

Film Review: Hugh Laurie, Catherine Keener in Inconsistent ‘The Oranges’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 4, 2012 - 2:16pm

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “The Oranges” suffers from a common problem in these suburban comedies of error in that it assumes we care about these characters who are essentially less interesting than your actual neighbors. Infidelity, bad parenting, friendships collapsing – they’re happening every day on your street. Films like “The Oranges” may think they’re tapping a vein of picket fence peculiarity like “American Beauty” but the result actually plays more like a Showtime sitcom pilot that never got picked up because it was too boring to maintain week to week.

Vanessa Walling (Alia Shawkat) narrates the tale of the once-close dynamic between her family, including mom Paige (Catherine Keener), brother Toby (Adam Brody), and dad David (Hugh Laurie), and that of the family that lives across the street, the Ostroffs – Terry (Oliver Platt), Cathy (Allison Janney), and daughter Nina (Leighton Meester). The action of the piece revolves around an affair that starts between David and Nina, half his age and someone he watched grow up in his relationship with the Ostroffs. Vanessa, in particular, doesn’t take the family meltdown well given her past rivalry with Nina. The families bicker, the tones shift wildly, and the whole film feels driven by writer agenda instead of actual character.



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “The Oranges” in our reviews section.](#) [13]

Way too much of “The Oranges” is dedicated to plot over character. We never get to know these characters (all of the set-up comes in introductory narration from Shawkat) before their lives are falling apart due to an infidelity that the writer doesn’t even have the guts to allow to happen (they just kiss and are caught before, God forbid, something serious happens) before their carnal desires tear their neighborhood apart. So much of “The Oranges” depends on Vanessa’s narration and not only is it poorly written but an odd choice for an omniscient narrator. She’s constantly telling us about other character’s actions and motives. It’s bad writing.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Oranges” review.](#) [13]

“The Oranges” stars Hugh Laurie, Catherine Keener, Oliver Platt, Allison Janney, Leighton Meester, Adam Brody, and Alia Shawkat. It will be released in Chicago on October 5, 2012.



The Oranges

Photo credit: ATO Pictures

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