

# Film Review: ‘Dallas Buyers Club’ is Highly Romanticized Yet Effective

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 8, 2013 - 9:22pm

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CHICAGO – Matthew McConaughey’s performance as a 1980s-era HIV positive man in the drama “Dallas Buyers Club” is a gangbusters piece of acting. However, some highly exaggerated characters and soft soaping of reality creates a more gauzy romance of the situation than true grit.



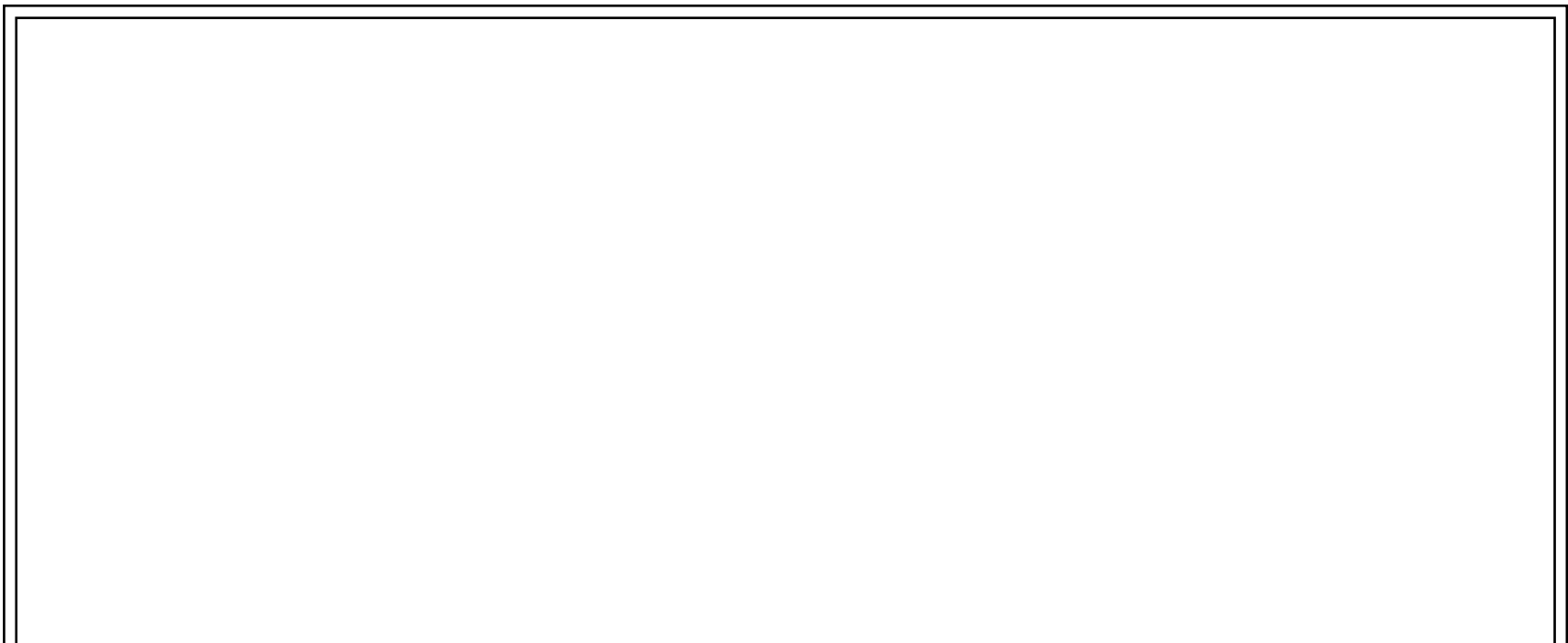
It’s not that this isn’t a compelling story – it is, and it’s based on truth – but there is a Hollywood sheen upon it that has characters miscast, motivations too noble and gay personas too queen-like to feel completely legitimate. It is the 1980s AIDS circumstance that we wished would be, with a noble cowboy taking on the Medical Industrial Complex and the government to provide healing drugs for the HIV population. It wasn’t as easy as that – see last year’s documentary “How to Survive a Plague” – and the medical community weren’t all mustache twirlers. But the film does successfully focus on the screwed-up system that allowed human beings to die because their lifestyles were counter to society and a pharmaceutical/medical bureaucracy that was blinded by money.

A roughneck, hard drinking and heterosexual oil rig electrician, Ron Woodroof (Matthew McConaughey), has been losing weight and health for months. When a workplace accident brings him to a Dallas hospital, he is diagnosed HIV-positive (he had slept with a injectable drug user). Refusing to acknowledge his fate, or his death sentence of 30 days, Ron embarks on more reckless behavior.

It is a sympathetic doctor named Eve (Jennifer Garner) who convinces Ron to begin treatment, but he can’t get his hands on the drug AZT, which was still in clinical trials in 1986. While getting treatment in the hospital, he meets a gay AIDS sufferer named Rayon (Jared Leto), and between the two of them they hatch a plot to run and sell non-FDA approved drugs from Mexico, Japan and Amsterdam. The Dallas Buyers Club is born.

*“Dallas Buyers Club” continues its limited release in Chicago on November 8th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Matthew McConaughey, Jennifer Garner, Jared Leto, Denis O’Hare and Steve Zahn. Screenplay by Craig Borten and Melisa Wallack. Directed by Jean-Marc Vallée. Rated “R”*

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Taking On the System: Rayon (Jared Leto) and Ron (Matthew McConaughey) in 'Dallas Buyers Club'

*Photo credit: Focus Features*



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