

Not Too Many Good Reasons to Experience ‘The Walk’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 30, 2015 - 11:32am

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – I am not opposed to dramatic retellings of true events from history, but I think the drama should at least be as entertaining as a PBS documentary on the same subject. “The Walk” tells the true story of a French wire walker and the twin tower World Trade Center in the mid-1970s...when he strung a wire between them, and then proceeded to walk from one tower to the other without a net more than a thousand feet in the air.

While its vertigo inducing finale delivers the goods, “The Walk” can’t quite justify its own existence especially since there’s a perfectly fascinating documentary about the same subject readily available. For a movie that is supposed to be a visual spectacle, it spends an awful lot of time violating the classic rule of cinema by telling instead of showing.



Joseph Gordon-Levitt in ‘The Walk’

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Releasing

Joseph Gordon-Levitt, sporting an exaggerated but not entirely ridiculous French accent, stars as Philippe Petit, a wire walker who dreams of performing the most incredible wire walk in history. He narrates nearly the entire film, and nary a minute goes by when his voiceover isn’t yapping away. And the film takes its own sweet time getting to its purpose for being.

Before we get to what we came for, we get a lot of scenes with Levitt recruiting accomplices for his stunt, and studying the art of wirewalking under the tutelage of acclaimed circus master Papa Rudy (Ben Kingsley). Rather than helping to flesh out the character, these scenes add little or nothing to the proceedings.

But onto that finale. Once Petit actually gets to New York and begins planning his daring stunt the film picks up the pace – and amid all the character’s yammering about becoming one with the wire, director Robert Zemeckis’ visuals are indeed striking. While Zemeckis has run into a George Lucas problem in the past where he let his fascination with new effects overrun his storytelling, the images here are mostly seamless and he only occasionally turns Levitt into an obviously CGI character amid a computer generated reproduction of the twin towers.



Contemplating the Void in ‘The Walk’
Photo credit: Sony Pictures Releasing

But curiously the narrative tension never quite gets out of first gear. It’s always a struggle for a film based on a true story to keep its audience interested because we already know how it turns out. Some of these movies get us to suspend our disbelief and put the hair on our arms on end as they ratchet up the tension. Others simply mosey around even if they are dangling hundreds of feet in the air.

I saw this film in IMAX in 3D, and while there were a couple of moments when I did feel a rush when Levitt and the camera peer down from his wire to the ground more than a thousand feet below, I can’t say It made that much of a difference. If you’re interested in this story save yourself some money, and rent the Oscar Award Winning documentary “Man On Wire” instead.

“The Walk” opens everywhere on September 30th in 3D and IMAX 3D. See local listings for 3D/IMAX theaters and show times. Featuring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Charlotte Le Bon, Ben Kingsley, James Badge Dale, Ben Schwartz, Cesar Domboy and Steve Valentine. Screenplay by Robert Zemeckis and Christopher Browne. Directed by Robert Zemeckis. Rated “PG”



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Source URL (retrieved on Apr 25 2024 - 8:07am):

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