



FILM: **NORMAN: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer**

FDG RATING: 3.2 ☺☺☺○○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Joseph Cedar: *Director, writer*

Richard Gere: *Actor, Norman Oppenheimer*

Lior Ashkenaz: *Actor, Micha Eshel*

DATE: June 18, 2017

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **NORMAN: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer**

One of our resident reviewers had the perfect description of the film, Norman, saying it was an entertaining, intertwined puzzle where instead of a missing piece, there was one too many pieces.

Richard Gere pulled off a stellar performance making his schmoozing, slightly irritating, desperate “deal-maker” very believable. An aging nobody, he hustles a living by claiming to have “connections”. We witness the “rise” of Norman, the New York fixer, when he navigates himself into the graces of Eshel, an Israeli dignitary, by buying him a \$1200 pair of shoes to impress him. The man becomes the prime minister of Israel allowing Norman to relish his association but only for a short time.

During his “rise”, Norman is hoping to strike it rich by essentially selling off part of Israel's national debt, a scheme built on a web of shaky promises. If it all works out, Norman makes money, Rabbi Blumenthal's congregation gets a needed infusion of cash to buy the temple's building, Philip marries his fiancée with Rabbi Blumenthal presiding, and Eshel is praised as the greatest prime minister in history. However, all that goes up must come down, and Norman's “up” is tenuously ephemeral. The puzzle pieces don't fit together; thus the “fall” of Norman. And being a nobody, he basically disappears.

Some of us thought the plot was weak and implausible. Others found Norman to be uncomfortably irritating and had to be won over to finally appreciate Gere's performance. Admittedly slow and a bit tedious, one reviewer found it boring and turned the DVD off about three quarters through the film. Others noted the convolution of intertwined deals was very clever.

Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer was original, funny, sad, and somewhat suspenseful with an intriguing main character. We gave the film a rising (or falling) 3.2 on a scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

Adriane Dedic, adedic@pacbell.net

[Film Discussion Group](#) (FDG) organizer