

Preston's Point-of-View

Movie Review – *Tower Heist*

November 2011

Rating: **Five out of Five Reno Arches!**

This is a movie that has plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, a decent story line and great characters. It's all about a luxury high-rise in midtown Manhattan and the people who live and work in the building. The heavy in the movie is Alan Alda. He lives in the Penthouse and took control of the employee's pension fund and has swindled it away. The building manager, Ben Stiller, was the one who asked Alda to manage the money and feels totally responsible for this fiasco. And Stiller makes it his mission to get the money back.

Investment swindle stories have become a soup du jour in the industry and while this one has shades of Madoff, it also has a clever approach to wear the money went. Stiller enlists the help of a thug who lives in his neighborhood, Eddie Murphy. Murphy has Producer credit in this film and plays his character with vintage Murphysk. While his role is a major character, he doesn't overwhelm you with his presence but his "lines" are Murphy through and through.

Stiller enlists the help of some Tower employees to create a gang to take back what is theirs. Adding to the ensemble, Matthew Broderick, Casey Affleck, Gabourey Sidibe, Téa Leoni, Stephen Henderson, Judd Hirsch, and Michael Peña. When the FBI steps in, Alda fights back and seems to have the upper hand for the moment.

Stiller's gang has developed a way to get cash out of a hidden safe in Alda's apartment and to the backdrop of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, announcer Matt Lauer included, the game is afoot. The last movie I remember using that Parade as a backdrop was *Miracle on 34th Street* starring Edmund Gwenn, Maureen O'Hara, and John Payne back in 1947.

Things are going as well as can be expected until the safe is found and opened and it's empty! Alda is a smart crook but Stiller is not deterred and eventually discovers his (Alda's) secret. Now it's quick thinking and some "high" jinx that causes the plot to thicken and the plan to change! In the end, everyone gets their "piece" of the stash, Stiller takes the fall and does time and Alda goes to jail and they throw away the key.

The pace of the story keeps you engaged, the actors play their roles with individual style creating many personas and the twists and turns build the plot into a fun climax and a, “that’s clever” moment. Alda is a good villain; Stiller is the quiet hero, and Gabourey Sidibe, a maid in the building, has some show-stealing bits. Nice to see Téa Leoni on screen again, she’s the FBI agent in charge and takes a shine to Stiller. Matthew Broderick plays an investment banker who was a building resident but lost his job, his wife and kids and the bank takes his condo, so he has nothing to lose despite the fact he’s somewhat of a depressed whimp. Entertaining...I liked it and if you’re looking for a laugh, *Tower Heist* will deliver!

Carpe Diem