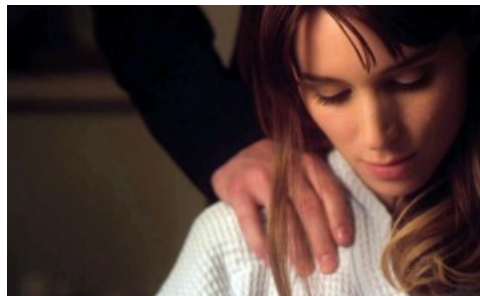


## Review: Side Effects

This clinically cool psycho-thriller loses a star for relapsing into a conventional narrative. [Tom Lubek](#) reviews

Sunday 17 March 2013



**Director:** Steven Soderbergh

**Starring:** Jude Law, Rooney Mara, Catherine Zeta Jones, Channing Tatum

**Length:** 106 minutes

**Rating:** ★★★★★

*Side Effects* is supposed to be Steven Soderbergh's last film, but given its achievements it would be unfortunate if this proves to be the case. The first three quarters amount to a bitter examination of how casually anti-depressant drugs seem to be advertised in the media of contemporary America. Such medication here wreaks havoc upon the lives of their consumers and any unsuspecting person who gets too close.

Martin Taylor (Tatum) is a Wall Street broker who has been incarcerated for the last four years due to insider trading. Any chance of respite after his release is ruined when his wife Emily (Mara) attempts suicide and has to begin treatment with a psychiatrist, Dr. Jonathan Banks (Law). The overworked doctor has problems of his own however; his wife has recently been fired and he is struggling to make ends meet.

“Among delicate questions of morality ruthlessly explored is the relationship between a doctor and their patient”

When the opportunity comes along, Banks is eager to make some cash by trialling a new on the market anti-depressant with his patients. After consulting Emily's previous psychiatrist, Dr. Victoria Siebert (Jones), she is prescribed the drug Ablixa and things go from bad to worse. Emily's life rapidly unravels as the side effects take hold, proving in many ways to be far worse than her original symptoms.

Among delicate questions of morality ruthlessly explored is the relationship between a doctor and their patient. The motives of pharmaceutical companies are also queried as they bombard potential consumers

with adverts that promise to take the pain away. People desperate for free medication appear forced to participate in potentially dangerous drugs trials and anti-depressants are bandied about like the latest fashion accessory: "I can't believe you're still on Prozac, you simply must try Ablixa!" etc. Every character seems to have routinely taken medication for depression at some point in their lives, and a stylish scrutiny of this situation sets *Side Effects* up as a slick psychological thriller.

What a shame then, that in the film's final act, its direction is derailed by a contrived "twist" which undermines the work done by an otherwise mesmeric plot. But since any harm done is mitigated by understated cinematography, fitting characters, and their delivery by a very convincing cast, these scenes are damaging rather than destructive to the experience.



Most Read Discussed

1. [Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)
2. [TV Review: Endeavour - Series 3 Episode 2: 'Arcadia'](#)
3. [TV Review: Vera Series 5 Episode 2: 'Old Wounds'](#)
4. [Film meets fact - why is historical accuracy important?](#)
5. [TV Review: Endeavour - Series 3 Episode 4: 'Coda'](#)
6. [TV Review: Endeavour Series 2 Episode 2](#)

### Write for Nouse Film & TV

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

### More in Film & TV

[Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)

[Interview: Get Ready With Me director Jonatan Etzler](#)

[Short Film Sunday: Fauve](#)

[Netflix sued by Satanic Temple](#)

[Vintage Sundays Review: The Wizard of Oz](#)

[Review: Manbiki Kazoku \(Shoplifters\)](#)

[About Nouse](#)  
[Who's Nouse](#)  
[Website Credits](#)  
[Contact Us](#)  
[Advertising](#)

[Archives](#)  
[Student Discounts](#)  
[Print Editions](#)  
[Mini-Sites](#)  
[Nouse on Twitter](#)  
[Nouse on Facebook](#)  
[Nouse on Google+](#)

© 1964–2018 Nouse

[Policies](#) |

