

## David & Layla Redefines the Romantic Comedy

Written by Administrator

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Something smells rotten on the indie circuit. When a crap sandwich such as “David & Layla” be comes a darling of

21 festivals you really have to wonder whether or not there are simply too many fests out there.

Poorly written and directed, this romantic comedy is neither romantic nor funny. Despite its rich premise, in which a star-crossed Kurd and Jew fall for each other, there is little to like or believe here.

David (David Moscow, he was the little Tom Hanks in BIG) has a local cable show which focuses on sex. He is in a passionless engagement to a hypertense A-type Jewish American Princess. While doing man on the street interviews he tries several times to talk the stunning Layla (Shiva Rose). Layla initially shuns him but warms up. The two go on a few dates and fall in love. With Layla facing immediate deportation, David proposes. The two then have to convince their parents (with deeply rooted bigotries) that love between a Jew and Kurd is possible and holy. Eventually, the two cultures find they have much more in common than originally thought.

The first hint that neophyte writer/direct Jay Jonroy has no sense of how a romantic comedy works comes before the titles. A black card is inserted stating

*“For my sister, whose husband was kidnapped in 1963. Later he was found murdered with 170 other civilians in a mass grave. Her two sons are refugees in Germany.”*

*For my brother, missing since 1993. In 2003 his remains were found in Saddam’s Abu Ghraib mass grave. His widow and three children are refugees in Holland*  
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WHAT THE FUCK? I'm ready for some LOVE!

While tragic, this opening casts a dark grey cloud over the entire film.

What follows is a series of misadventures that would sink any man’s chances of wooing the love of their life. One completely unbelievable incident takes place aboard David’s boat. After inviting Layla for a short cruise he takes some XTC, pukes a lot and nearly kills them both. The scene is played for laughs, but how many women would really stick with a new guy after that? Since it is based ( I assume VERY loosely) on a true story, the viewer feels blackmailed into thinking these things may actually happen.

Also in the unbelievable is David’s conversion to Islam. While being questioned about Ramadan, David states that there is a “diet” rather than “a fast.” I think of all of the traditions of Islam this one would be the Jews would understand the most. This grated me since it seemed that the filmmaker had no grasp on Jewish culture at all.

The film is peppered with stories about the genocide of the Kurds (shocker: the Bush family is responsible) which does give some pertinent information but detracts from the main story.—convincing the parents. Rather than showing a in-depth character study of the two cultures, the filmmaker opts for shallow stereotypes of both the Kurdish and Jewish families. Both families are portrayed as extremely stubborn and then relent for no apparent reason. The result left me feeling as if a reel was missing. I couldn’t help but think that the real story was with the parents, not the lovers.

Across the board the performances are weak, this is obviously a sign of a director who has little experience in working with actors. David Moscow really tries to cut loose but he seems

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restrained.

I really try and stay away from vitriolic reviews. However, every now and again a flick comes my way that really ruffles my feathers. Such is the case with “David & Layla.”

With all of the critical success this film has had it left me with only two opinions. Either the festival judges (and Variety, for that matter) are completely whipped by self-righteousness or I am the dumbest goy in the universe.