By PATRICK HALL
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Andrew Detmer’s drunken father attacks him in the basement, hovering over the teen, assailing his son with physical and verbal abuse. Suddenly, the father is thrown against the wall, Andrew pins him there by the throat as the teen’s new telekinetic powers turn the tables on his abusive father.

“Chronicle” is a film following Andrew, played by **Dane DeHaan**, his cousin Matt Garrety, played by **Alex Russell,** and Steve Montgomery, played by **Michael B. Jordan**, as they develop the power to move objects with their minds and levitate their bodies to the point of actually flying.

Directed by 26-year-old **Josh Trank**, the film hit theaters this past Friday and I caught it on Saturday night at The Roxy Theater in Lebanon.

The film explores the trio’s budding powers and growing friendship while also diving in the dark recesses of human nature and the basic choice we all have to make, whether to use our “power” to harm or help others.

When things begin to spiral out of control for Andrew, it leads to a thrilling and intense showdown between the teens, giving a very down-to-earth portrayal of what the world might be like if superheroes (and villains) were real.

I am not a fan of “found-footage” films, which is the term used to describe a film that is shot in such a way to appear as if it is through the hand-held camera of one of the characters.

In this case, Andrew is the one filming all of “Chronicle’s” events and I questioned the purpose

of shooting the film in this way, but it does lend to a more sympathetic portrayal of Andrew.

We get a very personal look into Andrew’s life and how it affects his personality through the use of the “found-footage” point of view. Since we follow Andrew around at all times and we get to see and almost live in his home, the film draws empathy from the audience.

On the other hand, we only get to see Matt and Steve through Andrew’s lens but the group’s characterization and dialogue works so well, we are still given enough insight into Matt and Steve to understand and connect with them.

The crux of the film is whether these teenagers’ environments shape the use of their power, or if choice is the bottom-line for every human action.

Andrew’s increasingly violent behavior could very well be a product of an environment that has done nothing but abuse him. Granting someone power in that situation could lead to a backlash of violence, however, there’s also the ability to choose the other course.

We see Steve plan to use his power to add to his fame and popularity through the school talent show, while Matt works to keep his power hidden from others and suggesting rules to follow, seemingly aware of the darker possibilities.

Andrew also uses his power in an attempt to comfort his dying mother, but even then, good intentions turn to violence, ultimately leading to the final showdown between the teenagers.

The film peels away the layers of each character through very genuine moments that slowly pace the film. Only then does it give way to intense and surprisingly unique action sequences that once again, reveal yet another layer to Andrew and Matt, especially.

The three virtually unknown actors strike every emotional chord perfectly and have the luxury of working with a script that exceeded my expectations.

“Chronicle” is a surprising success as it focuses on characterization above all else. While securing a strong character-driven narrative, the action and conflict flows naturally and delivers an incredible, painful and heartfelt conclusion while delivering a warning to everyone.

“What are you capable of?”

Chronicle is rated PG-13 and has a runtime of 83 minutes.

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