

Film Review: Awful ‘Playing for Keeps’ Wastes Talents of Notable Cast

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 7, 2012 - 5:44pm

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CHICAGO – When will the movie universe stop lionizing the upper middle class and their “problems” as a standard for storytelling? The idiotic crawl of “Playing for Keeps” is a prime example of that style, a sad exercise in contradictions that pass for narrative. Gerard Butler, Jessica Biel, Dennis Quaid and Catherine Zeta-Jones get punked by the script.



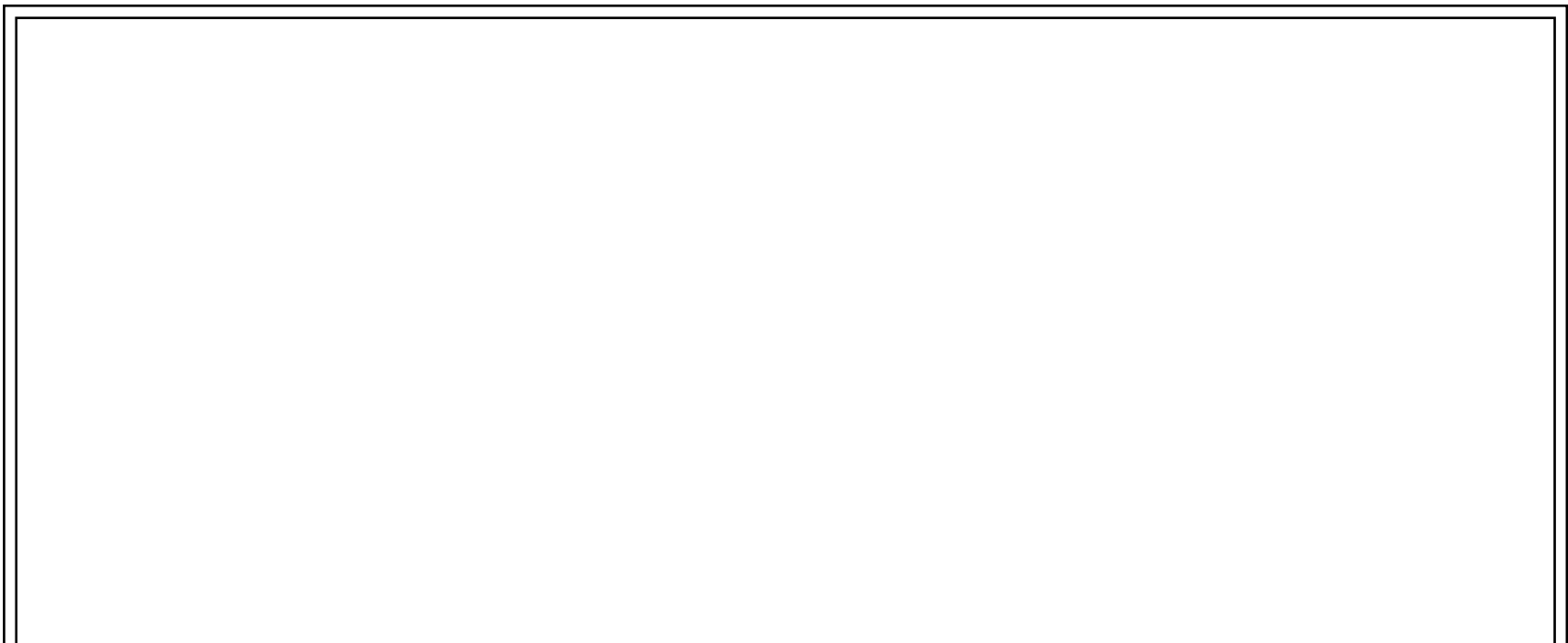
The four actors listed above have been stellar in other films, Jones even having an Oscar on her mantle. They are all getting a bit older, perhaps having issues with getting the right scripts in their agent’s hands. But man, there was nothing on the written page in this movie, unless it was radically changed during production, that would have a sensible and bankable actor give it a whirl. In what could have been the exploration of some current family issues involving divorce, custody and forgiveness, devolves into Gerard Butler getting the opportunity to bed some lovelies – almost including Dennis Quaid – in a suburb that doesn’t exist.

George (Butler) is an international ex-soccer star who has somehow ended up broke and living in Virginia. He has moved there to be closer to his son Lewis (Noah Lomax), and still carries a torch for his ex-wife Stacie (Jessica Biel). George is sort of lost, and there is an interesting scene in the beginning where he is making a bad audition tape in hopes to be a soccer analyst for a local station. His scattershot visitations of his son becomes problematic, and this is solved by having him become coach of Lewis’s soccer team (why he hadn’t been doing that all along is not explained).

This unleashes the ardor of the single divorcees and unhappy wives in the bleachers, including Patti (Uma Thurman), Barb (Judy Greer) and Denise (Catherine Zeta-Jones). Barb wants a fling with George and gets it, Denise wants a fling in exchange for a better audition tape, and gets it, Patti wants to sleep around her husband Carl (Dennis Quaid), but doesn’t get it because her rich man hubby has a tail on her. Carl also befriends George for reasons not explained and gives the soccer coach an expensive car. It’s all just another day in the Virginia suburbs of America.

“Playing for Keeps” opens everywhere on December 7th. Featuring Gerard Butler, Noah Lomax, Jessica Biel, Dennis Quaid, Uma Thurman, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Judy Greer. Screenplay by Robbie Fox. Directed by Gabriele Muccino. Rated “PG-13”

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Players: George (Gerard Butler) and Son Lewis (Noah Lomax) in ‘Playing for Keeps’
Photo credit: FilmDistrict



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