

Red Notice: A star-studded waste of potential

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Ryan Reynolds. Gal Gadot. Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson.

Three of current Hollywood's most exciting names should be a recipe for something great. Sadly, it's far from it.

Ever since the pandemic hit and streaming services received a major boost in popularity and usage, there have been platforms competing left and right to release the most hype shows and movies. Netflix, arguably, has been at the forefront of that competition all throughout, and with *Red Notice*, has broken the record of most-watched film in Netflix opening day history. However, there lies the problem.

The fact that a movie like *Red Notice* made such an impact is a clear indicator of the current mainstream taste: face over quality. A brand new movie starring three big stars is enough to make people tune in regardless of the actual substance to be expected. In terms of said substance, unfortunately, there wasn't much. Minor spoilers ahead.

The story starts with FBI Agent John Hartley (played by Dwayne Johnson) tracking down famous art thief Nolan Booth (played by Ryan Reynolds). Despite Nolan constantly evading capture, Hartley is able to finally put Nolan behind bars thanks to secret information leaked by the criminal mastermind 'The Bishop' (played by Gal Gadot).

However, in a strange twist of fate, Hartley is framed for money embezzlement by The Bishop, stripped of his status as a law enforcer, and is put in the same jail cell as Nolan. To get his life back, Hartley pairs up with Nolan to foil The Bishop's master plan of stealing Cleopatra's golden eggs, a long-lost treasure coveted by international criminals.



Thus begins the unlikely duo's fight against the dastardly Bishop, who always seems to be one step ahead of the two blossoming buds.

Let's start with the positives. The main attraction of this movie is the three main actors, and rather expectedly, they perform their roles quite well. 'The Rock' plays the stoic yet protective character of John Hartley excellently, and Ryan Reynolds is basically just Deadpool in the role of a charismatic, joke-loving, non-serious anti-hero. While Gal Gadot as a criminal mastermind might sound quite different from Wonder Woman, she plays the villainous role with similar enthusiasm and charm. The three complement each other almost exemplarily, and as the movie is very dependent on snappy quips, their chemistry pulls off the comedic scenes

nicely as well.

Sadly, that is where the praise ends. *Red Notice* has a story that is not only filled with plot holes but is willingly left incomplete to tease a sequel. After almost two hours of runtime, having the main resolution end in a random plot twist with little lasting consequence feels like a betrayal to the audience. Add very cheesy lines and predictable action to the mix, and you get a movie that is hard to slog through once the initial charm of The Rock and Deadpool pair has worn off.

The writing in general feels like something inspired from Bond movies but tries way too hard to shove in unfunny jokes during even the most serious scenes. There is also an over-reliance on action to pad the runtime: action that does



little to drive the plot forward. *Red Notice* prominently features some of the most typical action tropes in spy movie history, including but definitely not limited to car chases, museum hijacks, prison break, falling down a waterfall, infiltrating a VIP party, impersonating someone to hack security, and many more.

The writing also did not give the talented actors any quality materials to work with. Most of the dialogue is snappy one-liners or just action-oriented comedic routines, which is a shame because, with this star-studded cast, this movie had the potential to be much better.

All in all, *Red Notice* feels like just another action flick that is good for wasting two hours on. Just don't expect anything meaningful from a film that is made to be a cheap one-time pop.

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