

Kin looks good, but doesn't make a whole lot of sense

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: «« out of «««««

Running Time: 102 minutes

Sometimes, it truly is this simple... If you want to make a great movie, you've got to have an exceptional script. The extremely talented cast of the new film *Kin* do everything they can to make the most of an intriguing idea. However, it becomes lost within what ultimately is a rambling, nonsensical script.

Unfortunately, the performers can only do so much before the plot holes and bizarre actions of the characters ultimately let viewers down.

Set in a dilapidated, rundown Detroit, the story follows Eli (Myles Truitt) the adopted son of Hal Solinski (Dennis Quaid). Times haven't been good for the family, with Hal raising the boy alone as a gruff disciplinarian, chiding his son for collecting scrap metals from an abandoned building to try and sell (even if the intent is to help pay their way).

One day, the boy finds a strange, futuristic ray gun and dead soldiers in the building. Things get even more complicated when step brother Jimmy (Jack Reynor) is released from prison, owing a \$60,000 debt to local borderline-mullet-brandishing gang kingpin, Taylor Balik (James Franco). After a nasty fracas, Eli and Jimmy go on the run with not only thugs in pursuit, but also futuristic "cleaners" on motorcycles.

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The movie has a mostly somber and serious tone. Life is extremely harsh as Eli struggles to fit in both around the neighborhood and with his family. Hal awkwardly offers solace, suggesting he's only hard on his son because life is hard, encouraging the kid to try and do the morally ethical thing.

The monologues are pretty silly, but Quaid manages to deliver them with some effectiveness. The kid is likable and his older sibling has more dramatic material to work with, struggling with his disapproving father and admitting to making questionable life decisions (which become even more bizarre as the story progresses). It's just unfortunate that more isn't done with this material.

Franco is extremely entertaining as the film's distinctive villain. He and his crew are both threatening and sell some amusing lines as the determined revenge-seeker drives across country to catch his target. Sadly, the character disappears for large chunks of the film, denying viewers the opportunity to experience some much-needed conflict between the leads and central villain.

Instead, the movie winds its way to a strip club and introduces new crooks. It's a long way into events when the powerful ray gun is first used. Over several sequences that don't do much to suspend disbelief, the leads befriend exotic dancer Milly (Zoe Kravitz) and plot to rob the strip club goons and make off with some cash.

The protagonists are less-than-subtle with the weaponry. This strange gun is massive, yet Eli successfully manages to play with and lug it around in close quarters without anyone noticing.

Again, there's some interesting potential in dealing with the inherent threat of this deadly item, as well as the ramifications of shootings (as seen through the eyes of a pre-teen boy). However, the movie ultimately chooses to have its main character ignore much of the advice relayed by his father and simply vaporize his targets.

Alas, while technically proficient to watch, dramatically, it's all clumsy in execution.

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The last act involves the reappearance of the motorcycle “cleaners,” who are shown to possess powers that probably could have helped everyone a lot earlier in the film. They give some vague idea of who they are and their interest in Eli, but it ultimately doesn't make a whole lot of sense (besides setting up another movie).

In the end, the actors in *Kin* are good, but this reviewer found himself continually questioning the motivations and actions of the characters. If you can't relate to or understand the choices made by the people in a film, then something may have gotten confused or gone wrong somewhere along the way. Should there eventually be a follow-up, one hopes the makers take more care to solve these problems.

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