

Nicolas Cage, Guy Pearce Find Boredom While They're 'Seeking Justice'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 16, 2012 - 1:25pm

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Seeking Justice” must have been such a juicy proposition on paper. Director Roger Donaldson is coming off his most interesting film in years (“The Bank Job”), Nicolas Cage is overdue for a quality drama, Guy Pearce is one of our most interesting actors, and the supporting cast includes a number of interesting actors with recent TV hits – Jennifer Carpenter (“Dexter”), Harold Perrineau Jr. (“Lost”), and January Jones (“Mad Men”). The only thing you’ll be wondering during this inert alleged thriller is where it all went wrong.

The premise of “Seeking Justice” is actually a decent one for this increasingly dangerous world. A man's wife is raped. Another man comes to him and tells him that he can give him the justice he seeks. He claims to be the leader of a group of vigilantes and he wants to help, asking only a future favor in exchange. It's a classic Faustian conundrum for the favor is unclear and will almost certainly be at a greater cost than the man first considers. It's a solid pitch for a thriller and the one that probably got “Seeking Justice” made. It's where “Justice” goes from there and how incredibly boring the final script ended up that kills all of the potential for thrills in this dull affair.



Seeking Justice

Photo credit: Anchor Bay

The man is Will Gerard (Nicholas Cage), the wife is named Laura (January Jones), and the vengeance specialist is a mysterious fellow named Simon (Guy Pearce). She's brutally assaulted and, as she lies in her hospital bed, a deal for revenge is offered in the waiting room. How many men would take it? Your wife lies in pain after being raped and her attacker could get what he deserves while keeping your hands

clean? All that's asked is a favor somewhere down the road? In one of MANY flaws in Robert Tannen's screenplay, we see the rapist being killed by another man who makes clear that he's a former "client" of Simon. In other words, we now know that it's only a matter of time before Will becomes the executor for someone else seeking justice.

Before any tension can build or any realism between the trauma that should be haunting Will and Laura, Simon returns with a mark for our boring hero. He's tells Will that he's a pedophile and that Will has to do what needs to be done. Our protagonist refuses. He's not a killer. But denial is not an option. Simon and his crew of thugs continue to pressure Will, even threatening his wife. What is Will going to do? How can he get out of this? Or will he have to kill because he sought justice?

"Seeking Justice" gets far more complicated from here but somehow still never develops the tension it needs. Even Cage doesn't get to chew scenery like he has so expertly in recent junk like "Trespass." He looks bored half the time. But it's more the fault of Tannen and Donaldson, who can't find the tension in this piece. And Jones is as ineffective an actress as there is working in major films today. She's just awful here, never once coming off as believable. Carpenter and Perrineau are alright in incredibly limited roles but they're not around to make an impact. It's Cage's film – he's in nearly every scene – and the movie only slightly comes to life at all when he's interacting with Pearce, a great actor even in dreck like this.



Seeking Justice

Photo credit: Anchor Bay

And make no mistake, this is dreck. It's just boring. Donaldson and Tannen set the film in New Orleans but don't know how to use the city well – hitting major marks like Bourbon Street and the Superdome like tourists but not turning it into the character it could have been (and ending, of all places, in an abandoned mall). And they completely fumble the pace. When the movie needs to be turning up the tension in the middle act, it turns into an attempt at a '70s thriller – a film in which a man investigates a conspiracy when he really should just be running for his life and trying to protect his wife. And the final act twist is STUPID.

A talented cast, a Faustian concept, a great location – "Seeking Justice" is just a weird failure. Maybe Nicolas Cage is cursed. ("Trespass" also had a talented cast and strong concept but ended up even less effective than this nearly-straight-to-DVD movie.) Cage long ago became a target of ridicule because of his over-acting. At least in those films that became YouTube fodder, we had some scenery chewing to look forward to. At that time, most critics lamented how they missed the serious Nicolas Cage. I'm starting to miss the wacky one.

"Seeking Justice" stars Nicolas Cage, January Jones, Guy Pearce, Harold Perrineau Jr., and Jennifer Carpenter. It was written by Robert Tannen and directed by Roger Donaldson. It was released on March 16th, 2012 and is rated R.



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