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Joe Biden Comedy Bids ‘Goodbye’ to Intelligent Russian TV Satire

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A still from the series “Goodbye.” **kinopoisk.ru**

Recently, a new Russian series titled “Goodbye” hit the screens, promising an ironic take on the cultural and political contrasts between Russia and the West. Yet, despite an extensive promotional campaign, the project proved to be far from the witty satirical masterpiece it aspired to be. Instead, “Goodbye” leaves its audience more bewildered than genuinely entertained.

A chuckle may escape the viewer's lips. But it would be a laugh laden with cringe rather than the mark of true comedic brilliance. Let us peel back the faux-gray hair on star Dmitry Dyuzhev’s head and delve into the clammy, musty darkness hiding beneath.

At the center of the story is a character representing Joe Biden who, by a twist of fate, finds himself hopelessly lost in Russia, stumbling through absurd, almost slapstick situations. The premise itself is farcical enough to sharpen viewer expectations, for parodies can be

incredibly insightful when skillfully crafted. However, it becomes clear within the first few episodes that the creators could not maintain that fine line between satire and farce.

In fairness, their ambitions were lofty: to present the leader of a global superpower fumbling through unfamiliar situations in a foreign land, provoking reflection on the true nature of political authority. But instead, the series ends up being nothing but a loose chain of jokes, desperately chasing cheap laughs while losing any depth in the process. The plot's foundation seems as thin as smoke, and the characters' motivations are as insubstantial as the wind.

Biden here is not portrayed as a political figure but as a caricature: bumbling, tongue-tied, and seemingly devoid of any control over his surroundings. This depiction is so exaggerated that even the most forgiving viewers (if there are any) will feel disappointed — "Goodbye" is not a clever satire of power but rather a string of silly situations, wildly overstepping in its depiction of the American leader from the very start.

This Biden is neither cunning nor insightful and has none of the nuances of a real person. Instead, he is a feeble, bewildered man who barely grasps what is happening. Instead of being a sharp political jab, this caricature resembles a crude school bathroom scribble about the principal and his wife.

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Dyuzhev's Biden is not merely helpless. He is helpless specifically in Russian scenarios: he wanders into a typical Moscow cafe, is unable to make sense of the menu, argues with the cashier over the price, fumbles with Russian currency, and even forgets where he left his security team.

The stereotypes saturating each scene feel like stale jokes from thirty years ago. It all comes across as the work of a writer who has taken the comedy genre far too literally. Biden trudges through the chilly streets of Moscow, puzzled as to why no one recognizes him, acting as if he is a lost soul in a foreign land, clueless about anything beyond the U.S. borders.

One could find a hint of satire here if the creators had managed to delve into the profound contrasts between Russian and American global perspectives. But "Goodbye" merely scrapes the surface: Biden, ambling about in a Russian fur coat and ushanka hat, evokes not so much laughter as confusion. Irony strikes when it lands on the mark, as the classic reminder goes, "in the midst of the absurd, one must find the serious," but clearly, the creators of "Goodbye" missed this memo.

The portrayal of Biden's character deserves special mention. The actor's performance leaves you with the feeling that he could not quite find the essence of the role, or at least understand how to make this character feel even slightly real. Sure, he speaks with an accent, and he tries to look lost in Russian settings. But his performance is so devoid of nuance that it evokes neither sympathy nor laughter. It feels as if we are watching not a living character but a jumbled assembly of internet memes and clichés.

Contrast this with Sacha Baron Cohen's film "The Dictator," in which the protagonist is portrayed as utterly outrageous yet undeniably human. "Goodbye" offers us not a person but

a puppet, bearing only a superficial resemblance to a real man.

The actor's lines are delivered with an accent more akin to parody than any genuine attempt to embody an American. "Goodbye" does not induce laughter. It sparks mild irritation at its clumsy attempts at farce which is served instead of refined irony. Ultimately, the character comes off as simply laughable (in the worst sense), and even when he says something serious, it is hard to see anything behind his words but a poorly crafted role.

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One of the show's major failings is its lack of a coherent and logical storyline. Each episode feels more like a separate joke or amusing tale rather than a part of a unified narrative. In their bid to place Biden in various "Russian" scenarios, the creators seem to have forgotten to develop a connected plot. This absence of a cohesive thread between episodes makes the series feel like a random collection of situations, rendering it laborious and even tiresome to watch.

Additionally, there is no hint of character development. Biden is as lost and confused in the final episode as he is in the first, an American who never manages to find his footing in Russia. A classic storytelling rule tells us that the hero must change. Yet "Goodbye" ignores that rule entirely.

The show's attempts to employ political satire come off as shallow, relying more on clichés and stereotypes than wit. Rather than delivering a work that prompts reflection on politics or cultural contrasts, "Goodbye" drowns itself in a sea of absurd scenes and empty exchanges. Lines like "Do you have this in America too?" are jokes for the sake of jokes, not meaningful satire.

Political satire holds immense potential, and perhaps the creators initially aimed to produce something genuinely relevant and engaging. But, as Chekhov put it, "Funny doesn't always mean amusing," and "Goodbye" embodies this sentiment. It brings only awkwardness instead of laughter, and disappointment instead of irony.

"Goodbye" could have been a bold and significant statement about politics and culture, about the challenges of perceiving other nations, and the image of the enemy often fostered in mass media. Unfortunately, what emerged is a superficial work that fails to laugh at the real differences. Instead of sharp satire, we get a collection of stereotypes in which Biden, as a character, serves merely to reinforce outdated notions of "American simplicity" and "Russian mystery."

Viewers are left only to shrug: there is no real comedy here, nor drama and irony. The literary greats would agree in unison that such satire lacks catharsis and merely distorts our understanding of thoughtful, intelligent comedy.

And so, "Goodbye" is less a comedic triumph than a farewell to quality satire on Russian television.

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