

'Captain America: Civil War' lacks perfection, but includes some superb action

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: ««« out of 4

Running Time: 146 minutes

Well, we're now 13 films into the "Marvel Cinematic Universe." Under the circumstances, things appear to be going quite well. Not every film has exactly soared creatively, but most present just enough to keep viewers entrenched and wanting more. The latest is *Captain America: Civil War* and it offers one element that's a bit different ... a confrontation between many of the heroes.

The story revolves around the character of The Winter Soldier aka James "Bucky" Barnes (Sebastian Stan). After several superhero interventions result in collateral damage, the United Nations demand The Avengers to register themselves and come under their control. More conflict arises when The Winter Soldier appears to have reverted back to his assassin ways and causes a disaster. Captain America (Chris Evans) refuses to submit to UN demands and wants no harm to come to his old friend Barnes, but Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) feels differently about the government intervention, leading to an inevitable confrontation.

Overall, the film is about as good as one can expect, given the increasingly busy nature of the plot lines and characters. It's nearly 2 and 1/2 hours, which is a long, long time for any superhero movie. Even worse, the filmmakers are not only forced to examine the themes raised, introduce a new villain and play catch up with the established characters, but also debut a couple of brand new superheroes. It's an awful lot of material to cover and one can feel the movie struggling to keep Captain America at its center.

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Alas, the Winter Soldier thread isn't really different enough from the previous movie. And as impressive as the action is, it does appear to use an excess of CGI - in fact, occasionally it seems as if the actor's heads have simply been pasted onto their digital bodies. Additionally, villain Zemo (Daniel Brühl) doesn't make as big an impression as hoped. The performance itself is quite good. In fact, it's very low-key and grounded. Yet it almost feels like it's a part of a different movie, which means he gets buried somewhat beneath the scenery-chewing heroes.

Still, the movie never quite buckles under its own weight. Indeed, opposing viewpoints on the consequences of The Avengers actions and the murky area between being a hero and a vigilante do provide some dramatic meat. They are explored more thoughtfully than in another recent caped and cowl effort, even if it all feels a bit at odds with some of the film's lighter moments and the smart aleck interplay between the characters.

And of course, the incredible airport-set showdown featuring 12 heroes going toe to toe is so much fun that it alone is almost worth the price of admission. You'll see some enormously entertaining stuff as each character shows their stuff in the most exaggerated and creative ways possible. Many have reported that Spider-Man steals the sequence. He does have plenty of amusing asides and the fracas provides a strong introduction to the character, although one hopes future features avoid his unending enthusiasm. Comments like, "Awesome!" and "That's so cool!" are repeated so frequently that any continuation of this over a feature length running time may prove grating.

For all its minor issues, this is still an entertaining action flick with one knock-out sequence. *Captain America: Civil War* isn't quite as impressive as its hero's last adventure, but it will likely please both obsessive fans of Marvel comics and casual viewers.

Note: There were two post credits scenes at the screening, neither of which offered any major shocks about upcoming features. And on a personal note, the 3-D conversion doesn't offer a whole lot of visual pop. You're perfectly fine viewing the movie in two dimensions.

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