

## Tom Hanks is Solid, But ‘Sully’ Never Really Soars

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 9, 2016 - 2:15pm

- [Aaron Eckhart](#) [2]
- [Anna Gunn](#) [3]
- [Clint Eastwood](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Holt McCallany](#) [6]
- [Jamey Sheridan](#) [7]
- [Katie Couric](#) [8]
- [Laura Linney](#) [9]
- [Mike O'Malley](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Spike Walters](#) [12]
- [Sully](#) [13]
- [Todd Kamarnicki](#) [14]
- [Tom Hanks](#) [15]
- [Valerie Mahaffey](#) [16]
- [Warner Brothers](#) [17]



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Sully” is a solid effort from Director Clint Eastwood, but it never really soars the way its supposed to. It’s a good story, helped immeasurably by Tom Hanks low key performance, but it feels unnecessary. The problem may be that the story of the pilot who pulled off the so-called “Miracle on the Hudson” is so well known, the movie can’t really add anything to it.

In January of 2009, Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger US Airways flight encountered a flock of birds as it took off from New York’s LaGuardia Airport. The bird strike took out both of the aircraft’s engines, and Sully (Hanks) made the split second decision to land the plane in the Hudson river rather than try to get back to the airport.



Captain Chesley Sullenberger (Tom Hanks) Takes Command in ‘Sully’

*Photo credit: Warner Bros.*

Tom Hanks is perfectly cast, and he could have just gone into his default good guy mode and gotten away with it – but that’s not what he does here. He goes deep inside to find the subtlety inside a character who easily could have just put a halo on his head and been done with it. Instead I was reminded of Hanks work in the film “Captain Phillips” which contained some of his worst acting and some of his best back to back. In that film, after Phillips is rescued there’s a scene where Hanks is being examined by the nurse onboard the ship. You see him slowly

realize what he’s just gone through and he just collapses under the avalanche of emotion, and that’s how Hanks plays Sully.

Sullenberger is a fundamentally good and decent person, whose head is still swimming and can’t quite comprehend just what he’s gone through. He’s distant, and full of internal doubt and second guessing, especially as the NTSB conducts its investigation and questions whether his daring water landing was really necessary. Hanks doesn’t feel the need to chew scenery, his Sully is a character who is used to being dependable and uncomfortable being the center of attention.

Other members of the cast are uniformly solid, including Laura Linney, Jamey Sheridan, Anna Gunn and Holt McCallany. Aaron Eckhart, as first officer Jeff Skiles, is the only one who seems to be trying a little too hard. Wearing a big and bushy moustache, and chomping at the bit sitting through NTSB hearings, Eckhart feels out of place in this otherwise soft spoken exercise in biopic filmmaking.



Sullenberger and First Officer Jeff Skiles (Aaron Eckhart) in ‘Sully’

*Photo credit: Warner Bros.*

Narratively the film starts in the days after the disaster and works its way backwards in flashbacks. Eastwood’s depiction of the water landing is competent and solid, but It didn’t have me clutching my seat or anything. The one time his plane crash sequences spring to life is when he examines other perspectives of the incident beyond the passengers and crew. There’s a scene where workers in a high rise see the plane plunging out of the sky heading for New York, and you can’t help but see 9/11 running through their heads all over again.

“Sully” is a solid performer that won’t make anyone feel that they’ve wasted their time. And Tom Hanks’ performance is right on the mark, but this time around Director Clint Eastwood isn’t interested in telling anybody anything that they didn’t already know.

*“Sully” opens everywhere on September 9th. Featuring Tom Hanks, Aaron Eckhart, Laura Linney, Valerie Mahaffey, Mike O’Malley, Jamey Sheridan and Anna Gunn. Screenplay by Todd Kamarnicki. Directed by Clint Eastwood. Rated “PG-13”*



[18]

By [SPIKE WALTERS](#) [19]

Contributor

HollywoodChicago.com

[spike@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:spike@hollywoodchicago.com) [18]

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