

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Zero Dark Thirty Lives Up to Its Story Helen Kenney, staff writer



“Zero Dark Thirty” directed by Kathryn Bigelow and written by Mark Boal lives up to its ambitious tagline “the greatest manhunt in history” as it skillfully tells the story of America’s militant pursuit of Al Qaeda’s notorious leader Osama bin Laden. While the film has received some backlash for its seemingly pro-torture stance on interrogation techniques—the movie is much more about America’s decade long failure to find bin Laden than the success torture eventually facilitates.

The prologue is a black screen accompanied by the terrifying, chaotic sounds of 9/11—and when we hear the authentic recording of a sobbing woman on the phone with a 911 operator, the horrific reality of that day is unearthed and we as an audience are reminded of how angry we really are.

The same anger is what surely fuels the film’s protagonist, a CIA operative named Maya (Jessica Chastain), as she spends her entire career dedicated to finding the man America wants most. Two years after the attacks she has just been transferred to a CIA

“black site” in Pakistan. There, her fellow operative Dan (Jason Clarke) employs “enhanced interrogation”—a cocktail of waterboarding and painful humiliation—to extract information from Anmar (Reda Kateb), a captured Al Qaeda operative. Although these scenes are arguably the most contro-

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versial, they are crucial to the overall virtue of the film. While we find him despicable, we also recognize that Anmar is human—and our clashing feelings of sympathy and anger parallel the jarring acts of humanity and brutality that run ramped throughout the film.

Maya, who initially is not taken seriously, is a refreshing take on a strong female role; while packing just as much of a punch and acute intelligence as her female action-hero peers, she

exercises her command fully clothed and without a stunt double. Her prowess gradually becomes the force behind the entire operation which chronicles a series of minute and disconnected advances regardless of her best efforts. Accompanied by a number of impressive explosions and a stomachache full of suspense, the mission treks on without much traction until finally, rapidly, questions render into their long awaited results.

In a masterfully executed scene we watch the nighttime siege of May 1, 2011 on bin Laden’s hideout in Abbottabad by Navy SEALs, marking the conclusion to a long and tumultuous pursuit. This is the part of the story which we are most familiar and the climax of “Zero Dark Thirty” yet it is the crescendo that leaves us most heart heavy. We are exhaustedly satisfied—and so is Maya, who we last see departing on a jet, alone and in well-deserved tears.

Also starring: Chris Pratt, Joel Edgerton, Kyle Chandler and Mark Strong. Open in wide-release.

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ASK GIGI

I’m wondering how old is too old to date. I’m 20, and my new boyfriend is 30. Some of my friends say that he’s too old, but I actually really like him. He doesn’t seem old to me, but I do worry about what my friends will think. So, How old is too old?

I really don’t think that there is an exact age at which I can say “he’s too old”. You’ve heard the saying “age is but a number”, and I do feel that that can be applied to you. You need to stop worrying about what your friends feel about him and instead focus on how you feel about him. Ask yourself these

questions: Do you feel comfortable with him? Do you want to introduce him to your friends? Would you feel comfortable introducing him to your parents? As long as you feel he’s right for you, your friends and family should see that and respect your relationship. Just remember, if you don’t feel comfortable with

his age now, you might never. If you’re going to be invested in this relationship, he has to be a part of your life, and you have to be comfortable with him completely.

Love, Gigi