

## Members and guests feedback for *Hard Truths*

Difficult to watch.

*Hard Truths* is certainly a hard watch although I did find it funny at times. The two central performances and the cinematography were excellent but I needed a bit more in terms of plot. Inferring both the back story and the way forward for this deeply unhappy family is taking narrative ambiguity a bit too far for me.

I was disappointed with this film, having in the past always enjoyed Mike Leigh's films. This one lacked the humour of his previous films and Pansy, although well played by Marianne Jean-Baptiste, was so miserable and aggressive that I wondered how her family put up with her. The ending was abrupt with no resolution to her problems.

Engaging but with too many gaps. Why did he throw out the flowers for example?

Some excellent performances from the main characters but the film evoked a harrowing feeling of sadness. We know not to expect happy endings from Mike Leigh but this did feel brutal.

I think I am going to give this a 1 because I am still thinking about it. This was such a hard film to watch (and it is the second time I have seen it) but I thought Marianne Jean-Baptiste's performance was exceptional as a woman in such profound pain. A great character study by a great director. Wonderful acting by the supporting cast and I just have to hope that there was a glimmer of hope for Moses at the end....

Brilliantly acted, thought provoking and incredibly sad that this very depressed woman couldn't help herself or get the help she so obviously needed, even though she had close family around her who cared so much for her.

Mike Leigh, slice of life, brilliant. I thought it explored mental illness, grief and love, so well. What lovely dancing daughters! And how sad the single tear at the end.

Ironically, the screening problems mirrored my response to the film's story itself. - very frustrating that nothing appeared to be being done about the situation but obvious that very little could be done to remediate it (at the time). I ended up bewildered!

A stellar performance from the main actors. The film managed to find a good balance between the humour and the obvious pain and anger, making it less emotionally draining the watch. The ending was rather abrupt – but I guess this just reflects real life, that there are no easy solutions with such intractable problems.

Frighteningly realistic Mr Leigh, as expected. Brilliant.

Compassion for Marianne J-B's rebarbative Pansy crept up on me during this utterly gripping film but the relentless pessimism makes it a "two" for me. The ending was a real downer to go home on despite all the brilliance of Mike Leigh and his superb cast. In the despairs of '26 we need some hope.

It became very bleak but the very funny lines in the earlier part of the film and the superb acting throughout offset that for me.

I was really looking forward to seeing this film but was very disappointed. I really disliked the characterisation of Pansy and the awfulness of the lives of her husband and son. I found it depressing and unrealistic. I enjoyed the hairdressing scenes and the scene with Chantelle and her daughters but overall, I was very disappointed in the film.

Leigh's worst?

A very painful watch brilliantly acted and thought provoking.

There is strong acting and relentless immersion of the family dynamic sometimes documentary – like. This demanding, emotional and realistic film may be described as depth of characters but without a clear resolution it could also be described as tedious!

Not sure I understand the ending. Main actress is very good.

Beautifully filmed and great performances. The House of Misery contrasted with the House of Joy. So sad but some great comic moments. Loved it.

I enjoyed this film, but it was a very hard watch, made harder by the fact there was no “resolution” at the end. The misery of all the characters will continue...I read several reviews of the film afterwards which clarified that Pansy is portrayed as suffering clinical depression. This was not explicit in the film and I wondered whether any of the characters understood this, including Pansy herself. No one seemed willing or able to help Pansy. Even her sister, the only one to show any real compassion, did not appear to be taking any active steps to help her. Whilst funny in places (there was a lot of laughter in the audience) my main emotions were shock and sadness.

Overall, a bleak, depressing picture of two family's lives and problems. In fact, one of the families is a joyful, supportive one, despite the two young sisters experiencing difficulties at work they don't/ can't share with the other. But the other family is so dysfunctional it is depressing to watch. Marianne Jean-Baptiste takes angry assertiveness to a whole new exhausting level and although she is collapsing towards the end, I felt very little sympathy towards her. Still not sure why her husband threw the flowers into the garden? Not one of Mike Leigh's better films.

On the whole I enjoyed this film - it was an interesting study of an apparently typical London suburban family. Except all the characters were more extreme than is typical. Pansy, obviously, but also her husband (so silent), her son (so inactive), her sister's family (so positive and cheerful). I thought Marianne Jean Baptiste, although mostly very powerful, over acted to the point of complete unbelievability at times. The other acting was perfect. As were the settings. It was also very funny. But so bleak - surely her sister (or the GP) could have persuaded Pansy into therapy!

I thought the acting was astounding especially Marianne Jean Baptiste but also David Webber as her husband. I would have liked to know whether the couple just carried on as they were or made changes but accept that the film did not want to make that clear.

Great performances and classic Mike Leigh.

Thought provoking and brilliantly acted, this film accessed the nuances, compulsions and conflicts of depression with compassion and humour. The only reason not to give it the highest

possible score was that it remained unresolved to the end so felt somewhat single dimensioned.

An Excellent, however, the shouting although excellent and necessary! was TOO LOUD! Please can you reduce the sound for the next film. Also, loss of visuals annoying but actually quite interesting to just hear dialogue alone, so not such a big issue. Thank you for yet another excellent film/film maker. I used to know Katrine Cartlidge who acted for Mike Leigh. She told us how he worked. Truly unique and important. Katrin died tragically too young.

Most Leigh films stand up to repeated viewing and this was no exception. Outstanding performance from Marianne Jean-Baptiste.

I really enjoyed it. What an utterly compelling performance by Marianne Jean-Baptiste! An incredible portrayal of someone battling with clinical depression, the hard truth being that her family are so impacted by her perennial rage that they are all left helpless. I so wanted some climactic relief and thought we might see it in the closing scene but Leigh had the last word. real life is full of mess and pain and is often left unresolved ...

I am afraid my wife and I thought the film was tedious and we both rate it only Poor.

Thank you for the screening of Hard Truths. My feedback score is Excellent for the acting, which was superb. However, I found the film a very difficult watch with no redemption, which made it challenging overall.

Though the performances were intense and well-studied, it was a grim storyline and a hard watch. No doubt it will make the following films more pleasing!

A truly gripping film concerning clinical depression and the concomitant "hard truths" associated with it. Amazing acting and direction. What a shame that the film kept cutting out. Notwithstanding it was thoroughly engrossing and a tad scary!

I thought it was Excellent.

*Mike Leigh makes great movies and this was no exception. The whole film was "carried" by Marianne Jean-Baptiste who gave us a tour de force. Depressing, (if you will excuse the pun) as were others.*

A difficult film to watch, unrelenting and depressing about the behaviour of an angry woman who was only able to receive love from her pretty older sister. The angry, depressed woman was married to a man who had become depressed himself and they had one son of around 20 who seemed to do nothing but comfort eat. I kept wondering whether she was either born angry and depressed or received no love as a child and whether her constant tiredness was through illness or from using up energy on being angry. She pushed away everyone who tried to be normal and friendly. I was glad when the film ended and came away feeling exhausted myself.

I sense this film was a vehicle created for the actress and she dominated from start to finish. Sadly, the character she played was paranoid, angry and unpleasant. More sadly the hard truth is there are actually many real people who are similarly beyond help. Perhaps Mike Leigh thinks his audience does not know that to be true and therefore felt the need to hammer it home and then hammer it home again. I was glad when the film ended, the second 45 minutes added little to the first.

Terrific film! Laugh out loud funny but also very sad. Outstanding acting, particularly by Pansy. I felt as if I knew the characters by the (abrupt) end of the film.

Torture and that's nothing to do with the technical difficulties. Probably the worst film I have sat through to the credits. The only redeeming feature was that it was under two hours long.

Quite savage presentation of how destructive mental illness can be in its effect on a family. Brilliantly acted, especially by the ill woman and by her sister and friendly family who are silenced but credible in their reactions to her diatribes. I felt touched by her son's tiny mute gestures towards human contact, although he was clearly a damaged soul.

The film contained unnecessary ugliness that was demeaning to black people.

Rating, OK (if I could give 2.5 I would). I feel a little harsh giving it an OK but I can't say on the whole it was a 'good film'. I enjoyed and appreciated the tender moments and although the first half was very entertaining, the unresolved ending was a disappointment. Even a glimmer of hope that the main protagonist might start to feel lighter, or the hope that her husband might decide to take a stand would have left me feeling satisfied and bumped up the score to a Good.

A harsh portrayal of mental health issues and the harm they can cause to the immediate family and beyond. Not a film for enjoyment albeit with excellent acting.

Top marks for Jean-Baptiste's performance as Pansy, a chronically depressed woman whose misery and rage infects all who wander into her ambit. However, the failure of anybody to constructively intervene in her plight plus the sheer bleakness and absence of a redemptive or cathartic moment spoiled the effect of this film for me. Long before the end I wanted to leave the cinema. Indeed, the twitchy neurotic projector seemed to mirror my discomfort.

Hard Truths, It was indeed a hard watch. Two hours of my life that I won't get back! A totally appalling woman with no redeeming features. I can only hope that the son will come out of his shell. Of course, the acting was good but I couldn't wait for it to end. A fine performance from Marianne Jean-Baptiste as Pansy. Some moments of humour to lift what became a tough watch.

A wonderful performance by Pansy who had some funny lines but mostly very difficult to watch someone so damaged and so destructive to her nearest and dearest.

*Wonderful actress but unenjoyable to watch. We enjoy going to watch films to feel entertained not drained.*

Funny and sad at the same time. Shame about the blue screen as it took some of the pleasure away.

It was great! Definitely an Excellent.

Sadly, this was not for me. The acting was excellent, particularly the two sisters and the husband. However, I found the suppressed and the expressed anger throughout very difficult to endure for two hours. It was exhausting. A real insight into the problems people are facing of unresolved trauma and how it affects those they are in any kind of relationship with.

There was a lot of repeat anger from Pansy but we never moved on to the realisation that she is suffering from mental health problems, not just bad behaviour even by the standards of a culture known for direct speaking. Even the doctor doesn't spot it. This might be the 'Hard Truth', but some progression might have given us closure.

OK - in that it is a mid-point between Excellent and Dreadful. Both interesting and awful: sad that emotionally inarticulate characters should still exist in the 21st Century - this was the kind of behaviour that might have been expected in the UK in the 1970s (so, Excellent) - and excellent in terms of the credibility of the script and the characters' accents - although Curtley (sp.?) was doing rather well in owning a three-bedroom house in north London on a handyman/builder's salary with two dependants to look after (so, Dreadful). Pansy seems have experienced what today would be called Eldest Daughter Syndrome and a lack of encouragement to do anything with her life but the remedy for that lies in her own hands, not least with a touch HRT. It is a truism that sibling experiences in a family can be very different depending on birth order. There is some hope for Moses in that he has met a girl and his two cousins have suggested he join them when he goes for a walk but Curtley is right to cry: he has brought this situation partly on himself in tolerating increasingly unhelpful behaviour from Pansy, probably for years. I suspect most guys would at this point would be looking to leave...and if his back problems are not resolved, they are all screwed. Probably unpleasant for some audience members to watch if reminded of an upbringing without laughter; predominantly negative outlooks (often a consequence alcohol problems in a previous generation); a lack of good family role models; a lack of genuine interest in other family members; and family members who cannot see their own way out of self-defeating behaviours and are not inclined to find help to do so. And that is without undiagnosed ASD, ADHD, etc.... - all very common. Interesting selection but watching it once was enough.

Reluctantly I'm only going to give this a Poor. This was a brilliantly acted film but looking back I felt uncomfortable about the way in which Pansy was portrayed, this being so over-the-top that she became something of a caricature of a real person.

I was excited to see another Mike Leigh film but was rather disappointed by this one: Just seemed to be a litany of woman hits menopause and other woes, with no relief or development of the characters. And I hate endings that take you nowhere but instead feel like the director didn't have any idea what to do with the film.

Great to see a British movie with some excellent acting- Pansy in particular. Thought provoking subjects - mental health, growing up, sibling rivalry, marital relationships. So many layers to unwrap with each character. Very clever dialogue (Pansy) and extremely funny in places. Loved the scene with the mother and her two daughters talking about a night out. My first Mike Leigh film and looking forward to seeing more.

Typical Mike Keigh. Finds inadvertent humour in great sadness. The cemetery scene between the two sisters was so powerful. And the second generation ... what a mixed bag. Touching scene at the end with Moses accepting a sweet under Eros.