

Rumors are swirling today about two upcoming Marvel films, 'Ant-Man' and 'Doctor Strange'

REVIEW: 'Just Go With It' nothing but Devlin



Tracy Bennett, (c) Columbia Pictures 2011



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'Just Go With It'

Rating:

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There's a running joke in the comedy "Just Go With It" involving Jennifer Aniston's character's children referring to their bowel movements as "Devlin." If nothing else, it provides a family-friendly way to refer to what otherwise could only be referred to as a remarkably unsuccessful attempt at comedy.

The prologue is good, sets you up to expect something far better than what the rest of the movie delivers. Danny, played by Adam Sandler, finds out on his wedding day that his bride cheated on him the night before, and is only marrying him because he's going to be a plastic surgeon. He leaves her, and soon finds that wearing his wedding ring and making up horror stories about non-existent wives, is an easy way to bed sympathetic women. He carries this on for years, until the ruse finally bites him on the bottom when he meets Palmer, a beautiful young woman (Brooklyn Decker) he really wants to have a relationship with but who has no intention of being the other woman. Jennifer Aniston plays Danny's assistant Katherine, a single mom coerced into acting the part of Danny's soon-to-be-ex-wife.

The script, ironically, is based on a script by the legendary I.A.L. Diamond who wrote some of Billy Wilder's best movies. That screenplay was based on a Broadway play based on a French play but none of that really matters. "Just Go With It" has an annoying tendency to go over the top when it isn't funny and rein it in when it might have been. The dialogue is phony and forced, the pacing uneven and the plot is predictable. Where the movie is going is obvious ten minutes in, which doesn't help when the action inexplicably slows down as soon as Jennifer Aniston shows up.

"Just Go With It" is directed, at least nominally, by Dennis Dugan, who also directed Sandler in "Grown-Ups" and "I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry." Neither of those were brilliant but they shine like the sun itself in comparison to this. He's done little here but point the camera at the actors and let them go. Although the entire movie is at least in focus and reasonably well-exposed, it also has the dubious distinction of featuring some of the blandest and least distinctive Hawaiian location photography ever done.

The big name cast is a waste of time. Ms. Aniston hasn't even phoned in a performance here. She more mugs her way through it with a haphazard collection of exaggerated facial expressions culled from reruns of "Friends," but it wouldn't be fair to blame this entire unfunny mess on her. Sandler doesn't act either. He does his schtick and he's done it better before. Although Katherine keeps talking about what a great guy Danny is, and how funny and charming he is, there's nothing on screen to justify it. In point of fact, the guy comes off like a mean-spirited, self-absorbed a**hole most of the time. Third-billed Nicole Kidman seems to be there mainly to get an all-expense paid Hawaiian vacation. Brooklyn Decker was cast for her ability to stuff a bikini and that she manages creditably. At least one person has a clue of what they're supposed to be doing.

LOCAL NOTE: "Just Go With It" is playing at Regal Cinemas and The Bowtie Theater in Schenectady.