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MOVIES & SHOWTIMES

'Thunder Force' lacks ... thunder

BY MAKENZIE WHITTLE • The Bulletin

Hollywood should really stop greenlighting every Ben Falcone/Melissa McCarthy movie. Netflix's "Thunder Force" makes the fourth time a Falcone-written, directed and produced project has featured his actor-wife, and each time they fall flat with films full of unfunny antics. (The others are "Tammy" (2014), "The Boss" (2016) and "Life of the Party" (2018). HBO Max's 2020 film "Superintelligence" was not written by Falcone, but he did direct and produce it.)



Melissa McCarthy, left, and Octavia Spencer in a scene from "Thunder Force" (2021).

Netflix

The film lays out that in 1983 the planet was struck with some cosmic rays that genetically altered a select group of the population giving them superpowers. The problem is the powers were only unleashed in those who already had some sociopathic tendencies and they became supervillains that are called Miscreants.

The plot is incredibly formulaic and lazy as it follows two best but estranged friends, Lydia and Emily (McCarthy and Octavia Spencer), who reunite 20 years after going their separate ways.

Lydia works a forklift in a Chicago shipping yard while Emily has gone on to run a research company. The two haven't spoken in all those years, and when their high school reunion rolls around, Lydia takes steps to reunite.

When they do, she accidentally takes a serum that will give her super-strength. Emily in turn takes an invisibility serum and the two form a power duo called Thunder Force.

Meanwhile, a mayoral election between a grassroots candidate (Melissa Ponzio) and a typically greasy politician named The King (Bobby Cannavale) is threatened by a Miscreant named Laser (Pom Klementieff) who has been wreaking havoc on the city for a while.

The story is so by-the-numbers you can almost predict down to the second when a "twist" is going to happen, and you can see them plainly from early on in the run time.

As for the comedy, any slightly funny situ-

More Information

"Thunder Force"

106 minutes

Rated PG-13 for some action/violence, language and mild suggestive material



ation is quickly ruined by the apparent need to repeat the joke as many times as possible, as if someone was saying, "Here's the joke. Did you catch it? I'll say it again. Did you hear it? Did you see it? We'll just keep hammering it into the ground for ya!"

There may be a nice, slightly heartwarming story in there about reconciliation, empowerment and friendship, but it is bogged down under the blanket barraging of bad jokes, overused gags and tired storytelling.

One of the most infuriating parts of this movie might be the fact that it is full of good actors, ones that have been nominated for and won awards and shown off their comedy and overall acting chops countless times. And while it looks like they're at least enjoying themselves (many of them have worked together in the past, and Spencer and McCarthy have been actual friends for 20 years), nothing can save the uninspired superhero attempt.

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