

When blind dates go wrong.



SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO NEST**  
 1975

Jack Nicholson tries to pull a fast one on the medical profession. Big mistake.

**BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN**  
 2005

Tough but tender LGBT classic about forbidden love on the range.

**KILLER JOE**  
 2011

McConaughey plays unlikeable but irresistible in another Texan drama.

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# Dallas Buyers Club

★★★★☆ Out 7 February The war on drugs companies...

**W**HAT WOULD YOU DO IF DOCTORS gave you 30 days to live? That's the dilemma facing Ron Woodroof (Matthew McConaughey) in this '80s-set AIDS drama. But this is no *Bucket List* and we're a long way from *Philadelphia*. Indeed, the first 60 minutes resembles one of those '70s Jack Nicholson films where the characters drink, swear and screw while life swirls heedlessly around them.

A scratchy son-of-a-bitch with sand-blasted vocal chords, colossal appetites and all manner of racist, reductive opinions, Woodroof is roaringly alive, although in his case it's not a compliment - perhaps howlingly alive is nearer the mark. We first meet him at the rodeo, shagging two unfussy local girls while the rider gets gored behind him. It's a none-too-subtle metaphor - Ron's about to get unseated by the raging

bull between his legs too - but he can't change his behaviour any more than the animal can. When Dr Sevard (Denis O'Hare) tells him he's got HIV, Woodroof threatens to "whip his fucking ass". When he hears the 30-day verdict, a witty cut takes us to "Day One" - a grim orgy of booze, coke and trailer-trash sex.

Director Jean-Marc Vallée (*The Young Victoria*) keeps this choppy rhythm going throughout so we never relax into the movie, just as Woodroof never relents, cycling through denial, terror - even praying - before wresting control of his treatment from the cynical Sevard and the more sympathetic Dr Saks (Jennifer Garner). With the help of Rayon (Jared

Leto), a transgender HIV-positive hustler, Woodroof starts the eponymous (illegal) drugs dispensary, selling fellow sufferers what they need to survive. Providing the sweet to McConaughey's salt, Leto brings a disarming gentleness to Rayon, who quietly wins

Woodroof over, even if the Buyers Club remains chiefly a business rather than a charitable venture.

Both actors are magnificent, but as Woodroof starts to take on America's medical establishment, the film shifts

awkwardly from personal to political, losing some of its fire in the process. McConaughey never falters, but you'll still find yourself softening towards Woodroof: a bad man, but a *real* one. He may be

selfish, prejudiced and unrepentant, but he never gives in, and as sickness makes him a walking skeleton, his sheer monumental bloody-mindedness starts to look more and more like heroism. **Matt Glasby**

'This is no *Bucket List* and we're a long way from *Philadelphia*...'

**THE VERDICT** If not wholly convincing as an 'issues' movie, this memoir is a triumph as an actors' showcase; with McConaughey and Leto giving the performances of their careers.

► **Certificate 15** Director Jean-Marc Vallée Starring Matthew McConaughey, Jared Leto, Jennifer Garner **Screenplay** Craig Borten, Melisa Wallack **Distributor** Entertainment One **Running time** 117 mins

## TALKING POINT

Craig Borten's original script did the rounds for 20 years before it finally got made. Woody Harrelson, Brad Pitt and Ryan Gosling were all attached at different points.

### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™

