

‘Escape from Tomorrow’ Blasts America’s Sacred Mice

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 25, 2013 - 12:57pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – One of America’s family traditions has become the trip to Disney World (or land). In one of the most highly charged anarchistic films in memory, this “tradition” is set on its mouse ears, as writer/director Randy Moore allows everyone to “Escape from Tomorrow.”

The average family, the average family vacation is the basis for this fantastic takedown of all that is sacred in the Disney universe. Shooting guerilla style on the actual locations, Moore creates a surreal landscape of fear, paranoia, sex, anarchy and madness – exactly what Walt had in mind when he created his world. In actuality though, this vision is closer to the truth than the fantasy Disney washes over us. It is a lesson in creating a balance between true imagination and contrived dollar grabbers. Although spotty in narrative flow, “Escape from Tomorrow” serves as an amazing thesis for American morality gone South. It’s a small world, after all.

Jim (Roy Abramsohn) and Emily (Elena Schuber) take their kids Sara (Katelynn Rodriguez) and Elliot (Jack Dalton) to the Magic Kingdom of Disney World. As they are about to go to the park for another day, Jim receives a phone call that he has been terminated from his job. Shocked from that body blow, he must pretend to be the diligent father at Disney World, which is a brutally idiotic place to be when facing a life disaster.



Jim (Roy Abramsohn) Enjoys the Magic Kingdom with a Woman (Alison Lees-Taylor) in ‘Escape From Tomorrow’
Photo credit: Producers Distribution Agency

Jim begins to lash out psychologically. His fantasy and reality begin to play tricks upon him, and he becomes obsessed with a couple of

French tourists, two underage but Lolita-esque girls. He also has a run-in with an amulet-wearing woman (Alison Lees-Taylor), whose witchy/princess charms run parallel to what the theme park has to offer. This is one amusement ride that won't stop.

The brass cojones it took to go into those parks and film this movie is heroic. Agree or disagree with the approach to the family, the story does lay open the hypocrisy of manufactured happiness. And what is almost beautiful is the way it just keeps breaking down, going deeper into the rabbit hole with a fierce intention and absolution. It puts a million candle spotlight into the darkest corners of the American cultural psyche.

The cast is brave as well. Although the father, portrayed by Roy Abramsohn, lacked the range of reactions to the circumstances, he is game enough to fly into the eye of the hurricane. The child actors were superior, as the filmmakers chose an essential American archetype look and crossed it with the father's meltdown. The French girls were tremendously interesting throughout, although some of the decisions made about their purpose were a bit skewered. But, goddamn, this film takes it to the limit – yes, there is climax.

The characteristics of the princess and the witch, two female roles that Disney repeats over and over, are given a proper rodding in the film. The actress Alison Lees-Taylor embodies both with a luminescence that will curdle your brain pan. The female character of motherhood, madonna, princess, prostitute, witch and temptress are all put through this sublime ringer, and on the other side is a real exposed nerve.



Bring the Whole Crew: Jim and Emily (Elena Schuber) in 'Escape From Tomorrow'
Photo credit: Producers Distribution Agency

Because of the nature of the film style, and the way it was secretly done, there are some flaws in the atmosphere, but for the most part the black & white digital quality lends a hand to the surreal quality of the proceedings. This is not only in the father's crack-up, it's within the park itself – stripped of its happy colors, the Disney universe becomes akin to horror. The story is a flight of fancy, and in that sense goes in directions that work and don't work, depending on point of view. But it doesn't matter, because this is a bold adventure.

Is it Walt's fault that the Disney "World" has come out of the other side of the looking glass symbolizing more that he intended? "Escape from Tomorrow" is an argument for "yes." M-I-C...see you real soon, K-E-Y...why? Because we like you. N-O-O-S-E.

"Escape from Tomorrow" continues its limited release in Chicago on October 25th, and is available in Video On Demand. See local listings for theater locations, show times and VOD systems. Featuring Roy Abramsohn, Elena Schuber, Katelynn Rodriguez, Jack Dalton and Alison Lees-Taylor. Written and directed by Randy Moore. Not Rated.



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