

Acting saves 'The Wolf of Wall Street'

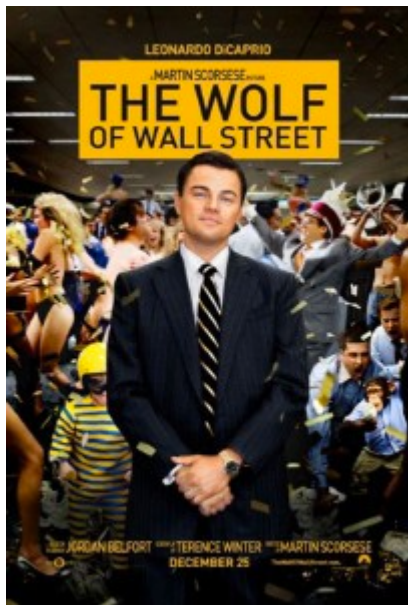


By Jeremy Miller

"The Wolf of Wall Street" is the latest from master filmmaker Martin Scorsese. It stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Jonah Hill, Matthew McConaughey, Margot Robbie and Kyle Chandler.

The three-hour epic centers on the rise and fall of Jordan Belfort (DiCaprio), a young and very ambitious stockbroker on Wall Street. He moves to Wall Street wanting to get in on the action, and quickly decides to stray away from the corporate ladder and do things his way. Joined by a few quirky characters, including his No. 2 Donnie Azoff (Hill) he turns a broker firm of 20 employees into 250 with a perfectly rounded sales script he wrote himself.

Essentially, the firm made their money pushing worthless penny stocks onto rich people and took 50 percent commission off each and every sale. Along the way, the "crew" delves into the world of drugs, prostitution, and any other activity that warrants an R rating.



Eventually they catch the attention of the FBI, especially agent Patrick Denham (Chandler) who confidently pursues Jordan and his buddies, just waiting for them to screw up overtly. Jordan has to evade the FBI while also upholding his playboy image, along with the managing of his now very successful firm. But how long can he keep it up? Bam! There's the plot.

The film is packed full of fancy cars, elaborate houses, the craziest parties, and most things the average person only fantasizes about while scratching the \$2 ticket purchased at 7-Eleven that day.

Aesthetically the film is decent, pretty standard cinematography and the cast, not the visuals, delivers most of the power. Leonardo definitely out-did himself (won the Golden Globe) and I sense he's favored for the Oscar. Jonah Hill is who really stuck out to me, however. He created a wonderfully entertaining character and was hands down the comedic drive behind the film.

I enjoyed the story and felt it moved well and I was satisfied when it was over. There's just one problem that warranted the 3/5 rating. I felt like I was watching a modern day reimagining of "Goodfellas". As soon as I had this epiphany, I realized that it is almost the exact same film. Plot points, story line, even the timing was the same. If you've seen one, you've seen the other. That bummed me out. The stories are similar, so I don't put it all on Mr. Scorsese, and it's still a wonderful film, but that just took away from my experience. Also, unlike "Goodfellas", the three-hour run time of "Wolf" was noticed. I must have checked my watch three or four times toward the end just waiting for credits to roll which is never

a good indicator. Overall, the film was good, acting was awesome, it was fun and explosive, but I didn't feel it held to the Scorsese standard of a game changer.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.