

Room 314



Films built around a specific structural conceit are an oft-tricky affair, with as many effectively bridging their thematically conjoined parts (*Three Times*) or appropriately executing their clever narrative layouts (*Memento*) as there are efforts simply lacking significance beyond their shallow surface gimmickry (*The Usual Suspects*—the atrociously overrated mother of them all). Alternately illuminating and contrived, *Room 314* never leaves the parameters of its titular hotel quarter, passively observing five separate couples' respective stays in the room over the course of several evenings. Circumstances vary from one to the next, though a wobbly pattern emerges of grief-stricken individuals retreating from the burdens of the outside world in order to find temporary solace, whether in each other's arms or through those of their chosen vices. The diversity of personal demons carried into the room suggests it is but a microcosm of wider social patterns: infidelity, suicide, prostitution, alcoholism, and the pangs of intimacy all seem to leave their essences behind in the pale tan walls, not unlike the residue of cigarette smoke. The film opens with Nick and Stacey (Matthew Del Negro and Joelle Carter, respectively) the latter of whom wakes up panicked and confused after a night of hard drinking and what may or may not have been a one night stand; later, business partners meet to possibly cheat on their spouses, and what first appears to be an adorable, virginal couple ready to deflower instead reveals itself as a pay-and-fuck gone awry. *Room 314*'s creative impulses are an empowering example of do-it-yourself filmmaking, even if its encounters are subtly nuanced as often as they are unnecessarily schematic in their dialectic exposition. Fortunately, the filmmakers wisely saved the best for last, as the final segment ("David and Caly") is an endearing observation of budding young love, showcasing a fantastic performance by Michael Mosley, whose emotional inflections are so intimately naked as to surely cause discomfort for many audience members. Were the entire film this undisguised in its emotions.

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