

Film Review: Beyond Being Trippy, 'Inherent Vice' is a Difficult Trip

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 9, 2015 - 10:23am

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CHICAGO – Interpreting the ambling and sonic prose of author Thomas Pynchon has eluded filmmakers until now. Director Paul Thomas Anderson takes a whack at “Inherent Vice,” and although much of the film has his usual eminent vision, as a whole it makes for difficult sledding.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

This is a “far out” story of a post-1960s burn out, who fashions himself as a private investigator. When he gets caught in a web of intrigue which involves his old girlfriend, it is the voices outside and in his head tell him to keep going. It’s definitely fun to live in the post-1960s world (it’s set in 1970) and there are some nice jabs along the way, but this is also the ‘70s as interpreted through a director and actor who at best were little kids back then. Hell, even I was a little kid. It’s parallel universe time, and why not? That is what the movies do best, and there are parts of this film that are absolutely groovy, but as a whole may leave you scratching the old head trip.

Larry “Doc” Sportello (Joaquin Phoenix) is a private investigator, but does most of his investigations inside his own soul through copious pot use. An old galpal name Shasta (Katherine Waterston) ambles back into his life, launching a mystery as to what she has been doing – having an affair with a Los Angeles real estate mogul named Wolfmann (Eric Roberts) and suddenly disappearing with him after connecting with Doc.

As Doc starts to unravel the clues to her whereabouts, he gets a beating for his nosiness from “Bigfoot” Bjornsen (Josh Brolin), the local police detective who purports to be Doc’s “inside” man. The key to this whole scenario could lie with D.A. Penny (Reese Witherspoon), Jade (Hong Chau), wacky dentist Dr. Blatnoyd (Martin Short), dead or alive rocker Coy Harlingen (Owen Wilson), Doc’s attorney Smilax (Benecio Del Toro) or Doc’s “friend” Sortilège (Joanna Newsom).

“Inherent Vice” opens everywhere on January 9th. Featuring Joaquin Phoenix, Joanna Newsom, Katherine Waterston, Josh Brolin, Eric Roberts, Maya Rudolph, Hong Chau, Martin Short, Reese Witherspoon and Owen Wilson. Written and directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. Rated “R”



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Joaquin Phoenix as Doc in 'Inherent Vice'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

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