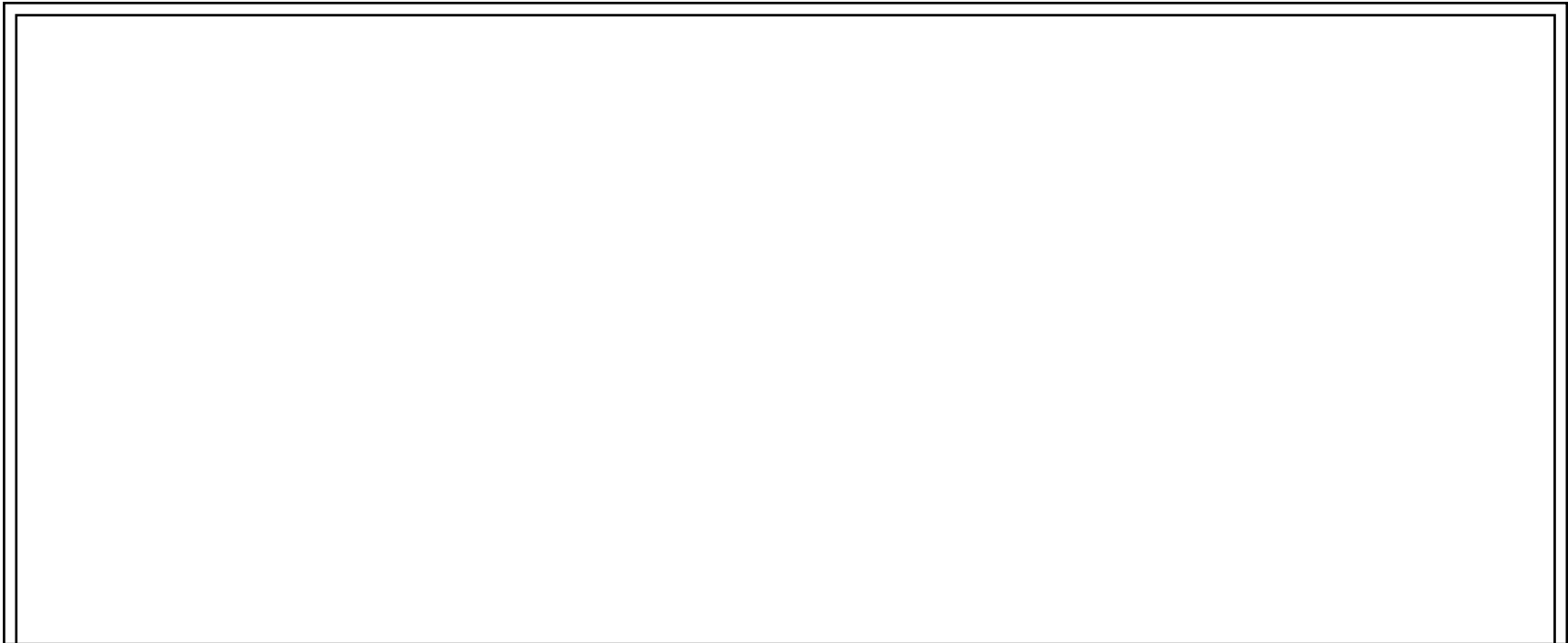
Bottom line, this is a funny film, with an economical story that punctuates the laughs with both whoopee cushion-type gags and a sordid excess that pushes the nose of USA hubris right into its own excrement. Cohen is a fine practitioner of “Trojan Horse” comedy – while hiding behind an obnoxious character, he is free to point out the hypocrisy of those who are just as obnoxious around him, but are presumably the “good” people. It’s a hit-and-miss strategy, but when it does hit the target, the points are sharp and sink deep.

Sacha Baron Cohen is General Aladeen, the supreme dictator of the oil-rich North African nation of Wadiya. He lives a clueless life of wretched excess and egotistic folly as the self-centered overlord of a fearful nation. When he’s not sleeping with a bevy of celebrities, including Megan Fox, he is developing nuclear weapons to collect even more power. This causes the United States to get involved, and they want him in New York City to speak at a session of the United Nations.

Unbeknownst to the General, his closet advisor Tamir (Ben Kingsley) is plotting to overthrow the government. Right after they arrive in New York, Tamir sets up a double to replace the dictator and captures Aladeen with the intention of having him killed. The tyrant manages to escape, but he is left in the American city without money, power or his signature beard, which has been shaved off. When Aladeen tries to expose the overthrow, he is mistaken for a protester, and is adopted by a kindly hippie named Zoey (Anna Faris). Now the Dictator must team up with an ex-countryman named Nadal (Jason Mantzoukas) to get back what is rightfully his.

“The Dictator” opens everywhere on May 16th. Featuring Sacha Baron Cohen, Ben Kingsley, Anna Faris, John C. Reilly, Jason Mantzoukas and Megan Fox. Screenplay by Sacha Baron Cohen, Alec Berg, David Mandel and Jeff Schaffer. Directed by Larry Charles. Rated “R”

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Sacha Baron Cohen (General Aladeen) Arrives in 'The Dictator'
Photo credit: Melissa Sue Gordon for Paramount Pictures



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