

Owen Wilson, Jason Sudeikis Skate By in 'Hall Pass'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 25, 2011 - 10:47am

- [Bobby Farrelly](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Christina Applegate](#) [4]
- [Hall Pass](#) [5]
- [Jason Sudeikis](#) [6]
- [Jenna Fischer](#) [7]
- [Kingpin](#) [8]
- [Movie Review](#) [9]
- [Owen Wilson](#) [10]
- [Peter Farrelly](#) [11]
- [Richard Jenkins](#) [12]
- [There's Something About Mary](#) [13]



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The Farrelly Brothers' "Hall Pass" is a near-miss for the directors of "There's Something About Mary" and "Dumb & Dumber" that features enough laughs to remember when the boys were in their prime but ultimately doesn't come enough together to get them back to it. With Owen Wilson delivering a pretty lazy performance but "SNL" star Jason Sudeikis balancing it out with a nearly-great one, "Hall Pass" is a hit-and-miss affair that falls too often on the wrong side of that comedy corridor.

Rick (Wilson) and Maggie (Jenna Fischer of "The Office") are happily married. They're in that rut that all married couples will recognize in which kids and family take priority over date night and passionate romance. And the fact is that Rick has got a case of the wandering eyes, clearly wondering what it would be like to stray, even just for a weekend. He's the kind of guy who would never cheat, but can still think about it.

His buddy Fred (Jason Sudeikis) seems the type more likely to step out on his lovely wife Grace (Christina Applegate) although he seems too goofy to get laid in the era of sexting. So, like many Middle-American men, Rick and Fred talk about how much they would pay to bang a Hawaiian Tropic girl (with poker/golf buddies played by Larry Joe Campbell, Stephen Merchant, and J.B. Smoove) and ogle the insanely-sexy chick at the coffee shop named Leigh (Nicky Whelan).



Hall Pass

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

After a few incidents, including one in which the boys are heard acting like morons over a security system, Maggie and Grace decide to do the unthinkable — they give their husbands a week off from marriage. They can do whatever they want; no questions asked. While the boys head off to Applebee's and get stoned on a golf course, the ladies go to Cape Cod and get into some flirtatious situations of their own. Will any of the four cheat on their week off from marriage? Will any of them learn lessons? The answers may surprise you.

"Hall Pass" takes enough left turns that it's refreshing enough to nearly come together. Like the Farrellys did in their prime ("Kingpin" and "There's Something About Mary" are comedy masterpieces), they sometimes find that unexpected joke or plot twist that hits the funny bone in just the right way. There are some very funny scenes, lines, and moments in "Hall Pass."



Hall Pass

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

But scenes, lines, and moments don't make a movie. A comedy works if those elements add up; if they form a cohesive whole that you find entertaining. "Hall Pass" never finds that rhythm. It moves in fits and starts, in the jerky fashion that distinguishes bad comedies from good ones. It might work on cable, when you can flip during the scenes that just don't work (no movie needs TWO sh*t jokes in which you see actual human feces), but the pace of "Hall Pass" never clicks. It's in no small part due to the fact the idiocy of the guys is often overblown. Sure, it's easy to believe that some suburbanites would have trouble meeting girls but it's too broad a joke to have them go to Applebee's to do so or pass out in a hot tub after the hottest girl in town agrees to meet them for a drink. The jokes in "Mary" feel organic to the plot. They feel forced here.

Luckily, the Farrellys have some talented people to deliver them. Sudeikis is great in his first leading role, displaying wit and perfect timing. If he finds the right part, he could truly break out. Fischer and Applegate are, in many ways, more interesting than the boys. Sadly, Wilson doesn't work. He gives a lazy performance here, something that feels half-hearted and simply not as interesting or charismatic as the part demands.

You will laugh at "Hall Pass." And that counts for something. Just don't be surprised if you find yourself wishing it added up to something more. It's not quite a comedy "pass," nor is it a "fail." We'll call it incomplete.

"Hall Pass" stars Owen Wilson, Jason Sudeikis, Jenna Fischer, Christina Applegate, and Richard Jenkins. It was written by Pete Jones & Peter Farrelly & Kevin Barnett & Bobby Farrelly and directed by the Farrelly Brothers. It will open on February 25th, 2011 and is rated R.



[14]

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- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/christina-applegate>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/hall-pass>
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