

Pal Secretly Serves as Sperm Donor in Biological Clock Comedy

Written by Film Review by Kam Williams



JENNIFER ANISTON **THE SWITCH** JASON BATEMAN
THE MOST UNEXPECTED COMEDY EVER CONCEIVED
FROM THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT YOU JUNO AND LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE



The Switch

The well-saturated blurb for *The Switch* asserts that the film comes “From the people who brought you *Juno* and *Little Miss Sunshine*.” That’s a serious claim given that each of those hilarious hits landed an Academy Award in the Best Original Screenplay category. Regrettably, I found myself scratching my head asking what happened during this relatively-funereal flick’s closing credits.

As it turns out, however, *Juno* was written by Diablo Cody and directed by Jason Reitman, while *Little Miss Sunshine* was written by Michael Arndt and co-directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris. And none of the above were on *The Switch*’s creative team. Comparing the casts, the only name that resurfaces is that of Jason Bateman, who enjoyed a supporting role in *Juno*. Therefore, excuse me for wondering what exactly *The Switch*’s marketing team meant with all the misleading hype?

Had the movie actually measured up to the films upon whose success it sought to trade, I wouldn’t have found the false advertising so annoying. But this pretender pales in comparison, starting with a storyline too farfetched to take seriously.

Unmarried Kassie Larson (Jennifer Aniston), a career-oriented, NYC television producer, is desperate to have a baby because she hears her biological clock ticking. She reflexively rejects the offer of her BFF Wally (Bateman) to serve as the sperm donor because he’s a hypochondriac, and she doesn’t want a child carrying DNA with the same traits.

But rather than retain the anonymous services of an artificial insemination clinic, Kassie settles on Roland (Patrick Wilson), a seemingly happily-married stranger who meets her requirements,

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being tall and handsome with a good sense of humor. Next, she invites all her friends over for an "I'm Getting Pregnant Party" during which an inebriated Wally, in a fit of jealousy, sneaks into the bathroom to replace Roland's semen with his own before Kassie has had a chance to inject any into her womb.

Soon enough, she's expecting, quits her job, and moves home to Minnesota which she considers a better place to raise a child. Fast-forward seven years and she's returning to New York with six year-old Sebastian (Thomas Robinson), having been seduced back to the Big Apple by the dangling carrot of a plum position at ABC-TV.

Once settled in Manhattan, Kassie introduces her son to Wally who can't help but notice a resemblance in that the kid is afflicted with the same concatenation of tics and neuroses as he. Mom also contacts Roland, Sebastian's supposed biological father, who is now conveniently divorced. As love blossoms between Kassie and Roland with matrimony looming on the horizon, the fly in the ointment is the possibility of Wally spilling the beans about Sebastian's paternity in order to and ruin the wedding plans.

Resting upon a patently-felonious premise more criminal than humorous, *The Switch* is never funny and elicited exactly one unforced laugh from this critic. One. A worse protagonist to win the girl's heart in the end is hard to imagine, for unrepentant "I don't remember doing it" Wally, like a true unrecovered alcoholic deep in denial, avoids taking ownership of his deliberate frustration of Kassie's desires or his violation of her body.

A walkout-bad, 'bait and switch' rip-off bearing less resemblance to *Juno* or *Little Miss Sunshine* than to terrible TV sitcoms revolving around the shopworn 'one big lie' plot device.

Poor (½ star)

Rated PG-13 for nudity, sexuality, profanity, drug use and mature themes.

Running time: 100 Minutes

Distributor: Miramax Films

To see a trailer for *The Switch*, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNYvMI1EC9U&feature=search>