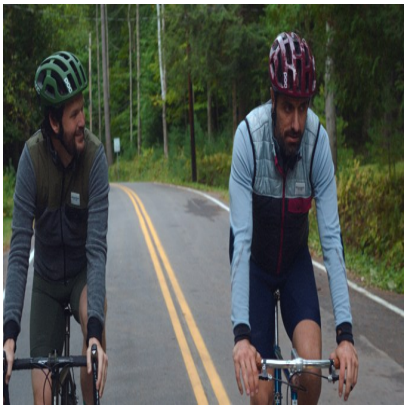
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SUNDANCE FILM REVIEW: The Climb

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The Climb, featured in the Spotlight section of the 2020 Sundance Film Festival is directed by New York actor and filmmaker, Michael Angelo Covino. Covino most recently received the Special Jury Prize at SXSW for *Hunter Gatherer*. In 2016, he was named to *Moviemaker Magazine*â??s â??25 screenwriters to watchâ?• list. In *The Climb*, from Sony Pictures Classic, Covino tells the story of two best friends navigating adulthood and what it means to be a best friend. The film opens with the two main characters, Kyle, portrayed by Kyle Marvin, and Mike, portrayed by Covino himself, biking up a long incline in France.



Best friends, Kyle, left, portrayed by Kyle Marvin, and Mike, portrayed by Michael Angelo Covino, sta

Both riders are climbing vigorously when the fun begins. Kyle reveals to his best friend and soon-to-be best man at Kyleâ??s upcoming wedding his anxiety about the thoughts of married life. Without missing a beat Mike drops a silent but deadly bombshell â?? he slept with Kyleâ??s fianceâ??, Suzi, portrayed by Talia Balsam, multiple times. But before Kyle and Suzi began dating. Mike a standout high school

football player swears it meant nothing and they broke it off long ago.

Adding to the raucous opening, a small Italian car arrives blaring its obnoxious horn. Mike comes undone swearing for the driver to go by and then he proceeds to chase the car profusely. When Kyle finally catches up, the driver is pummelling a prostrate Mike culminating in a few well-placed stomps that land Mike in the hospital. Suzi arrives to check on Kyleâ??s well-being and discovers Mike in an examining station. Both swear they have no feelings for each other before engaging in a no-holds-barred passionate kiss. Kyle walks in and the wedding is off while the story is just beginning.

Covino delivers brilliance with a sharply written script he and Morgan co-wrote. Adding into the mix some nicely placed diegetic musical performances and *The Climb* is quickly elevated into art cinema. A strong musical score from Jon Natchez and Martin Mabz heightens the filmâ??s revealing truths. Cinematographer Zach Cupperstein executes several French New Wave shots that speak volumes in the filmâ??s cinematic language. Sara Shaw provides seamless editing and complementary pacing consistent with the narrative. Callan Stokes handled costuming augmenting the setting while enhancing an eye-pleasing mise-en-scene. A strong supporting cast includes veteran actor, George Wendt, Judith Godreche, and Gayle Rankin in well-executed roles.

The Climb is a treasure-trove of filmmaking techniques with strong screenwriting, well-executed cinematography, and compelling performances. Itâ??s is a fun ride and a highly recommended viewing.

Additional screenings at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival are Sunday, January 26th, 6:30 PM, at the Ray Theatre, and Saturday, February 1st, 6PM, at the Park City Library.

Until then, Iâ??ll see you at the movies!



Category

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Tags

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Date Created
January 26, 2020

Author
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