



*Man Overboard* Review

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*Man Overboard* is a comedy seemingly about a lot of things – family, business, money, friends, and questioning all of them – but ultimately, when you step away from the film, it's one idea that sticks with you: There's a reward in doing the right thing when the wrong thing might be the easier option.

It is a comedy with a moral, and sometimes those movies fall on their faces. That's because a comedy is supposed to make you laugh, first and foremost, and if it fails to do that, it doesn't much matter what else the movie has going for it. Where a lot of movies in this genre make their biggest mistake is in focusing on just the jokes. When these jokes can't be strung together by substance, not only aren't people laughing because the humor is so forced, but they also aren't enjoying anything else about tonight's feature presentation.

In the case of *Man Overboard*, writers Ashley Scott Meyers and Nathan Ives have clearly based their movie about the circumstances of believable characters. That takes the pressure off getting a laugh every minute or two and developing a real story, and any laugh is better in context. We meet C.J. Mason (Matthew Kaminsky), who runs his own used boat dealership. He does well enough to provide for his family, but he'd obviously like to give them more. C.J. feels the sting of sluggish business and the expectations of his father-in-law, who constantly pushes C.J.'s buttons.

In order to afford a big new house that he bought under the pressure to prove himself to his wife's father, C.J. hires an aggressive new salesman at the dealership. Johnny (Mel Fair) is an oily snake of a man, but he's also a hell of a salesman, perhaps because he can sell himself on anything. Johnny brings a new dynamic to the shop, which had been maybe too relaxed over the years.

We know that all of these things will have to come to a head. The screenplay not only builds the brewing conflict between C.J. and Johnny, but it also adds some more serious notes about how an independent businessman has to struggle to make it all work. In essence, *Man Overboard* is built from the perspective of its main character outward. Give credit to director Oliver Robins for letting the things this story is really about buoy the rest of the details.

You could make a version of this story with more laughs, but you'd sacrifice its heart in the process. And as truly independent productions go, it's as polished and professional as you could hope to find. The photography, editing, music, and the performances all hit the mark, making *Man Overboard* a really effective comedy that's actually about something.