

Film Review: 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood' is a Cinematic Poem

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 26, 2019 - 9:52am

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CHICAGO – What does Quentin Tarantino think about? That question immediately comes to mind when experiencing his latest film “Once Upon a Time in Hollywood.” QT meditates on TV westerns, the summer of 1969 in Los Angeles and the Manson family, and it’s a tone and mood rather than a story. But it works.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

There is an unsettled nature to the film, much like his last two epics “Django Unchained” and “The Hateful Eight.” There are bits and pieces of a story crossed together in a unique era in Hollywood/Los Angeles, which QT captures perfectly. So with the Charles Manson Family looming in the background, why all the focus on an aging TV cowboy and his stunt double? That’s what Tarantino was thinking about, apparently, in association with all that is going on around them. This movie drew me in, had an absorbing intent – especially within the atmosphere – and ultimately spit me out on the other side with some motivation questions. But this is his best film since “Inglourious Basterds” and properly resides on the mantle of the Tarantino universe.

Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio) was a TV cowboy who had a decent run in the late 1950s/early ‘60s with the series “Bounty Law.” Along for his ride was his stunt double Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt), who has stuck with Rick even as his career declined by 1969, essentially becoming his driver and personal assistant. Rick is still working, but mostly as a heavy in TV dramas, B-movies and the fading western shows.

But Rick did buy a fancy house during his reign as a star, and he has new neighbors. The rising actress Sharon Tate (Margot Robbie) is living with her husband Roman Polanski (Rafal Zawierucha), but the house that has a target on it. Commune leader Charles Manson (Damien Herriman) used to hang out there with previous residents, and directs his followers to break in and enter the home ... to do harm.

“Once Upon a Time in Hollywood” opens everywhere on July 26th. Featuring the voices of Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt, Margot Robbie, Emile Hirsch, Margaret Qualley, Dakota Fanning, Bruce Dern and Al Pacino. Written and directed by Quentin Tarantino. Rated “R”



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Cliff (Brad Pitt) and Rick (Leonardo DiCaprio) in ‘Once Upon a Time in Hollywood’
Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

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