

Drew Barrymore, Justin Long Fall Short of 'Going the Distance'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 3, 2010 - 5:01pm

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Drew Barrymore no doubt is working hard to become Queen of the Romantic Comedy. She has done over ten of them, more if you count “Bad Girls.” (kidding) When recycling themes even the best of them can get redundant when seeing the same actress involved. “Going the Distance” is not even among the best of them.

There is a spin factor in this one. Drew is definitely older (graduate student, lest she actually works) and the language and situations are a more course adult style. Yet the same old rom-com clichés are there – the meet cute (or in this case, drunk), the romancing montage and the Greek Chorus friends/relatives. Add some flat jokes with little basis in reality and the whole thing seems tired.

Drew Barrymore is Erin, a graduate student in Journalism, about to end an internship in New York City. Justin Long is Garrett, an “A and R” man for a record label. Garrett has dumped his latest fling, with nary a regret in the world. It is at this point that he meets Erin, and takes a shine to her that he hadn’t had with anyone before. The catch is she’s moving back to her native San Francisco in a couple weeks. The connection is so strong they decide to have a long distance relationship,

None of their friends or relatives are advising for this type of coupling. Garrett’s pals, Box (Jason Sudeikis) and Dan (Charlie Day), chide him unmercifully, and question his very manhood. Erin’s married sister Corinne (Christina Applegate) is happy to have her back in the Bay area, but doesn’t understand the pining for Garrett. The situation complicates when Erin gets a plum job with the San Francisco Chronicle, so the question of who is going to move where becomes the overriding factor in this long distance romance.



Frequent Flyer Couple: Justin Long as Garrett and Drew Barrymore as Erin in 'Going the Distance'

Photo Credit: Jessica Miglio for © New Line Cinema and Warner Bros. Pictures

It is obvious the script was written with a younger cast in mind, because the same sort of twentysomething drift presides over these thirtysomething characters. Or maybe (doubtfully) the premise is making a statement on post pubescent adolescence lasting far into their thirties. The characters of Box and Dan are certainly candidates for this eternal frat boy stage, saying and doing things that would go over great at a college kegger. Did Box just take a \$300 cellphone and drive it with a golf club? Hilarious, if in context it wasn't sociopathic.

Drew Barrymore has simply gone one romantic comedy over the line, since breathing some new life into the form with 2007's "Words and Lyrics." You'd think a nice girl like her would have settled down by now, but instead she's flying across country pursuing a guy who quite frankly was presented in his previous breakup as a misogynist idiot. There seems to be little chemistry between the pair, which is odd because they were a couple in real life. Emphasis on the "were," depending on which gossip tabloid you're reading. Ouch.

The Greek Chorus, which are always at the beck and call of the rom-com couple, includes Erin's family in San Fran. Besides Applegate, her husband is Jim Gaffigan as Phil, whose lines seem all made up by him, including the observation that a neighborhood is not bad because they have a Boston Market restaurant – the driest joke in the mostly unsubtle parade of one-liners. And many gags depend on the character-being-really-stupid syndrome, like a spray-on tanning bit and an open door policy on a roommate's bathroom function.

[In an interview with HollywoodChicago.](#) [14] first time narrative film director Nanette Burstein admitted that half of the film was scripted and half was "improvisation." There were obvious laugh lines and sight gags that felt improvised, giving the film a after-show-at-the-Second-City feel rather than an organic story flow. Sudeikis and Day in particular were the biggest offenders of the improvisation side, sacrificing character for nibbling wit.



With Friends Like These...: Justin Long, Jason Sudeikis as Box, and Charlie Day as Dan in 'Going the Distance'
Photo Credit: Jessica Miglio for © New Line Cinema and Warner Bros. Pictures

This is not the worse film in the easiest movie category – romantic comedy – to compete in. The couple in their thirties was different, and Drew got to do more than be the ingenue. But it still was dull edged and rambling at times, with a limp 'who cares' ending. This is a movie where if the long distance thing didn't work out it would be damned daring, but we couldn't have that, could we? This is a real life couple! Wait a minute...

There is an old maxim in Hollywood that there are three stages of roles for women in film – girlfriend, wife/mother and district attorney. Drew Barrymore better start practicing her speeches before a jury of her peers, because she has soldiered through her last rom-com.

"Going the Distance" opens everywhere on September 3rd. Featuring Drew Barrymore, Justin Long, Jason Sudeikis, Charlie Day, Christina Applegate and Jim Gaffigan. Screenplay by Geoff LaTulippe and directed by Nanette Burstein. Rated "R"



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