

Film Review: Lily Tomlin Fuels the Journey Depicted in 'Grandma'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 28, 2015 - 11:05am

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CHICAGO – There is a circumstantial and frank presentation of abortion in the new Paul Weitz film “Grandma,” and it probably could not have resulted the way it did if the story wasn’t anchored by the great Lily Tomlin. She portrays the title character, helping her granddaughter get to the procedure.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

There are some clunky scenes along the way to the clinic, but the film does point toward the emotional element in the choice women make, above and beyond the abortion “issue.” By using Lily Tomlin’s character – a representative of the 1960s, when abortion was illegal – as a contrast to her granddaughter’s fate, is almost to have the whole history of the debate portrayed. The difference is it’s not done with placards and loudmouths, but through the very human decision that has to be made – difficult, unfortunate and vital to provide. Despite some über surliness by the curmudgeonly drawn Lily character, the humanity on display in the film is important when discussing or debating the hot button topic.

Sage (Julia Garner) is found wandering aimlessly in her grandmother Elle’s (Lily Tomlin) neighborhood. Elle is an academic who published feminist poetry of note in her early career, and is assessing her life months after her same sex life partner has died, and left her to pay off debts that has left little in savings. It is in this scenario that Sage appears on Elle’s doorstep, needing money for an abortion.

Elle doesn’t have sufficient funds, and Sage is too frightened to go to her mother Judy (Marcia Gay Harden), who Elle birthed with her life partner. So Sage and Elle pile into her antique car to seek out money for the procedure. Along the way they encounter Elle’s new girlfriend Olivia (Judy Greer), the cad named Cam (Nat Wolff) who put Sage in her condition and Elle’s ex-husband Karl (Sam Elliott), who still has issues of his own.

“Grandma” is in select theaters, including Chicago, on August 28th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Lily Tomlin, Sam Elliott, Julia Garner, Marcia Gay Harden, Judy Greer, Elizabeth Peña, Nat Wolff and John Cho. Written and directed by Paul Weitz. Rated “R”



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Sage (Julia Garner) and Elle (Lily Tomlin) on the Road in 'Grandma'

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

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