Though a Failed Comedy, ‘Delivery Man’ Shows Vince Vaughn’s Lesser-Seen Dramatic Side

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Has Vince Vaughn **peaked**?

Since hit films like “Swingers” and “Wedding Crashers,” critical flops like “Couples Retreat” and “The Dilemma” have shown he’s fighting an uphill battle to find redemption. While “Delivery Man” isn’t his re-breakout role, it does show you a lesser-seen side: his drama instead of his comedy.

The problem is “Delivery Man” is supposed to be funny. Inspired by the 2011 Canadian hit comedy “Starbuck” [19] – in which Patrick Huard plays David Wozniak in the French version of this film – “Delivery Man” fails as a comedy where “Starbuck” succeeds. While you’ll be disappointed if you’re expecting another “Swingers”-like comedy from Vince Vaughn, you’ll be surprised to see his softer, paternal and caregiver side instead of his trademark party manboy.



Vince Vaughn as David Wozniak in “Delivery Man”.
Image credit: DreamWorks Pictures

“Delivery Man” is rated “PG-13” and “Starbuck” is rated “R,” by the way, and you can unfortunately feel the difference. It won’t be clear to you whether “Delivery Man” fails as the hilariously absurd comedy it’s supposed to be – despite the direction successfully taken by “Starbuck” – or if intends not to be one in the first place.

It focuses on being a drama and hones in on the human reality of trying to cope with the transformation from a manboy to a father. At the very least, “Delivery Man” should have been billed as a dramedy instead of a comedy. In Vince Vaughn’s version of David Wozniak, he delivers meat for his father’s meat-packing business. He’s an irresponsible underachiever who can’t get jerseys delivered on time for a family photo and fails to convince his girlfriend that he’s suited for her future.

Despite being pitched the blessings of fatherhood by Aleksy (Bobby Moynihan) as well as the burdens by his best friend and lawyer Brett (Chris Pratt), being blindsided with the news that his girlfriend Emma (Cobie Smulders) is preggers with his child is nothing to compared to the man who mysteriously breaks into David’s house with news no man on Earth has every received.



How to BBQ for 533 kids.
Image credit: DreamWorks Pictures

In exchange for his blissful ignorance and $24,000 (he later still shoulders an $80,000 debt), it turns out David has fathered 533 children through anonymous donations to a fertility clinic 20 years ago. All “growed up,” now David’s in a sour pickle. He must decide whether or not to come forward when 142 of them file a class-action lawsuit to reveal his identity. Chris Pratt’s character attempts to use the opportunity to prove he’s a competent lawyer even though his family thinks him a loser.

“Delivery Man” will fare better in your eyes if you’ve never seen “Starbuck”. Having seen “Starbuck” first, you’ll be missing the comedy. But not having seen “Starbuck” first or not even having known about it, “Delivery Man” will give you the chance to experience Vince Vaughn’s transformation from an irresponsible manboy into a man any woman could take home to mom.

But the transformation feels only somewhat believable. He takes the sudden news of having fathered an impossible 533 children much like a movie star would in a film rather than how any guy would in real life. Is it even medically possible for any one man’s man juice to be so potent?



Vince Vaughn as David Wozniak in “Delivery Man”.
Image credit: DreamWorks Pictures

Also, the film is missing a true freak-out scene that any normal dude would have when attempting to wrap his brain around the gravity of the situation. This is billed as a comedy, and is for the most part failing at being one, but this would be a prime opportunity to be funny. You could imagine a hundred different funny ways to go batshit crazy with this news. Instead, he skips the emotional impossibility and jumps directly into trying to understand the legal side of it.

That blunder aside, where Vince Vaughn’s character gets interesting is when he – still too quickly for anyone to realistically believe – opens the envelope his lawyer friend tells him not to. That envelope houses the profiles of his hundreds of biological kids. The first one, of course, is a professional basketball player. The rest range from a kid crippled in a wheelchair who can’t speak to a girl about to OD on drugs to a street musician to a fat kid. They culminate into one kid who finds him out and forces himself on Starbuck because he needs to get to know where he came from.

While David feels too quick to be willing to be a charitable father to so many kids, some of the stories will touch you nonetheless. Having to perhaps make the first huge decision of his adult life, David must choose whether or not to send one of his kids into rehab. David must also learn to spend time with one boy who can’t talk back. David must enable another son to shoot for his acting dreams instead of limiting himself to being a dead-end barista.



Bobby Moynihan (left) and Vince Vaughn (right) in “Delivery Man”.
Image credit: DreamWorks Pictures

Amid magically turning into an angelic Father Teresa who suddenly decides he must look over and protect his gaggle of geese, the film feels like it’s missing another scene. You’d think the true Vince Vaughn would want to escape to Vegas for a weekend of debauchery in a conflicted state between the new man he’s attempting to become and the wreckless funboy he often is.

On the whole, “Delivery Man” fails to be the complete package that “Starbuck” turned out to be. But throughout its comedic and believability failures, it discovers dramatic moments that Vince Vaughn fans would welcome. But if you’re not a Vince Vaughn lover or you’re looking for a comedy, “Delivery Man” will leave you without a happy ending.

”Delivery Man” stars Vince Vaughn, Chris Pratt, Cobie Smulders, Bobby Moynihan, Andrzej Blumenfeld, Simon Delaney, Dave Patten, Adam Chanler-Berat, Britt Robertson, Jack Reynor, Amos VanderPoel and Matthew Daddario from writer and director Ken Scott and writer Martin Petit (based on the original screenplay “Starbuck”). The film, which has a running time of 103 minutes and opened on Nov. 22, 2013, is rated “PG-13” for thematic elements, sexual content, some drug material, brief violence and language.


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