

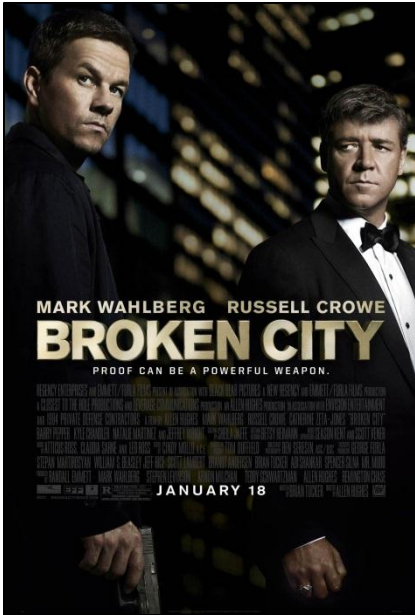
In theaters

# “Broken City”

Saved by the characters



By Jayson Burns



Personally, I occasionally have a hard time following plots that involve politics or business, mostly due to all of the little technical details that get thrown around. Because of that, I can get disinterested fairly quickly while watching these movies.

Fortunately for Broken City, despite some of these same issues, its characters were enough for me to give it a chance.

The story follows Billy Taggart (Mark Wahlberg), a police officer turned private eye as a result of a public outcry against his supposedly criminal shooting of a local New Yorker.

Being aware of his “specialty” in tracking adulterous loved ones, Mayor Hostetler (Russell Crowe) hires Billy to follow his wife (Catherine Zeta-Jones) and uncover her affair, promising him the money he needs to pay his debts. New information soon begins to cross Billy’s desk, however, and he learns that there is much more going on than he had been told.

Something that surprised me about Broken City is that I had a much easier time following the plot points that were implied rather than those that were spelled out. This is due mostly to the scandal that serves as the main focus, which involved quite a few names and business/political dealings being thrown around.

It never got to the point where I was completely lost, but I did miss a few details at first because I didn’t catch a character’s name. Still, Billy’s personal story was very interesting, with much of his past never being overly stated and instead implied by the way he and others interacted.

With one or two exceptions, Mark Wahlberg does a fine job as Billy. What I enjoyed especially is how well he portrayed the “little guy” among the political powerhouses like the chief of police or the mayor.

Russell Crowe gives the mayor of New York some good dimension, being charismatic despite being far from a saint himself. Catherine Zeta-Jones does not get that much screen time, but she does all right in the scenes she was given.

As for some of the supporting cast, Alona Tal stands out as Billy’s assistant and the two have an enjoyable chemistry between them, but Jeffery Wright as the police commissioner seemed a little too intense; I began to wonder if his character ever blinked.

Despite my issues with the way the main plot was fleshed-out, the script was fairly solid if a bit long. With Billy and his assistant being a prime example, characters and their interactions with each other were very well written for the most part.

One glaring issue I had with Broken City, however, is its sudden jump of seven years after the introduction. This made it both a little jarring as well as a bit unbelievable. Aside from Billy becoming a private eye, not much seems to have changed for anyone in seven years.

Something else that bugged me was near the end, when the film decided to have some editing styles it didn’t have before.

Though the main plot could’ve used some work, the characters are still enjoyable enough to make this a good choice for anyone interested.

*This film is rated R.*