

THE NICE GUYS MOVIE REVIEW

Shane Black is no stranger to writing compelling and edgy material that captivates audience members that favor the action/thriller genre in particular. For those unfamiliar with the body of work from the writer/director of *The Nice Guys*, Black has had quite a reputable career when it comes to writing and selling screenplays; mind you, this endeavor has spanned three decades. The script that ultimately contributed to Black's rise to prominence back in the late 80s was *Lethal Weapon*. Black would later go on to set a record in 1994 with his sale of *The Long Kiss Goodnight* for 4 million. Fast forward thirty years after writing *Lethal Weapon* and Shane Black is still proving to be a master of his craft with his latest writing and directorial effort.

Here's the interesting thing about *The Nice Guys*; what Shane Black has given us here is not anything particularly new or nothing that hasn't been done before, but nevertheless the film still feels fresh and exciting because of the time that it's made in. *The Nice Guys* is a wonderful reprieve from the agonizing onslaught of sequels, reboots, and superhero films that are constantly being thrown at us like bricks. To me personally, there's nothing more exhilarating and refreshing than going to the movies to see an original concept flick that has been well received by both critics and average moviegoers alike. But the most wonderful thing about all of this is that *The Nice Guys* was given a wide release and was made readily available instead of being relegated to a limited release where any average moviegoer would be forced to venture out to a larger cinema in their nearest big city to even have a shred of hope of seeing it.

Earlier this year, I found myself searching out theaters that were playing original concept flicks such as *The Lobster*, *Green Room*, or *Sing Street* because of their limited release status. Whereas with *The Nice Guys*, I was able to easily and conveniently view it at my local theater a few miles from my where I live. Please keep in mind I'm one of the unlucky ones who reside in a small town in central Massachusetts about an hour outside of Boston. I do miss the days of being able to see original concept movies in abundance at my local theater when I was a kid. I grew up in the 90s, when original concept movies like *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* were thriving and making money hand over fist. But with movies like *The Nice Guys* being critically acclaimed and well spoken about during this sequel/reboot/remake era, it gives original concept enthusiasts a glint of hope.

The Nice Guys is in the vein of a buddy-buddy cop movie that follows the unlikely pairing of two private detectives investigating the disappearance of a young woman by the name of Amelia. I can't emphasize "unlikely pairing" enough, seeing as the characters of Holland March (Ryan Gosling) and Jackson Healy (Russell Crowe) are undeniably strange bedfellows. Jackson Healy is one these take-no-shit types who has no problem swinging elbows and using brute

force until his target is lying face down in the dirt, unable to get up or even move. Contrast this with the complete idiocy and bone headedness of Holland March and you have the main formula that makes up the wild, eccentric but very well fleshed out ride that is *The Nice Guys*.

There are a lot of fun and memorable moments throughout the film. One in particular, takes March and Healy to a party thrown by a rich and well known porn director. As March and Healy weave their way through the sea of partygoers, we as the audience really get a feel for the time period of the film. Songs such as "September" by Earth, Wind & Fire and "Get Down On It" by Kool and The Gang fuel the party with life. Everyone inhabiting the scene sports quintessential 70s garb and rocks various styles from the time period – we're talking sideburns, plaid pants, flamboyant colored bell-bottoms, afros seen on both men and women, etc. By how goofy Gosling's character is and how he reacts to certain situations, you would think the film would be in danger of entering the realm of campiness but is always cleverly swerved right back on track with the ruthless aggression of Crowe's character, keeping the serious tone that the film is trying to achieve. This is where the chemistry of both Gosling and Crowe's characters come into play and should be heavily praised for keeping consistency and one continuous flow that never seems to break immersion throughout the duration of the film.

On top of the quick-witted and edgy dialogue delivered flawlessly by both Gosling and Crowe, the film is complimented by a few well executed action scenes that never get too over the top or have you questioning the viability of what's transpiring within the frame of the scene. The action scenes seem rewarding after all the twists and turns that March and Healy are forced to go through and endure on their journey to discover the truth about Amelia.

The Nice Guys feels like a light penetrating the darkness that is the overbearing regurgitation of remakes and sequels that Hollywood has been typically dishing out as of late. One can only hope from how well this movie has been received that it will encourage and perhaps even motivate the industry to not be so reluctant on pulling the trigger on original concepts rather than resorting to familiarity of pre-existing material. But much to my dismay, seeing as how *The Nice Guys* finished fourth in its opening weekend behind *The Angry Birds Movie*, *Captain America: Civil War*, and *Neighbors 2*; having original concept movies in abundance at the theater in the near future may be nothing more than a pipe dream.

Nevertheless, I feel as though *The Nice Guys* will get treated with much more respect as it finds its rightful place on the DVD/Blu-ray shelf of film fanatics and movie buffs alike. I've been wrong in the past, but this seems like the type of flick that will become a cult classic overtime, like a perfectly aged bottle of wine if you will, that every group of best friends, whether it's guys or girls, will undoubtedly be reciting line for line.