

## ‘Poms’ Stumbles and Fumbles Through a Stale, Familiar Routine

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on May 13, 2019 - 6:07pm

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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – There is an undeniable amount of skill and talent that goes into cheerleading. I happen to be rhythmically challenged so I am in awe of anyone, regardless of age, who can keep a beat while doing any sort of choreography. “Poms” promised to keep in step with a fresh premise, an all-star cast, and a new perspective on this tried-and-true genre but it tumbles along the way.

There is a temerity in the film that is rarely broken by the few hilarious, outrageous moments throughout. These moments are what the film was starved for because they were the only parts of the film that actually subverted the genre. The rest took the predictable route of joints aches and back pain. Co-writers Shane Atkinson and Zara Hayes both make their feature film screenplay debut, which is a major detriment to a film that could have used not only a more seasoned writer but also a person familiar with the perspective.



Photo credit: STX Entertainment

Atkinson and Hayes approach “Poms” with as the evergreen inspirational film it is. An underdog tale mixed with a bit of bucket list dream chasing and a novel concept. Having senior citizens attempt a cheerleading performance is meant to be the punchline and a draw for anyone going into this film, but there ends up being nothing funny about it. If you’re expecting a “Bad Grandpa”-style physical comedy, you’ll be sorely disappointed. On the other hand, if you’re hoping for something more heartfelt and genuine, you’ll only be partially disappointed.

“With age comes experience” is definitely an old adage that applies to this film. Every aspect in the approach and execution comes off as an



imitation of every film that has ventured into this similar genre combination. The safety in this approach is understandable for first-time filmmakers but unbearably boring for avid filmgoers. The comedy is subdued, fearing to stay in raunchy territory longer than a few moments because it doesn't want to come off as that kind of film. The emotional development is slow and muted, but ultimately still there so when it finally reaches the climax, you're right there with them with the appropriate response.



Photo credit: STX Entertainment

Director Zara Hayes hits every trope and stereotype, but with little to show for it. Aside from a few candid one-liners about sex from the characters, there is nothing that brings any new insight or immediacy for why this story should be told. There is a wealth of topics that could be explored ranging from existential crises to sexual activity to really anything new besides the typical fare we have come to expect from films about septuagenarians. Everything would be at the very least forgivable except for the squandering of this stellar cast.

Not only is "Poms" full of comedic powerhouses, but they also have some prolific actresses. With the likes of Diane Keaton, Jacki Weaver, Rhea Perlman, and Pam Grier among their ranks, the potential is limitless, but the self-imposed restrictions placed by the filmmakers dim their performances. In a film meant to be all about showcasing how age shouldn't dictate whether someone is still in their prime, the opportunity to show off the star power in "Poms" comes off as more of a jeer than a cheer.

*"Poms" opens everywhere on May 10th. Featuring Diane Keaton, Jacki Weaver, Rhea Perlman, Celia Weston, Phyllis Somerville, Alisha Boe, Charlie Tahan, and Pam Grier. Directed by Zara Hayes. Written by Shane Atkinson and Zara Hayes. Rated "PG-13"*



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