

'The Gentlemen' takes its time, but delivers in the end

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 31 January 2020 04:36



Rating: «« out of «««««

Running Time: 113 minutes

Writer/director Guy Ritchie has been behind the camera on many big Hollywood productions, including the *Sherlock Holmes* series, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and last year's live-action adaptation of the Disney animated film, *Aladdin*

. However, the movie-maker is perhaps best known by fans for the hard-boiled, but darkly comedic English crime flicks

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels

,

Snatch

and

RocknRolla

. His latest,

The Gentlemen

, is certainly an attempt to channel the latter features, mixing eccentric mobsters with brazen and off-color gags.

The story opens with private investigator Fletcher (Hugh Grant) arriving on the doorstep of Ray (Charlie Hunnam), a man who serves as consigliere to organized crime boss Mickey Pearson (Matthew McConaughey). Fletcher begins by describing Pearson's rise to power by setting up

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an elaborate marijuana operation across Britain. The reporter threatens to release his information to a tabloid unless the organization offers him a bribe. To prove the authenticity of his findings, he details the actions of several prominent figures in the kingpin's life. This includes Mickey's wife Rosalind (Michelle Dockery), as well as dangerous criminal associates like Matthew (Jeremy Strong), Dry Eye (Henry Golding), Lord George (Tom Wu) and Coach (Colin Farrell).

Frankly, this reviewer wasn't overly impressed by the opening act. It primarily features Fletcher introducing himself to Ray and the two engaging in cheeky banter and veiled threats as they each attempt to get the upper hand. To jazz up his story, Fletcher also tells fibs that result in depictions of imagined conflicts between the characters. At times, these gags feel forced and the insults don't generate the intended laughs. The first half of the feature also deals with a lot of exposition as to how expatriate Mickey found his way across the ocean, forged his drug kingpin empire and made friends and enemies in the trade. At least, if nothing else, the details of how the character managed to pull everything off are interesting to discover.

Although the story does strain to hit the mark comedically early on, it eventually improves. Once these varied, oddball supporting characters play a more prominent role in the story, crossing paths and double-crossing one another, more conflict and amusing scenarios arise. Even the editing and timeline of events start to shift around more creatively, veering from one person's perspective to another. As the plot becomes more exaggerated, it does result in crazier situations. After being asked to perform an errand for Mickey, Ray is forced into some dangerous scenarios with horrifying results. The Coach character is also asked to partake in some bizarre activities. It all results in gross-out gags and politically incorrect comments that do earn laughs.

Additionally, the screenplay does a nice job of eventually winding things back around to Mickey. Specifically, the questions raised by various parties about the crime boss going soft, losing his edge, and reasons some may want to remove him from his position of authority. While the twists and turns may not be all that shocking in the end, they're all handled and resolved in a sufficiently entertaining manner.

Truth be told, *The Gentlemen* was an unusual experience for this reviewer. The first half of the film simply didn't connect with me. Yet as the movie progressed, it slowly began to charm me over, in its own politically incorrect and bizarre way. If you're not a fan of this filmmaker's crime pictures, then his latest effort certainly won't be for you. But patient viewers and Guy Ritchie fans may find enough here to warrant a good giggle or two.

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