

Let's Try It Again – *The Suicide Squad* Quick Review

By Aurelio De Leon, Jr.

On the heels of the unbearable film that was *Suicide Squad* (2016), comes the much anticipated *The Suicide Squad* (2021) from director James Gunn. Considering the amount of studio interference that plagued the original film, I'm sure the original cut would have been an okay film, but with that being said, the bar wasn't high to reach for this pseudo sequel and with Gunn's experience with ensemble casts from the Guardians films, he goes above and beyond to deliver an exhilarating, colorful explosion of a summer blockbuster. Though the 2016 film was likely going for a more dour tone before Warner Brothers chewed it up and spat out the upbeat and quirky mess to match the success of *Deadpool*, that doesn't take away the fact that the 2021 version is leagues ahead in character development, humor, action, set pieces, dialogue and most importantly the soundtrack. This soundtrack isn't perfect but it's so much more subdued than the cringe inducing abomination of a soundtrack we got before. With all of those elements in place, Gunn is able to provide the necessary laughs and charm while daring to venture into the absolute absurdity of these comic book characters, managing to give most of them a chance to shine. There were also great moments when the frills and thrills dissipated just enough to allow for some stark scenes with grim realizations and tense situations to break up from the usual, though I will say there were moments where the pacing staggered a bit, but it wasn't enough to detract from the bloody fun it capitalizes on with its R rating.

The film doesn't forget its predecessor completely but definitely benefits from it in not having to divulge exposition and is able to jump into the thick of it without skipping a beat. Idris Elba, who elevates whatever he's in, mostly takes the helm as Bloodsport, and Viola Davis absolutely dominates her scenes, reprising her role as Amanda Waller. Some other standouts were Daniela Melchior as Ratcatcher, who brings a lot of heart to the team and of course Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn sporting her usual chaotic energy. Through all of these characters we're given the opportunity to connect with them and explore their morality in a way that's endearing but never takes itself too seriously. *The Suicide Squad* is an overall improvement but can also stand on its own; the plot isn't too deep but it's the colorful cast of characters that keeps you in your seat. It's an all-around fun time that scratches the itch left by the 2016 version and hopefully lets us forget it altogether.