

Zoe Saldana Sinks in Tedious, Illogical ‘Colombiana’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 26, 2011 - 4:31pm

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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Only the director of “The Transporter 3” could make a movie in which the gorgeous Zoe Saldana changes outfits as often as she speaks lines of dialogue as dull as the tedious, illogical, useless “Colombiana.” Sure, the final showdown has some damn cool action but it takes a hundred often-unbearable minutes to get there. With a story that’s morally repugnant if you take it seriously for even a second and not enough style to stand as escapist entertainment, there’s a reason this clunker is being buried at the end of August and wasn’t screened for most critics – it shouldn’t screen for most audiences either.

“Colombiana” opens with a scene of extreme violence that should have warranted the push from PG-13 to R that never happened. (Maybe the MPAA fell asleep or decided not to screen the film. It’s hard to blame them. But you should be warned that this is the most-violent PG-13 of the year. One man is eaten alive by sharks and dozens are gunned down.) A little girl named Cataleya watches her father and mother get gunned down at the orders of a ruthless drug lord. She escapes with some vital information and uses it to talk the American Embassy into allowing her passage from Bogota all the way to Chicago. Yes, it’s another film set in our wonderful hometown that doesn’t use it to any advantage at all.



Colombiana

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

In the Windy City, Cataleya joins forces with her uncle Emilio (Cliff Curtis in a role way beneath his talent level), who trains her to be a lethal killer. After a ridiculous scene in which he shoots a random car outside of her new school (don’t ask...it doesn’t really make sense in the movie either), we flash from 1992 to 2007 and the sweet Cataleya has turned into the lethal Zoe Saldana (“Avatar”). She’s been a killer-for-hire for years now, wiping out almost two dozen targets and leaving her tag, the Colombian orchid after which she was named. The idea being that the tags will lead the drug lord who ruined her life out of hiding and she can get her revenge.

Of course, the real idea is to merely kill time until the final battle in which Cataleya takes on the Colombian drug cartel. And that's what Megaton's film does. There are a few escape scenes as FBI Agent Ross (Lennie James) gets closer to the elusive killer that he's been unable to identify, a few hits (including the aforementioned shark-bait kill), and even a ridiculous love subplot with a painter named Danny Delanay (Michael Vartan). As anyone who has EVER seen a hitman movie can tell you – love gets you into trouble. But rarely has a love interest been less interesting than this dull character, one who exists PURELY to be our heroine's undoing.



Colombiana

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

“Colombiana” goes through the motions in such pedestrian ways that it doesn't even rise to the level of cliché. Megaton loves letting his camera slide over Saldana's incredibly body, but clearly has little interest in actually directing a performance. Saldana has been effective before but she's not good here, largely because she's given so little character that we never become interested in her story beyond occasionally thinking that maybe she's not as justified as the filmmakers think. Not to spoil anything, but her decisions lead to a lot of collateral damage and the plot turns her into something of a bad guy if you really think about it.

And yet, you're not supposed to think about it. And, trust me, I'd LOVE to turn my brain off and have one final summer ride before heading into the awards season seriousness that's around the corner. But “Colombiana” isn't engaging or enjoyable on an escapist level either. It's not that I'm taking it too seriously. It's that there's no way to take it in which it works. The characters don't work. The action doesn't work. The plot is filled with illogical holes. The style never elevates the film into anything enjoyable. Every angle one takes to judge “Colombiana” leads to the same result – it's a bad, bad movie.

“Colombiana” stars Zoe Saldana, Cliff Curtis, Michael Vartan, and Lennie Harris. It was written by Luc Besson & Robert Mark Kamen and directed by Olivier Megaton. It was released nationwide on August 26th, 2011.



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