

Star Performance Makes “The Informant!”

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A Review by
Andrew Henry, Instructor
Tom Sims, Executive Director
Cape May Film Society
609-884-6700
capemayfilm@hotmail.com
www.capemayfilm.org

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Can a movie about a whistleblower be funny, outrageous—even zany? Steven Soderbergh’s latest film “The Informant!” follows the true story of Mark Whitacre, a corporate executive who helped the FBI bust a major price-fixing scheme.

Henry’s Report

Whitacre sees himself as a master spy, taking down his higher-ups while at the same time envisioning his future at the company. “The Informant!” is more of a character study on one man being so blinded by his own greed, reality never comes into focus. Overall it is a well-made film, with beautiful shots, attention to the time period (early-90s) and all of the supporting players fill their roles adequately. But at times it does feel a little uneven. The score by Marvin Hamlisch is particularly jarring. I felt the music cues were reminding me I was suppose to laugh, instead of the humor just coming naturally from the situations.

The main reason to see this film is Damon’s performance, which I am certain will garner a Best Actor nomination come award season. His rapid stream of non-sequiturs provides an insight into Whitacre’s mind. We get to watch as his once noble intentions dissolve to reveal a pathetic man underneath. If Damon were not in this film, I might have reservations about recommending. But if you want to see one of the best performances of the year, check out “The Informant!”

Sims’ Report

No question Damon’s performance in this role is brilliant, and no doubt he makes the film. However, I wouldn’t downplay his supporting cast, each member seems to have a special talent and presence that only serve to build his character and bolster his work. I enjoyed the musical score, which was as much an irony as the life of Mark Whitacre himself. A story unfolds that is artfully told but nonetheless all business, yet the score right from a Bond adventure.

But the best part of this film is that Hollywood has given us a story that is just for us adults! Finally! My 17 year old daughter wanted to see this film because she thought it would be a zany comedy, and this may be owing to commercials that admittedly present it that way. She promptly fell asleep 20 minutes into it, as most of it went over her head. It feels good to have a studio film that respects rather than insults our intellect, one that says, “Let’s not target the 13-24 year olds with this one.”

So it looks like two solid recommendations for “The Informant!” primarily because of an Oscar-worthy performance from Matt Damon.

“Movie Spin,” is sponsored by the Cape May Film Society (www.capemayfilm.org), hosts of the award-winning Cape May Film Festival, November 20-22, 2009. You can email Andrew or Tom at capemayfilm@hotmail.com.