

Ryan Gosling Cannot Save Disjointed ‘All Good Things’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 23, 2010 - 4:45pm

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Having loved Andrew Jarecki’s “Capturing the Friedmans” and having recently named Ryan Gosling the best actor of his generation for his year-best work in “Blue Valentine,” I was psyched to fall for their collaboration on the true-crime thriller “All Good Things.” Sadly, my anticipation quickly turned to disappointment as this muddled work lurched toward a bizarre conclusion. Gosling and co-stars Kirsten Dunst and Frank Langella don’t do anything wrong here but the movie is such a mash-up of tones, fiction, and reality that it never comes together into anything coherent.

Ryan Gosling always finds the most interesting ways to believably present his characters but even he seems a bit lost by what’s expected of him in “All Good Things.” The Oscar nominee plays David Marks, a very-loose approximation of the real Robert Durst, who made headlines when he was accused of mutilating his neighbor. In Jarecki’s film, Durst/Marks is the son of Sanford Marks (Frank Langella), a legendary New York figure who the film suggests is trying to push his son into a life he doesn’t want for himself, especially after meeting the wonderful Katie (Kirsten Dunst).



All Good Things

Photo credit: *Magnolia*

Katie represents to David a way out of his smothering family life. He may be rich, but he’s miserable. The two fall in love, get married, and even open a store called, of course, All Good Things. They seem so happy.

Of course, there's no movie if Katie successfully pulls David from entering the family life of crime and when the young man gives into his father's urges and begins collecting from the seedy businesses that used to populate Times Square, tragedy seems inevitable. Just as the marriage of Katie and David is about to head toward inevitable divorce, she disappears and is never seen again. But that's really just the beginning of David/Robert's odd story.

Murder mystery, young romance, family drama – "All Good Things" is way too many things at one time and yet not much at all. Jarecki brilliantly weaved a number of elements together in "Capturing the Friedmans" but it feels like having to fictionalize major elements of the story of Robert Durst helped this project get away from him. When you have to rename a character from Morris Black to Malvern Bump (Philip Baker Hall) just to meet legal requirements, perhaps it's not a story you should be telling.



All Good Things

Photo credit: Magnolia

Jarecki uncomfortably straddles that line between true crime story and total fictionalization, getting lost in the gap in between and jamming as many elements as possible into this film causes very few of them to register. Just as we're starting to feel the love between David and Katie, their marriage begins to turn disastrous. Just as the family saga is turning Shakespearian, that plot is discarded for David's odd post-Katie saga. The movie never finds an engaging rhythm.

Perhaps Jarecki could have completely discarded the facts of the Durst story and made a stronger film about family drama and possible insanity but the fact is that his subject matter ended his true story in such an unusual way that it doesn't necessarily support a dramatic retelling. The final act of "All Good Things" is a near-disaster because the film never builds to it. Jarecki and his screenwriters start with romance, move to a family crime saga, and end with something out of "Dressed to Kill." Rarely have you seen a major movie with more of an identity crisis. I suppose Durst/Marks had a bit of one himself and so it's oddly appropriate but nonetheless a misfire.

"All Good Things" stars Ryan Gosling, Kirsten Dunst, Frank Langella, and Philip Baker Hall. It was written by Marcus Hinchey & Marc Smerling and directed by Andrew Jarecki. It is rated R and will be released in Chicago on December 25th, 2010.



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