

Robert Downey Jr., Zach Galifianakis Are an Odd Pair in Funny ‘Due Date’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 5, 2010 - 2:27am

- [Danny McBride](#) [2]
- [Due Date](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [Jamie Foxx](#) [5]
- [Juliette Lewis](#) [6]
- [Matt Walsh](#) [7]
- [Michelle Monaghan](#) [8]
- [Movie Review](#) [9]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [10]
- [Robert Downey Jr.](#) [11]
- [RZA](#) [12]
- [Zach Galifianakis](#) [13]



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – There is a strong temptation to lead this review with “Hey, ‘Due Date,’ ‘Planes, Trains and Automobiles’ just called, they want their plot back,” but this Robert Downey Jr. and Zach Galifianakis star vehicle drives on its own strange vibe, part road trip and part comedy that depends on suspension of all reality. Yet it mostly works.

Robert Downey Jr. portrays Peter, an agitated businessman on a trip to Atlanta, hoping to get back to his McMansion in Los Angeles as his pregnant wife Sarah (Michelle Monaghan) is scheduled for delivery. His plans are thwarted by a well meaning schmo named Ethan (Zach Galifianakis), who accidentally switches a bag with Peter at the airport which contains marijuana, and also causes enough of a ruckus on an airplane to put them both on the no-fly list.

Stuck in the rental car lot without his wallet (conveniently left on the plane), Peter accepts a ride from Ethan, who is on his way to Hollywood to be an actor. The straitlaced businessman is immediately put off by the oddball acting hopeful, who prefers to travel with his dog and his dead father’s ashes.

The wacky adventures the two get into is based mostly on Ethan’s complete lack of ethical sense. Separated from his pot at the airport, Ethan makes a pit stop in Birmingham to buy some more from Heidi (Juliette Lewis), but spending all his money on weed leaves the pair without cash. After a raucous encounter with a Western Union representative (Danny McBride), Ethan also wrecks the car after falling asleep at the wheel.



Couple’s Therapy: Robert Downey Jr. as Peter and Zach Galifianakis as Ethan in ‘Due Date’

Photo credit: Melinda Sue Gordon for © Warner Bros. Pictures

After the accident, Peter manages to call his friend Darryl (Jamie Foxx) in Texas to pick them up and suspects that his longtime friend's relationship with his California wife may have more implications than meets the eye. This naturally leads to an incident on the Mexican border after Peter and Ethan resume their road trip, as they race against the clock to be in Los Angeles for the birth of the baby.

Oftentimes this film is more odd than funny, and contains scenes that are almost cruel in their starkness. It was written by a committee of four screenwriters, including the director Todd Phillips ("The Hangover") and that is never a good sign. Whenever the road trip had its back against the wall, it solved the problem by subjecting Robert Downey Jr. to personal injury, such as their first car accident, which in its realism looked as though no one could possibly walk away from the resulting carnage.

It also relied on the Ethan character being sociopathic to generate laughs and narrative. His pure obliviousness, often explained by his believing that things would work out, made it improbable to believe that anyone would spend one second with the character, much less take a road trip. Galifianakis portrays Ethan very strangely, sashaying as if he were playing a swishy gay persona, which was also distracting.

It is also difficult to recall a film, beyond perhaps the old Cheech and Chong series, that celebrated the lubricating effects of marijuana as much as Due Date did. Ethan kept joking it was for his glaucoma, but the character's obsession with the wily weed made the film almost like a commercial for California's pro-pot initiative. If the film would have come out before election day, maybe Proposition 19 would have passed.

But in the end the film was so different in its eccentricity, that it generated some alternative kind of laughs – especially if one loves the sting of physical injury humor – that it slowly grows to stature. Juliette Lewis, for example, was playing essentially the same character as her hambone portrayal in the recent "Conviction," but this time it worked because of her reaction to Ethan, who mesmerized her with an hilarious monologue from "The Godfather."



Driving Them Crazy: Jamie Foxx as Darryl Gives a Lift to the Traveling Pair in 'Due Date'

Photo credit: Melinda Sue Gordon for © Warner Bros. Pictures

And the film had a slam bang ending, bringing the Ethan character to full circle with both an homage and sting to a popular current TV sitcom. It was as if the whole film was done as an exercise to get to the final joke, which was awe-inspiring in its audacity. By that time Downey was merely a spectator, so at least he didn't have to be beaten down anymore.

And is it possible that the film symbolized the journey of the USA zeitgeist now, with Downey's character representing how we are convinced in the media to think of ourselves, straitlaced potential family values types, racing back to home and hearth. But the true magic in this culture lies with the eccentrics like Ethan, who in the end entertain us in a way that could only exist in America.

"Due Date" opens everywhere November 5th. Featuring Robert Downey Jr., Zach Galifianakis, Michelle Monaghan, Jamie Foxx, Juliette Lewis, Matt Walsh and Danny McBride. Screenplay by Alan R. Cohen, Alan Freedland, Adam Szyziel and Todd Phillips, directed by Todd Phillips. Rated "R"



[14]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [15]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [14]

© 2010 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 24 2024 - 5:54am*):
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/12416/odd-pair-robert-downey-jr-zach-galifianakis-in-funny-due-due>

- Links:**
- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
 - [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/danny-mcbride>
 - [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/due-date>
 - [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
 - [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jamie-foxx>
 - [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/juliette-lewis>
 - [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/matt-walsh>
 - [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/michelle-monaghan>
 - [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
 - [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
 - [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/robert-downey-jr>
 - [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/rza>
 - [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/zach-galifianakis>
 - [14] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
 - [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>