

KEANU MOVIE REVIEW

If there was ever a cohesive unit, look no further than Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele. There's no denying the chemistry between this inseparable duo. The two comedians, more popularly known as simply Key & Peele to their ever-growing fan base, are relatively fresh, new faces in the vast world of comedy. They have their own TV show called *Key & Peele*, a series of hilarious, crafty, and satirical sketches, illustrating their views on world events, political figures, celebrities, and life in general. But while their comedic sketches on television are succinct and to the point, the product that they've delivered to us here in their first full length feature film *Keanu*, doesn't follow suit.

Keanu starts off with an act of violence. Two masked assailants infiltrate a warehouse where an underground drug operation is being run. The two gunmen unload on the drug dealers and criminals with relative ease. In the midst of the pandemonium, an adorable kitten who clearly belonged to the criminal running this unknown operation, successfully escapes unscathed. The kitten then finds its way to the doorstep of Rell (Jordan Peele) a down-on-his-luck slacker who just got dumped by his girlfriend. The dejected Rell is suddenly fueled with new life as this small feline shows up at just the right time in his sad and pathetic moment of sulking. The kitten, which Rell ends up naming Keanu, is given a new home while Rell is simultaneously given a new purpose to go on fighting the good fight. But when Rell's apartment is broken into unexpectedly and Keanu is nowhere to be found, Rell and his cousin Clarence (Keegan-Michael Key) are forced to go on a ridiculous search and endure the unrelenting wrath of the criminal underworld if they have any hopes of ever seeing Keanu again.

It's not the movie's absurdity that contributes to its failure to deliver but rather the inconsistency. After watching the explosive and exciting opening scene, one would naturally assume that the rest of the movie would have some type of consistent tone of violence and action, but it doesn't. The next forty minutes slow down to an unbearable crawl that leave you desperately reaching for the fast-forward button on the remote. The only onslaught that ensues until the next action scene is the barrage of terrible dialogue delivered by our heroes that we, as the audience, are forced to listen to. Whereas everything is well mapped out and cleverly executed in Key & Peele's short comedic sketches, the dialogue found in *Keanu* is not particularly clever or creative. It's outright pedestrian.

The course of the movie feels like one bad joke with no punch line or payoff. Sure, the characters that inhabit *Keanu* have clear motives, especially considering how overly simplistic the plot is, but the abilities that they magically possess are ultimately left up for questioning. We get it, it's supposed to be a stupid movie where stupid things are happening out of seemingly nowhere, but a line has to be drawn at some point and there should be some logical

reasoning why certain things are happening. But to our dismay, those explanations are non-existent.

Our two main protagonists are initially portrayed as dorky, repressed and non-violent guys that are suddenly doing back flips off walls, engaging in high speed car chases, and shooting up the bad guys in the heat of the moment. Rell and Clarence are completely out of their element when it comes to what they have to go through to get Keanu back, but it never appears that way. Some of these bad guys that end up being eliminated by these two untrained buffoons are the ruthless masked assailants from the opening scene of the movie. Two villains that were unable to be taken out by armed thugs are suddenly susceptible to being blood bathed by a couple of average, idiotic joes? As we're dragged along through this ridiculous warpath, the film keeps finding ways to graduate from unbelievable to utterly preposterous. Mind you, my gripe is not with the genre of the film. There have been ridiculous action comedies this year that have pulled these types of antics off correctly whereas in *Keanu* it seems completely out of place and illogical, given the character's backgrounds or lack thereof.

In *The Brothers Grimsby* starring Sacha Baron Cohen and Mark Strong, the high risk maneuvers and captivating aerial stunts performed by the characters that inhabit that particular world are believable because of the character's background. Mark Strong plays an MI6 agent. So we tend to think there's some believability behind him jumping from buildings and moving vehicles and sniping the bad guys from far distances. In *Mr. Right* starring Sam Rockwell and Anna Kendrick, Sam Rockwell's ability to eliminate multiple targets in a few, well calculated moves, again, seems believable because of his character's background. He's a hitman, trained in the art of the kill. We know that. All of this information is fed to us right from the get-go. On the contrary, it's nearly impossible to believe Keegan-Michael Key's character, Clarence, in *Keanu* is able to perform a back flip off a wall like Neo from *The Matrix* to impress the villains of the movie, especially when just a few scenes earlier he was portrayed as a dorky family guy, being lectured by his wife about how he should stop trying to please others and just be himself. But that's the issue. Who is he? What's his background? Where does he come from? What are his skills? What's his profession? There's no basis behind what Key & Peele's characters are able to do in *Keanu* which becomes not only problematic but just outright irresponsible on the writer's part.

Clarity in character is an essential cornerstone to any well told story but something that is clearly absent in *Keanu*, amongst many other things.