

Film Review: 'American Pastoral' Should Have Been Put to Pasture

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 21, 2016 - 3:25pm

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CHICAGO – Change can be a frightening part of life and the human experience. It is an unavoidable but often necessary transition for progress. If you fight change or innovation, the stagnation alone will weigh you down and hold you back. "American Pastoral" may deal with the themes of revolution, but that's about all that is revolutionary or unique about this film.



Rating: **2.0/5.0**

Ewan McGregor flexes his directorial muscle for the first time, but the sheer heft of the material proves to be beyond his weight class. Having no prior experience in the director's chair, McGregor does his best with the material given to him. Inheriting the reins of this long troubled project greatly hindered McGregor's chance at a true first impression for his directorial debut. He goes through the motions of leading this project by moving through the most overused filming techniques that film students learn in their first year. Everything from his framing to transitions for the passage of time are part of the greatest hits of any novice filmmaker that has yet to find a style or voice of their own.

What McGregor lacks in a unique voice he makes up for in visual style. He has a clear vision of the aesthetic for the time period and recreates it perfectly. He highlights the idyllic serenity in which our main protagonist views his life by painting every scene with warmer tones and vibrant colors. As he becomes more disillusioned with the reality he finds himself, his world takes a much cooler tone with the once vibrant colors turning into paler versions of themselves. Its something we have seen done many times before, but it shows that McGregor has promise stylistically even if he hasn't figured out how to apply the same technique narratively.

"American Pastoral" has a limited release in Chicago on October 21st, and opens everywhere October 28th. Featuring Ewan McGregor, Jennifer Connelly, Dakota Fanning, Uzo Aduba and David Strathairn. Screenplay by John Romano. Directed by Ewan McGregor. Rated "R"



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Dakota Fanning and Ewan McGregor in 'American Pastoral'

Photo credit: Lionsgate



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