

Film Review: British Import ‘Alan Partridge’ With Steve Coogan is Just Plain Silly

Submitted by [NickHC](#) [1] on April 26, 2014 - 4:51pm

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CHICAGO – Before earning Oscar nom validation for his “Philomena” screenplay last year, British comedian Steve Coogan led a separate life as Alan Partridge, a dopey media personality who symbolized the danger of empowering clowns like him with a microphone, whether on a news program, a late night show, or in a radio booth.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

A daffy concoction co-created by Armando Iannucci (of HBO’s “Veep” and the satirical film “In the Loop”), the character has bopped around different BBC series for years, until now getting his first feature film. With Coogan given a rare opportunity to show his prowess stateside as a lead comedian (he has appeared in “The Other Guys,” “Tropic Thunder,” and “Our Idiot Brother” in side roles), this British comedy does have a special charm. But even a certified comedian can only take a spotty collection of bits so far.

The latest adventure for Partridge finds him in situation of a sensationalism that even he wouldn’t dream up. His current radio station has taken up new management, which is dangerous for the likes of non-shock jocks like Partridge and his friend Pat Farrell (Colm Meaney). When Pat is sacked (and unknowingly so by Alan’s selfish urging to save his own job), Pat takes the radio station hostage the night of a company party introducing its new, sexy changes (even the new jingle sounds like a shampoo commercial). Alan is standing outside of the station at this time, oblivious to what is going on. Pat treats this as a stand against a culture obsessed with youth and sexing up anything in means of appeal; though he walks around the station with a shotgun, he has great delight in talking about the old days on the radio, having given himself airwave carte blanche.

As the one who is closest to Pat and has the highest chance of communicating with him, Alan becomes a middleman by the police to assess and try to resolve. Given this importance to the crime scene, Alan also stands as a tool for media coverage, figuring out how he can enhance his own brand from this experience, nonetheless at the expense of everyone else’s safety.

American audiences will relate to Alan Partridge as a British Ron Burgundy, a media man whose narcissism is the top story, and whose selfishness toys with fatal consequences. For those who are used to taking him in side-character doses, Coogan shows here the same dedication to character that makes Will Ferrell so popular, with a focus on articulating the specific personality traits that show why perspective doesn’t immediately come with age. Framed as a losing underdog who thinks he is a winner, Partridge is endearing as much as he is a fop, his self-obsession creating a strange sense of sympathy as he creates his own problems for himself.

“Alan Partridge” opened in Chicago on April 25th. Featuring Steve Coogan, Colm Meaney, Tim Key, Karl Theobald, and Felicity Montagu. Written by Peter Baynham, Steve Coogan, Neil Gibbons, Rob Gibbons, and Armando Iannucci. Directed by Declan Lowney. Rated “R”



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Steve Coogan as the title character in ‘Alan Partridge’

Photo credit: Magnolia Pictures



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