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Jam-packed comic cast can't revive 'Rough Night'

Just in time for wedding season, film falls flat even with plenty of talent to tap

The prewedding caper "Rough Night" is as underdeveloped as an improv sketch — without the benefit of a two-drink minimum.

A pseudo-feminist concatenation of sex jokes, "Rough Night" has a few big laughs, relying heavily on sight gags and pratfalls.

"Broad City" writers Paul Downs and Lucia Aniello — Aniello as writer-director, Downs as writer-actor — have taken a stellar comedic cast and underutilized all of its soldiering members. Even the most physical comic actors need textured characters to work from. Don't look for them here.

Scarlett Johansson's Jess is an earnest, uptight candidate running for state Senate. Viewed by her constituency as low-charisma, Jess' campaign is flailing. She trails an opponent whose poll

numbers rise with every Anthony Weineresque tweet.

Her metrosexual fiance, Peter (writer Downs), is not what you'd call high-testosterone, and he belongs to a friendship circle of aesthete straight men with similar temperaments.

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In college, Jess was best friend to chubby outsider Alice (Jillian Bell). Now 10 years after graduation, it doesn't take Freud to figure out that needy Alice has planned the girl trip of her own dreams under the guise of throwing a bachelorette party for Jess.

With two other members of



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their undergraduate foursome, Blair (Zoe Kravitz, daughter of Cosby kid Lisa Bonet and musician Lenny Kravitz) and Frankie (Ilana Glazer, "Broad City"), they are primed to spend a glorious South Beach weekend at the modernist glass-walled villa of a campaign benefactor.

head against a stone countertop. Now they are faced with the dilemma of disposing of a corpse, and they are too afraid to call the police.

There is so much comic talent in this movie — Ty Burrell and Demi Moore have small roles as sexy neighbors trolling for a threesome, Dean Winters (Mayhem in the Allstate commercials) plays a robber and Hasan Minhaj is one of the fiance's friends — director Aniello could have simply let them run loose.

Instead we watch them pluck along, hurtling from joke to joke with no clear path beneath them.

The pace improves in scenes involving fiance Peter. They're fresh in a weak-is-strong kind of way.

Peter embarks on a quest to find Jess when her phone drops and he misinterprets the breakup of their connection as the break-off of their engagement. Coached by his sensitive friends, Peter is resourceful and heroic in his hapless way. Perhaps this subplot works as well as it does because Downs is performing his own material.

Two of the girlfriends, Frankie and Blair, were lovers in college and the movie deals thoughtfully with the premise that participants in such campus experimentations still carry a torch.

With its June launch, "Rough Night" is in theaters just in time to kick off a slew of wedding-season bridesmaids' parties — but it's no "Bridesmaids."

Besides, all the badass bachelorettes will be over at "Wonder Woman."