



**AYAZ KADER**

Paul Thomas Anderson and Thomas Pynchon, besides sharing the name Thomas, also excel at portraying serious political matters in a comical manner. However, what stands out in his new film *One Battle After Another*, which itself is loosely inspired by Pynchon's 1990 novel *Vineland*, is Anderson's expertise in portraying the psychological drama of a wonderful father-daughter relationship.

The film follows the story of a militant revolutionary group, French 75, headed by Perfidia Beverly Hills and "Ghetto" Pat Calhoun, played by Teyana Taylor and Leonardo DiCaprio, respectively. The main antagonist is a colonel, Steven Lockjaw, who is played by Sean Penn.

Anderson's film is a powerful message against the recent US Immigration and

Customs Enforcement (ICE) crackdown on immigrants in the US and the injustices perpetuated by the elite class against the masses. This is made clear in the beginning as the group attempts to free detainees from a detention centre. Besides that, Colonel Lockjaw – who attempts to break up the group and hunt down its members – joins a white-supremacist group and is applauded by its members for his effort.

Additionally, Anderson's portrayal of Calhoun (who later lives under the name Bob Ferguson) and his relationship with his daughter Willa is a testament to his skills as an expert storyteller, particularly in the psychological drama genre. One must be quite stoic not to feel moved at the rendering of their relationship. DiCaprio's performance is central to this emotional weight. He brings an energy that makes

the film feel lived-in rather than performed, always showing himself by his daughter's side, no matter what. On the other hand, Teyana Taylor provides a counterbalance by grounding the film's chaotic elements with a sharp comedic instinct. Her presence induces a jolt of control into an otherwise frantic dynamics of the militant group.

Although cinema as a medium has, to various extents, always confronted the power structures that dictate the status quo, this film further reinforces its position as a tool that can be wielded in protest, especially in regard to the mainstream. Regardless of whether you're into political thrillers or not, Anderson provides a perfectly tuned comedic thriller that is filled with action. Thus, before you get ready to watch it, make sure to prepare yourself for an unforgettable, suspenseful rollercoaster.

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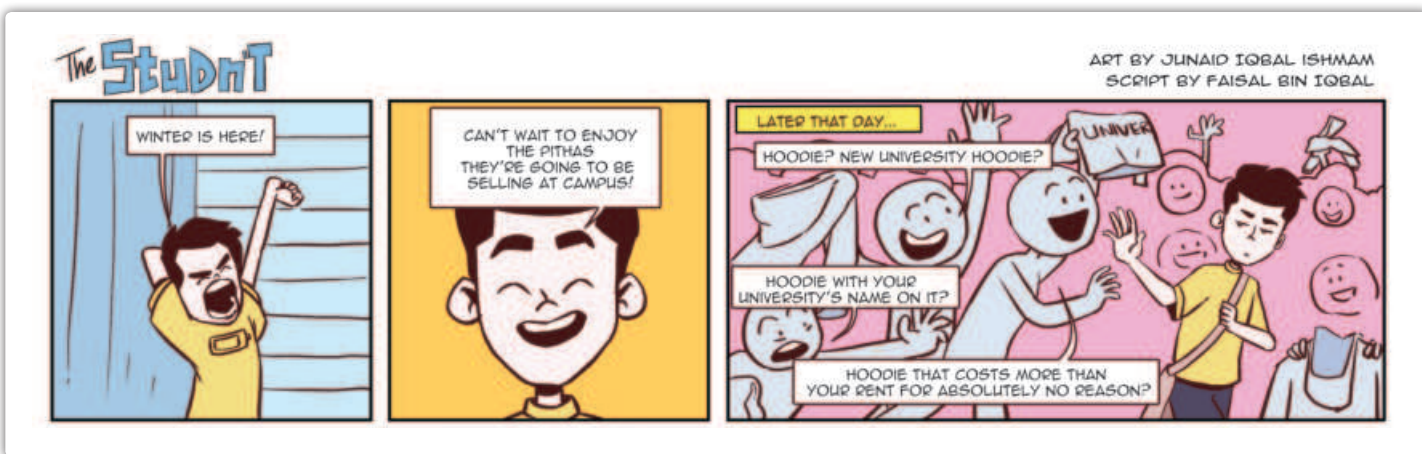
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