

Film Review: Casey Affleck Anchors ‘Manchester by the Sea’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 25, 2016 - 1:31pm

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CHICAGO – Tis the season for earnest character studies, and Casey Affleck in “Manchester by the Sea” has a doozy. Portraying a Boston guy with a mountain of sadness within, Affleck harbors the range of emotions like a coiled snake ready to strike, but manages to keep it all undercover.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

He portrays a man with reticent high drama, which is the preferred story arc of writer/director Kenneth Lonergan (“You Can Count on Me”). His journey is multi-faceted, involving a dying brother, his teenaged nephew and a ton of issues left behind in his old home town of Manchester, Massachusetts. As in any film drama located near Beantown, there will be hard drinking followed by fights, brother-to-brother loyalty and a wondrous array of Boston accents. The film follows the lead of Affleck’s various inner afflictions, and ebbs/flows based on what happens to him. It leans just north of being like a soap opera, and it is the performances that keeps it above that line.

Lee (Casey Affleck) is a grumpy janitor in Boston, who suddenly receives some stunning news. His brother Joe (Kyle Chandler) has passed away, succumbing to a heart condition that had been diagnosed earlier. This leaves his nephew Patrick (Lucas Hedges) with no kin, and he has been named the guardian. He travels back to his hometown Manchester to make the arrangements.

The films tells both Joe and Lee’s story through flashbacks. Lee was once married to Randi (Michelle Williams), who has stayed in Manchester. Joe’s ex-wife Elise (Gretchen Mol) is estranged from her son, and is a recovering alcoholic, but is now on a Christian path with her new husband Rodney (Matthew Broderick). The situation is complicated by Lee’s past, and his reluctance to take on Patrick is rooted in what had happened to him in Manchester.

“Manchester by the Sea” continues its nationwide release on November 25th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Casey Affleck, Michelle Williams, Kyle Chandler, Lucas Hedges, Gretchen Mol and Matthew Broderick. Written and directed by Kenneth Lonergan. Rated “R”



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Lee (Casey Affleck) and Patrick (Lucas Hodges) Try to Cope in 'Manchester by the Sea'
Photo credit: Amazon Studios

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