

## 'Into the Storm' Maybe Needs Some Sharks

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 7, 2014 - 7:25pm

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – What is there to say about a movie whose chief attraction lies in action set pieces involving CGI tornadoes? You either like this sort of thing or you don't. I took my ten year old, who seemed to have a good time, and I know I felt pretty captivated by some of those visuals – but I'm a sucker for a thrill ride. Sound indecisive?

Herein lies the problem. Even though the tornadoes don't suck (pun intended), the rest of the film is generally as flat as the aftermath. The wisest move that "Braveheart" scribe and "Into The Storm" director Steven Quale makes is keeping the film to a tight 89 minutes and paying minimal attention to the less than original or engaging aspects of its plot.

A group of storm chasers led by Peter (Matt Walsh) is in the middle a very rough season. They have constructed a vehicle called the Titus, which can pin itself to the ground allowing it to pass through actual tornadoes. Their goal, besides collecting scientific data, is to get the first ever shot of a twister from the inside out.



Force of Destruction: One of the Tornadoes from 'Into the Storm'

*Photo credit: Warner Bros*



Their attempt at a groundbreaking documentary has been thwarted by an inability to second guess where the next twister will land, leaving them with footage they might as well upload to YouTube. Funding has been pulled – and it looks like the team is out of luck – until an educated guess leads them on one last quest to the small town of Silverton, where an unprecedented series of storm fronts produces twister after twister, devastating the area, and testing the character of everyone it encounters.

It's all pretty predictable stuff. There are a couple of would-be YouTube hillbilly daredevils to provide some amusing enough comic relief, but the real star of the film is obviously the effects. To be fair they are spectacular, and scary enough to remind you of any tornado dreams that may have caused you to clutch your pillow tighter as a child. The team also opts not to anthropomorphize the tornados by adding animal-like sound effects – as was done in the granddaddy of all these films, "Twister."

The destruction is constant and on par with big screen presence, but so is the knowledge that it's all the result of fingers tapping on a keyboard. Oddly enough, the conceit that all this action is captured on video by various townsfolk is handled well and rarely distracts. Younger viewers may come into this fresh enough to get maximum enjoyment out of it, like my son. But I'm guessing the turgid scenes of rescue – and characters finally telling each other "I love you, man" – will bore even them.



Matt Walsh as Pete for 'Into the Storm'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

None of the performances are really worth highlighting here, the sole exception being Matt Walsh. He manages to bring Peter to seamy life quite well. He's a comedian by trade, and here he plays this mostly straight – and the film offers him more complexity than any of the other characters.

Like most modern disaster movies this one can't be satisfied with one disaster. Tornado after tornado appears here, stretching all attempts to suspend disbelief to the breaking point. Of course the whole thing leads up to the mother of all twisters, featured in the trailer. But as if that bit of excess wasn't enough, we even get a fire tornado. The only thing they didn't do was put sharks in any of the tornadoes, which is a shame. It's hardly a compliment to say that "Into the Storm" would have been more entertaining if they had.

*'Into the Storm' opens everywhere on August 8th. Featuring Matt Walsh, Richard Armitage, Sarah Wayne Callies, Max Deacon and Nathan Kress. Written by John Swetnam. Directed by Steven Quale. Rated "PG-13"*



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