

# **‘Total Recall’: Non-Stop Action, Not Much Depth**

*Total Recall* is a refashioned remake of the 1990 movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. The new version is a dystopian vision of a world where most of the world is uninhabitable due to chemical warfare so that only the United Federation of Britain and the Colony, formerly known as Australia, remain. Somehow, the workers in The Colony travel on an elevator called the Fall through the Earth to Britain and back, each trip taking only a few minutes.

Douglas Quaid (Colin Farrell) is troubled by nightmares of being attacked by robots and men in plastic armor while an attractive woman tries to rescue him. His beautiful wife (Kate Beckinsale) wakes him up and wants to comfort him. She finds out on TV that terrorists have attacked the subway, so she has to leave too soon to work on securing the disaster site. Quaid’s wife, Lori, is an officer in the United Federation. She must investigate the bombing.

Meanwhile, Quaid takes the Fall with his best friend to work in a robot soldier manufacturing plant in the United Federation of Britain. Quaid thinks about overcoming his nightmare by going to Total Rekall [sic], which advertises that it gives you new memories.

That night he comes home to find his wife asleep, so he goes to Total Rekall. Total Rekall is located in a seedy area of the colony where the a weird motley group of drug dealers and prostitutes hang out. They offer him many types of memories: adventures, love, fame, fortune, etc. He chooses being a spy.

In the middle of being injected by the false memory serum, troops show up and shoot up Total Rekall. Miraculously, Quaid has the ability to shoot up the troops and escape, now being

chased by his wife, who turns out to be a secret agent, not his wife.

**[Spoiler Alert!]** Anyway, whether he's really living the *Total Recall* life or a real life, Quaid discovers that he is a probably an agent called Hauser who is supposed to be working for the revolution headed up by a recluse named Matthias, but Quaid is really a double agent working for the Chancellor. Further, he finds that he has a beautiful love interest trying to save him named Melina (Jessica Biel). Also, he discovers that the government is creating chaos by staging the terrorist acts, so they have an excuse to invade The Colony and kill the people so they can repopulate with the overflow from the overpopulated Britain.

Nothing, however, is as it appears to be. In the midst of this confusion about what is real and what isn't real, there's a tremendous amount of killing, brutality and deception.

*Total Recall* is full of action. Young people who like action will get caught up in it. The movie emphasizes the individual against the state. It also poses the question: What is real? Several lines ask whether there is an objective reality. Regrettably, there are many plot holes in the movie and many unanswered questions. The characters, except for Quaid, are very thinly developed.

In a normal review, it could be said *Total Recall* is action without much of a plot. But since the movie is dealing with the nature of reality, maybe the plot holes, disjointed storyline and shallow characters are meant to hint that what's happening is just a dream. After all, dreams are never neatly logical, and some scholars have compared movies to a public dream.

There's a surplus of gratuitous foul language in this *Total Recall* remake. There's also the obligatory scene, based on the first total recall, with the three-breasted prostitute, who

exposes herself. The movie also contains drug use, radical libertarian individualism, many killings, implausible plot points and sexual situations. However, surprisingly, none of these cross the line into the excessively bad area of Movieguide ratings.

In the final analysis, extreme caution is required for the new *Total Recall*, especially for susceptible youth who could get caught up in the PG-13 movie's violence and the reality-bending story. In all, *Total Recall* is a B movie without much to offer moviegoers. There are better movies out there this summer and on home video.