

Film Review: Terrible Messaging in ‘The Best of Enemies’ Ruins an Otherwise Serviceable Film

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on April 6, 2019 - 7:48pm

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CHICAGO - According to my YouTube history, unlikely animal friendships would likely be in my top 10 most watched videos, alongside DIY home projects and finding out if that sharp pain means I’m dying. Something as simple as a cat and dog being bffs is adorable, but unlike what “The Best of Enemies” would have you believe, two naturally opposing forces don’t always need to play nice.



Rating: **1.5/5.0**

“Based on a true story” is one of those terms that is thrown around pretty casually when it comes to film. It could mean anything from, “Hey, we’re giving you most of these real events that happened!” to “These real people existed, but we basically made everything else up!” Usually, if the story sounds too good to be true, it likely isn’t. In the case of activist Ann Atwater and former Klan leader C.P. Ellis, the real story is stranger than fiction. “The Best of Enemies” follows the events that eventually lead Atwater and Ellis to become unlikely allies, and later, lifelong best friends. This film offers a rare lesson that just because something is true, doesn’t mean it’s right.

Writer/Director Robin Bissell makes his feature film debut with this look at race, tolerance, and understanding... or at least that’s what he would have you believe. This is where the facts of the film come into play, and while Bissell admirably does little distort them, he fails to provide a compelling enough context or a timely tone for why this story needs to be retold in 2019. As revisionist films like “Green Book” have proven, the American audience is starved for white savior tales that downplay the issues of race just for a neat, amicable resolution that makes (usually the white viewer) feel good about themselves. “The Best of Enemies”, while infinitely less cavalier with the truth than “Green Book”, attempts to elicit that same empty catharsis with a misguided message about the power of compromise in all things.

“The Best of Enemies” opens everywhere on April 5th. Featuring Taraji P. Henson, Sam Rockwell, Babou Ceesay, Anne Heche, and Wes Bentley. Directed by Robin Bissell. Written by Robin Bissell. Rated “PG-13”



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Photo credit: STX Films

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