

## Film Review: Lazy, Horrendous ‘Paranoia’ Wastes Talented Cast

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 15, 2013 - 3:33pm

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CHICAGO – Much like 2011’s silly “Abduction” with Taylor Lautner, the title of “Paranoia” isn’t exactly accurate. Just as that previous film wasn’t really about an abduction, paranoia is only a minor aspect of Robert Luketic’s new thriller. It’s more about corporate intrigue, theft, intellectual property, and fear. It’s not really paranoia if your life is literally threatened multiple times. It’s just another inaccurate, buzz-word title. They should have called “Nonsense.” Or “Laziness.” Or “Paycheck.” Whatever they called it, this is an inexcusably awful film, a movie made by people who should know better for an audience that they think will be just barely satisfied enough not to revolt. There’s no sense of craftsmanship or creativity here, just the bare minimum to meet enough clichés to get to the final act and send you on your way. It has all the thrills of a root canal.



Rating: **1.0/5.0**

One of many, many structural problems with the script for “Paranoia” is that lead character Adam Cassidy (Liam Hemsworth) is introduced with little redemptive characteristics other than he takes care of his sick dad (Richard Dreyfuss). He’s not very good at his job, thinks a lot of himself, and screws up a presentation to the point that he gets himself and his friends at tech company Ethion fired. Instead of figuring out how to climb the corporate ladder and earn what he receives by doing so, he takes his buddies out to party on the not-yet-cancelled (and, apparently, unlimited) corporate credit card. He racks up \$16k in party expenses and ends up sleeping with a beautiful marketing exec named Emma (Amber Heard).



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The next day, Adam’s old boss, Nicolas Wyatt (Gary Oldman), comes looking for his money. With the help of right-hand woman Judith (Embeth Davidtz) and muscle Miles Meechum (a hilariously-overacting Julian McMahon), Wyatt essentially blackmails Adam into the world of corporate intrigue. Adam will go to work for Eikon, Ethion’s biggest competitor and the company run by Wyatt’s old business partner, Jock Goddard (Harrison Ford). Again, Luketic and writers Jason Hall and Barry L. Levy lazily shoot themselves in the foot by not setting up what the arc of this character is supposed to be. Is he being blackmailed to a degree that we should see him as a victim of corporate malfeasance? Or is this a tale like “Wall Street” of a young man shown who the other half lives and embracing it? Neither narrative is established and so Adam becomes little more than a selfish jerk, the kind of guy who leaves his friends and moral code behind for a fancy car. But Luketic doesn’t even make that plotline work since there’s no joy in Adam finding the good life.

Of course, “Paranoia” is a film of double crosses and illegal behavior but none of it feels like it takes place in anything resembling the real world. We’re supposed to believe that Wyatt and Goddard are powerful enough to destroy Adam’s life and even kill those he loves and yet their power is often shown by McMahon chasing Hemsworth down crowded streets like an ordinary thug. It’s a film in which we’re supposed to see Cassidy as a genius who never got the chance at a major corporation and yet he does some of the dumbest things you’ll see on film this year, including the most poorly-planned heist in info tech history.



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*“Paranoia” stars Liam Hemsworth, Amber Heard, Embeth Davidtz, Julian McMahon, Josh Holloway, Gary Oldman, Richard Dreyfuss, and Harrison Ford. It was directed by Robert Luketic and opens on August 16, 2013.*



Paranoia

*Photo credit: Relativity Media*

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