

Film Review: Near-Perfect ‘Captain America: The Winter Soldier’ Defies Common Sequel Disappointment

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on April 6, 2014 - 3:34pm

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CHICAGO – If the original is anything to applaud, the sequel usually isn’t. And even more rarely is the sequel actually *better*.

While it’s aggressive to market “Captain America: The Winter Soldier” as one of the “best superhero movies of all time” and more realistic to pitch it as “better than ‘The Avengers,’” it most certainly is 2014’s best action flick yet and it definitely defies common sequel disappointment.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

When I think back on “Captain America: The First Avenger” three years ago, I recall it being *just fine*. I snoozed through a bit of it, I was somewhat underwhelmed by a lot of it and I remember leaving thinking I just got more of the same Hollywood blockbuster formula.

I wasn’t surprised, blown away or boldly thrown off guard by twists and turns I couldn’t have expected. A scrawny nobody gets a high-tech government serum and it’s just like Popeye eating his spinach. Fine. We got it.



[Read Adam Fendelman’s full review of “Captain America: The Winter Soldier”.](#) [24]

But three years later, it drops its initial director Joe Johnston. He has a dartboard of directorial credits including “Hidalgo,” “Jurassic Park III,” “Jumanji,” “The Rocketeer” and “Honey, I Shrunk the Kids”.

Instead, it brings on an even more surprising choice: Anthony Russo and Joe Russo. These guys are known for directing TV comedies including “Community” and “Arrested Development” along with lighthearted films such as “You, Me and Dupree”.

They’ve certainly never taken on a comic-book blockbuster. But with the same two screenwriters inking the sequel (Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely) from the same two comic-book guys (Joe Simon and Jack Kirby) and the addition of Ed Brubaker’s concept and story, the Russo boys are in good hands.

Their mission? Drop our frozen-in-time Captain America into the modern world to battle a new threat from old history. The final product? They mold their well-formed clay with all of the fun, drama, story, action and special effects you can ask for from Marvel and a Hollywood blockbuster.

“Captain America: The Winter Soldier” stars Chris Evans, Sebastian Stan, Samuel L. Jackson, Scarlett Johansson, Anthony Mackie, Robert Redford, Cobie Smulders, Hayley Atwel, Frank Grillo and the typical cameo by Stan Lee. It is directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo with the screenplay by Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely, concept and story by Ed Brubaker and comic book by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. The 136-minute film, which is rated “PG-13” for intense sequences of violence, gunplay and action throughout, opened on April 4, 2014.

 [Continue for Adam Fendelman’s full review of “Captain America: The Winter Soldier”.](#) [24]



Sebastian Stan as Bucky Barnes/Winter Soldier in “Captain America: The Winter Soldier”.
Photo credit: Marvel Studios

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