

Film Review: 'Wish I Was Here' Will Make You Wish You Weren't There

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 18, 2014 - 11:47am

- [Ashley Greene](#) [2]
- [Focus Features](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [James Avery](#) [5]
- [Jim Parsons](#) [6]
- [Joey King](#) [7]
- [Josh Gad](#) [8]
- [Judaism](#) [9]
- [Kate Hudson](#) [10]
- [Kickstarter](#) [11]
- [Mandy Patinkin](#) [12]
- [Movie Review](#) [13]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [14]
- [Wish I Was Here](#) [15]
- [Zach Braff](#) [16]

CHICAGO – Writer, director and lead actor Zach Braff has put it on the line for his latest feature, “Wish I Was Here.” He infamously used a crowd funding Kickstarter campaign to maintain creative control of the film, but he needn’t have bothered. The movie result is a sappy, high concept emotional manipulator with no basis in authenticity, and that might be the best thing that can be said about it.



Rating: **2.0/5.0**

This film wasn’t something that showcased what makes Braff interesting. Unlike his successful cult film of ten years ago, “Garden State,” Braff casts himself in a circumstance unlike his usual character, and too far from his real life for him to understand it (and he wrote it!). Braff plays a father in this film, but with no chemistry with his kids or wife – portrayed by Kate Hudson – and he disarmingly seems estranged from the family. Some might argue that is the point of the film, but the separation is so vast that the inevitable coming together is forced rather than natural. The whole film is like that – everything feels forced rather than emanating from truth. Braff likes to boast that film took “only” 26 days to make, but once it is viewed that fact is apparent in all the relationships and the connections between the characters.

Aidan (Zach Braff) is a struggling actor, whose wife Sarah (Kate Hudson) holds their children Grace and Tucker (Joey King and Pierce Gagnon) and the family together by working at a soulless job. When Aidan finds out his father Gabe (Mandy Patinkin) is dying, his life takes a turn, and he begins questioning his choice of career, his past life, his religion and his relationships.

He seeks out his brother Noah (Josh Gad), a loner geek holed up in a trailer, and begs him for reconciliation with the dying patriarch. He wants to mend fences – literally and figuratively – with this children, and of course he wants to understand his father’s journey into the next realm. All the while, his wife is having problems of her own, but what is happening could heal all calamity.

“Wish I Was Here” has a limited release, including Chicago, on July 18th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Zach Braff, Kate Hudson, Mandy Patinkin, Jim Parsons, Josh Gad, Joey King, Ashley Greene and James Avery. Written by Adam J. Braff and Zach Braff. Directed by Zach Braff. Rated “R”



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Aidan (Zach Braff), his Swear Jar and His Kids (Pierce Gagnon and Joey King) in ‘Wish I Was Here’
Photo credit: Focus Features

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- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/wish-i-was-here>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/zach-braff>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/24273/wish-i-was-here-will-make-you-wish-you-weren-t-there>