

Film Review: Jessica Chastain, Oscar Isaac Endure 'A Most Violent Year'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 17, 2015 - 9:25am

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CHICAGO – The effect of violence, centering on the roughest statistical year for it (1981) in New York City history, becomes a flashpoint for the way business has always been done. If someone isn't intimidating their competitor with lawyers or shady marketing practices, a few hired goons can do the trick. Oscar Isaac takes the beating, both real and metaphorical, in writer/director J.C. Chandor's "A Most Violent Year."



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

This is a slow but decent allegory that doesn't really come to any stark conclusions about New York City's propensity for strong-arm competitive practices, except to say it's business as usual. Oscar Isaac is shown to be one tough hombre, and is backed up by his moll – portrayed by Jessica Chastain with an in-and-out New York accent – and the film does have a vibe like "The Godfather," in a sense that America's wealth was built on survival of the fittest, like nature, and that survival depends on power, threats and intimidation.

Oscar Isaac is Abel Morales, an immigrant who has built a heating oil delivery company. Relying on instinct, he sets up a deal for a key riverside property that will expand his business to the next level. This doesn't sit well with his competitors, as they begin to intimidate the drivers of Abel's oil trucks. These threats start to unravel the property deal, much to the chagrin of Abel's lawyer (Albert Brooks) and his trophy wife Anna (Jessica Chastain).

When the district attorney (David Oyelowo) gets involved, Abel's accounting practices are also put into the intimidation mix. The struggle brings out the street fighter in Abel, and he begins his own strategy of fighting back. In the year 1981, where the moral decay and the violence are at their peak in the City of New York, the only way to survive is an eye for an eye.

"A Most Violent Year" opens everywhere on January 16th. Featuring Jessica Chastain, Oscar Isaac, Alessandro Nivola, David Oyelowo and Albert Brooks. Written and directed by J.C. Chandor. Rated "R"



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Oscar Isaac and Jessica Chastain in 'A Most Violent Year'

Photo credit: A24

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