

The Whistleblower

Cert 15 UK 2010 112 mins

Crew

Director	Larysa Kondracki
Screenplay	Larysa Kondracki and Eilis Kirwan
Cinematography	Kieran McGuigan
Film Editing	Julian Clarke

Cast

Rachel Weisz	Kathryn Bolkovac
Vanessa Redgrave	Madeleine Rees
Benedict Cumberbatch	Nick Kaufman
David Strathairn	Peter Ward
Roxana Condurache	Raya Kochan
Monica Bellucci	Laura Leviani

Synopsis

Bosnia, the recent past. Hard-up Nebraska Police Officer Kathryn Bolkovac accepts a well-paying UN peacekeeping job courtesy of a private military contractor working on behalf of the UN. She arrives in post-war Bosnia expecting a harmonized international effort, but instead finds chaos, disorder and simmering ethnic tensions.

When a brutally injured young woman lands in the UN's care, Kathryn risks her own safety as she unearths an organised and brutal underworld of sex trafficking. Despite attempts to thwart her investigation and threats on her life she fights to uncover the truth, and traces the path of criminality to a shocking source.



The Whistleblower is a late substitute at the viewing session for Coriolanus.

Please see the BFFS SW website for distributor information.



Reviews

....Weisz's performance holds the viewer every step of the way. Her Kathy could be a spiritual sister to the anti-Big Pharma crusader Weisz played in *The Constant Gardener*; it's a conventional but gripping star turn, fuelled by a righteous combo of human decency and fearless initiative.

Like most films of its type, *The Whistleblower* exists mainly to shed light on a sobering topic (bluntly brought home in the final reels), but it provides no shortage of dramatic satisfactions along the way. And while some may fault the film for favouring a white outsider's perspective, the better to ease mainstream audiences into issues they'd rather not think about, its deployment of Kathy as an entry point makes simple dramatic sense, given that this is a story about a Westerner bringing to light specifically Western abuses of power.

Even still, the film takes pains to do right by Irka and especially Raya (played with agonizing vulnerability by Condurache), regarding them with dignity under even the most nightmarish of circumstances. One especially gruelling scene of torture in the brothels arguably crosses the line and will have viewers squirming in their seats, yet one always senses a storyteller trying to do justice to the scenario's horrors rather than exploit them.

Low-budget production was shot over 36 days, primarily in Bucharest, Romania. Rounding out the fine cast are Jeanette Hain as Raya's mother and David Strathairn as a U.N. associate who comes into play during the surprisingly suspenseful sequence that caps the picture.

Justin Chang, Variety

This grim and gruelling biopic follows Kathryn Bolkovac (Rachel Weisz), a real-life Nebraska cop who joined the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia in 1999 and uncovered an underground network of underage sex trafficking.....

As the crusading whistleblower, Weisz gives a measured, compact performance that manages to sidestep wide-eyed idealism, while Canadian director Larysa Kondracki (making her feature film debut) shoots the harrowing scenes of abuse and dank dungeons with an unflinching refusal to compromise. It's a film with little sense of hope and a few rough edges plot-wise, but its powerful impact lingers.

Jamie Russell, Radio Times