

‘Demolition’ Describes the Way They Treated the Story

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 8, 2016 - 5:17am

- [Chris Cooper](#) [2]
- [Demolition](#) [3]
- [Finance](#) [4]
- [Fox Searchlight Pictures](#) [5]
- [Heather Lind](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [Jake Gyllenhaal](#) [8]
- [Jean-Marc Vallée](#) [9]
- [Judah Lewis](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Naomi Watts](#) [12]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [13]
- [Sanity](#) [14]
- [Tragedy](#) [15]
- [Wife](#) [16]



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The attempt to make a European-style “journey of emotional morality” between four characters in New York City kept getting flatter and flatter as the tale emerged. It’s amusing that they called it “Demolition,” because as cinema, it’s basically a teardown.

It’s Jake Gyllenhaal at his “Gyllenhaal-est” as a guilty widower who reacts in a special way when mourning his wife’s untimely death – and somehow it involves a mysterious outsider and her conveniently weird son, and lots of angst. There are some interesting feelings to consider, but they are all screwed into the ground until they melt at the center core. The director, Canadian Jean Marc-Valleé, has hacked it up before (the overrated “Dallas Buyer’s Club”), but this time the choppy narrative and attempts at “relevance” is a Hacker’s Hall of Fame. And dang nab the happy ending, which was tacked on so quickly the holes in the corner were still evident.

Davis (Jake Gyllenhaal) is living an investment banker, New York City commuter, upper middle class porn life. He lives with his perfect wife Julia (Heather Lind) in a House Beautiful architecture dreamscape. When a sudden car accident takes Julia’s life, he must deal with her father – who is also his boss – and the mixed feelings he has for the tragedy.



Davis (Jake Gyllenhaal) Contemplates His Symbolism in ‘Demolition’

Photo credit: Fox Searchlight Pictures

Davis begins to act strangely, and it begins with a here’s-my-life-story complaint letter to a vending machine customer service rep named Karen (Naomi Watts), and before you can say “unlikely romance,” they hook up. Her son Chris (Judah Lewis) is part of the package, and the two odd and angst-ridden pals are suddenly acting out in bizarre ways – including the quirk of Davis, who begins to disassemble and destroy things.

There are ingredients that are original. Mourning is always a savory subject for the human condition, and to explore this period with Davis – whose feelings for his dead wife are ambivalent at best – was a good platform to start on the emotional road. But the way he acts out becomes too much, and doesn’t really have a resolution. It’s also a characteristic that gets more annoying because it’s Jake G., since he’s had a career of stuff like this. He’s brings his Jake game, but the story does him no favors.

The strong cast includes Chris Cooper and Naomi Watts, both who are so good they almost overcome the raw material. Cooper needs to do more executive roles, he has a nice world weariness that gives the “master of the universe” – his firm handles billions – a little more edge. Watts has an understanding of character that adds more to less, except for her endgame. At the conclusion, the character had to turn around a lot of sins, which was a bit disappointing.

Jean-Marc Vallée directs a screenplay by Bryan Sipe, who also handled the pen lifting on “The Choice” earlier in the year. Who was the sinner on this narrative is difficult to determine, given that Vallée most likely had final cut, and there were many choppy transitions and noticeable gaps in happenings. Having seen “The Choice,” I would surmise they were equal opportunity offenders (although in fairness, “The Choice” was an adaptation. This is an original story by Sipe).



Happy Together: Davis and Karen (Naomi Watts) Co-mingle in ‘Demolition’

Photo credit: Fox Searchlight Pictures

Besides the good cast, there were some intriguing elements that teased in the beginning. The letter writing to the customer service rep was coy, but Gyllenhaal’s voice over on those moments had an appropriate I’m-about-to-go-off-the-deep-end quality, and the fact he didn’t really connect to his perfect first wife had some hope for his subsequent redemption. None of it, though, came to fruition.

I want Jake and Maggie to have a cinematic “Gyllenhaal Contest.” Just who can take that special family name and create a character that is darker? My money is on Maggie, but never count out Jake when the scene calls for “more Gyllenhaal.” That state of being can even challenge the concept of more cowbell.

“Demolition” opens nationwide on April 8th. Featuring Jake Gyllenhaal, Naomi Watts, Chris Cooper, Judah Lewis and Heather Lind. Written by Bryan Sipe. Directed by Jean Marc-Valleé. Rated “R”



[17]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [18]
Writer, Editorial Coordinator
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [17]

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 17 2024 - 11:35am*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/26411/demolition-is-appropriate-to-how-they-treated-the-story>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/chris-cooper>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/demolition>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/finance>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/fox-searchlight-pictures>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/heather-lind>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jake-gyllenhaal>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jean-marc-vall-e>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/judah-lewis>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/naomi-watts>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/sanity>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/tragedy>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/wife>
- [17] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>