

Film Review: 'Concussion' Can't Quite Tackle its Difficult Subject

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 25, 2015 - 6:56am

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CHICAGO – “Concussion” suffers from what I call the “Moneyball” problem – it’s got an interesting subject matter, but it doesn’t seem to know what to do with it. It doesn’t have enough faith in its own material or its audience, so it stocks up on a lot of off-the-shelf melodrama in effort to avoid digging into what makes the story interesting in the first place. It’s also a movie that chickens out at the end and seems afraid to pick a fight.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

Will Smith plays Bennet Omalu, a highly educated pathologist from Africa who has more degrees than most physicians and is working as a medical examiner in Pittsburgh. Smith gives a highly mannered performance – complete with an African accent – which is a little jarring at first. But Smith seems to be working from the outside in. The character is defined first by his idiosyncrasies, such as talking to the bodies he’s performing autopsies on to try to get a sense of who they were.

Smith seems to let his accent, those idiosyncrasies, and a few nods to faith define Dr. Omalu, rather than getting at the heart of what makes him tick. His life changes forever when a Pittsburgh Steelers Hall of Famer dies and winds up in Smith’s morgue. He performs an autopsy, and on nothing more than an educated hunch he orders a few more expensive tests to find out what years of blows to the head had done to the man.

“Concussion” opens everywhere December 25th. Featuring Will Smith, Albert Brooks, Alec Baldwin, Mike O’Malley, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Arliss Howard, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje, Paul Reiser and Luke Wilson. Written and directed by Peter Landesman. Rated “PG-13”



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Will Smith in ‘Concussion’

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures



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