

Central Intelligence: A Rock Solid Comedy with Hart

By Paula Tudor

If you are looking for a fun summer movie, look no further than Central Intelligence, starring Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson and Kevin Hart. Opening the same weekend as Finding Dory, I suspect this film may have been overlooked by some, especially since it is not suitable for young kids. However, I have no doubt that teens and adults will love this movie because it is the perfect summer escape.

Central Intelligence is one of those movies that almost slipped under my radar. I only became aware of it when I saw the trailer on television. It would seem that the movies creating the most buzz this summer are, of course, Finding Dory, and the upcoming release of the new, all-female Ghostbusters, opening in July. Since I was not exactly clamoring to see Finding Dory, I was glad that Central Intelligence came along because lately there have not been many movies worth paying to watch.

Central Intelligence is an action-packed comedy; and I do not use the term ‘action-packed’ loosely. A lot happens during the course of this movie so be sure to get all of your concession items before it begins. In the movie, Dwayne Johnson who plays Robbie Weirlicht, aka Bob Stone, and Kevin Hart, who plays Calvin Joyner, are former classmates. In high school Calvin was the all-star athlete and student, whom everyone loved. Robbie, on the other hand, was overweight and the quintessential nerd. As a result, he was relentlessly picked on by seemingly everyone except Calvin and his then girlfriend Maggie, played by Danielle Nicolet. Fast-forward 20 years and it is reunion time. Calvin has become dissatisfied with his life as an accountant, feeling that he has not really accomplished much since high school when he receives a friend request on Facebook from someone named Bob Stone. He accepts, not knowing at first who Bob Stone is. When he discovers that it is his old classmate Robbie, he agrees to meet with him in person, mostly to get out of going to marriage counseling. Calvin is shocked to find that Bob, while still essentially the same person on the inside, has changed in every way possible on the outside and is now a CIA agent who needs his help. Calvin agrees to help him with what he believes is a menial task involving a payroll problem. It turns out to be a CIA operation designed to keep satellite codes out of the wrong hands and clear Bob’s name in the process. Bob is being accused of murdering his former partner and is actually being chased by the CIA, which, as you might imagine, puts Calvin in an uncomfortable position. In fact, through most of the movie, Calvin is caught between Bob and the CIA, not knowing whom he can trust. This sets the stage for a lot of nail-bitingly hilarious scenarios.

Dwayne Johnson and Kevin Hart have excellent comedic chemistry and they play well off of each other. In addition, Kevin Hart incorporates a lot of physical comedy into his scenes, which are pure gold. This is the perfect juxtaposition to Johnson’s portrayal of a CIA agent with flawless physical timing and precision. Despite these

elements of action and comedy, Central Intelligence is not a film without substance. The theme of bullying runs deeply through the plot of this film. Though Bob has undergone a massive physical transformation he still carries the internal scars from being bullied. They are always there, under the surface, reminding him of how people used to see him. I do not want to give away too much of the film, but suffice to say there are two celebrity cameos whose parts are pivotal in the bullying theme, helping to make Central Intelligence not only funny, but heartfelt.

Central Intelligence is now playing in theaters and is rated PG-13.

Finding Dory is now playing in theaters and is rated PG.

Ghostbusters opens in theaters July 15th and is rated PG-13.

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