

Bullock and McCarthy paired as unlikely partners in good cop-bad cop comedy

Written by Kam Williams



DP-11220, FBI - FBI Special Agent Sarah Ashburn (Sandra Bullock, left) and Boston Detective Shannon Mullins (Melissa McCarthy) sit in a street after an unseasoned setback. Photo: Gamma Lia Photo. FBI and © 2012 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Not for sale or republication.

FBI Agent Sarah Ashburn (Sandra Bullock) has been dispatched to Boston where she's assigned to apprehend a ruthless drug kingpin. However, her boss is concerned about the uptight, 12-year veteran's horrible habit of rubbing her relatively-relaxed colleagues the wrong way.

Sure enough, upon arriving in Beantown, the proper Yale grad manages to irritate her new partner even before they're formally introduced, when the two have a spat over a spot in a police precinct parking lot. Sarah subsequently meets foul-mouthed Shannon Mullins (Melissa McCarthy), a hard-nosed city cop working a beat on a rough side of town.

They still grudgingly agree to investigate the narcotics case together, and it doesn't take long for their contrasting law enforcement styles to generate a lot of friction. Nerdy Sarah tends to play it by the book while Dirty Harry-like Shannon could care less about following the rules or respecting suspects' rights. Nevertheless, they're soon following a trail of clues that takes them from a seedy nightclub to a rundown tenement to an abandoned warehouse along the waterfront.

So unfolds "The Heat", a good cop-bad cop comedy reuniting director Paul Feig with Melissa McCarthy, the relentlessly-raunchy scene-stealer who upstaged the rest of the ensemble in his equally-hilarious "Bridesmaids". Here, McCarthy holds her own in a lead role opposite Sandra Bullock, with the pair generating just the right chemistry as terminally-mismatched partners.

Though the talented supporting cast includes Marlon Wayans, Michael Rapaport and Jane Curtin, make no mistake, this flick is all about the witty repartee between the protagonists. Typical is this salty exchange coming in close quarters, where Sarah's complaint "Your breast is invading my space." is met by Shannon's fair warning to "Keep your finger off my areola."

In another scene, Sarah blushes while Shannon plays a game of Russian roulette with a pistol pointed directly at a perp's gonads. Despite all the bawdy jokes, "The Heat" is grounded by a sensitive storyline that actually has you investing emotionally in the characters.

So, don't be surprised to shed a few tears as the curtain comes down on this two-fisted tale of

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female empowerment about a pair of polar-opposite lady lawmen who eventually set aside their differences to get their man while forging an enduring friendship worthy of a sequel.

Excellent (4 stars)

Rated R for violence, crude humor and pervasive profanity

Running time: 117 minutes

Distributor: 20th Century Fox

To see a trailer for "The Heat", visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0HWlvP1xdk>