



FILM: **VICE**

FDG RATING: 2.7 ☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️

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

Adam McKay: *director/writer*
Christian Bale: *actor, Dick Cheney*
Amy Adams: *actress, Lynne Cheney*
Steve Carell: *actor, Donald Rumsfeld*
Sam Rockwell: *actor, George W. Bush*

DATE: January 20, 2019

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **VICE**

No one knows what really happened since Cheney (an amazing Oscar worthy transformation by Christian Bale) destroyed all relevant documents, so director Adam McKay's, biased version is as good as any Shakespearian kingly rise to power (prodded behind the scenes by an even more manipulative female). Dick Cheney was a party going boozier who dropped out of Yale and retreated to his home state of Wyoming working as a utility lineman with no ambition and an embarrassing disappointment to his fiancée, Lynne Vincent (played with perfect restraint by Amy Adams), who reads him the marital riot act threatening that they were finished unless he pulled himself together. Which he does, in an about-face, in-your-face heartless scheme to become the most powerful vice president in American history that also turned all sense of justice, democracy, decency, and political process and authority on its head. And Lynne, who is the stronger intellect, vicariously relishes his rise to power knowing that as a female she would not be entitled to the same opportunities.

Almost all discussion participants agreed that the casting, make-up, and acting were outstanding. But as to the story and quirky film techniques, we were split. Some found the scene shifting jarring, others thought it was 2 hours too long, another said it was too quirky in a bad way, another enjoyed moments but then was confused by some weird scenes. All of us thought seeing the dismembered beating heart was too over the top. Even published critics questioned the burlesque treatment of the story noting that smarter insight into who Cheney was would be a better dramatic movie.

Positive comments focused on the insight into corruption. Others liked the farce and noted that some of the creative, unexpected filming techniques made the film more interesting and underscored the weirdness of the actual political situation: Weird and uncomfortably familiar in terms of Cheney's altered reality, usurpation of power, bullying, and contempt-for-the-rule-of-law leadership. He learns the Washington inside game during the Nixon and Ford administrations, applies the lessons during the presidency of George H.W. Bush and demonstrates his unmatched mastery when George W. (Sam Rockwell) comes along. Cheney talks Bush into outsourcing things like "bureaucracy," "foreign policy," "energy," and "military" to the Veep's office which historically led to policies that seriously damaged our nation such as his unilateral approach to foreign policy, his preference for military force over diplomacy, his considerable overestimation of American strength and his desire to reshape the Middle East. McKay wants us to see that we allowed this to happen then just as we allowed the current political situation.

A few powerful scores of 4 were subjugated by many lower ratings resulting in an inept 2.7 on our cumulative score of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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