

MOVIE REVIEW

Murky ‘Primetime’ is fueled by strong cast

By **Micheal Compton**
The Daily News

“To Catch A Predator” was a cultural phenomenon when it aired in the late 2000s, reshaping the bounds of TV investigative journalism for better or worse.

Its host Chris Hansen was the lightning rod for the storm — a man who can either be viewed as a well-meaning crusader or someone who used any means possible to garner fame and attention.

Both the show and its host are the focus of the new film “Primetime” — the feature film debut for documentary filmmaker Lance Oppenheim. This is a film that uncovers a speedy underbelly of its source material — one that at times feels just as interested in shocking its audience as the TV series it documents.

“Primetime” doesn’t always land the way it likely intended, but it succeeds in large part due to three central performances that anchor the film.

The first comes from Robert Pattinson as Hansen, who as the film begins finds his fame rising, with the show at the height of its popu-



This image released by A24 shows Robert Pattinson in a scene from "Primetime."

larity, as his home life is on, at best, rocky grounds. The show is about to be put on the prime time schedule, going head-to-head with “Lost.” The big opportunity comes with more stress as Hansen and his crew is encouraged by the network to find “bigger fish.”

Pattinson, who continues to build a resume of impressive work practically morphs into Hansen. He effectively captures his mannerisms and vocal cadence in a way that is fascinating to watch. Pattinson captures the complexity of Hansen, who first-time screenwriter Ajon Singh portrays as a bit of a narcissist drunk with fame.

Skyler Gisondo plays Dan Plumb, an aspiring actor hoping to get his

Screen Actor’s Guild card who is hired to be a decoy posing as the young boys who the sexual predators come in contact with on the internet. At first Dan sees this as a possible big break, but starts to slowly realize that perhaps this isn’t the type of fame he is in search of.

But perhaps the film’s best work comes from Merritt Wever as the show’s producer Andie Bender. Andie serves as Hansen’s moral compass — trying to keep the show on the tracks even as it feels like it is about to come off the rails. Andie’s story arc provides the strongest moments in “Primetime” with Andie’s story appearing to be headed one way, only to make a surprising turn in the third act.

These performances keep “Primetime” afloat even when it feels like it is about to veer too heavy into sensationalism. Oppenheim (who co-directed the Elizabeth Holmes documentary “You Can See Everything” that is gathering a lot of awards buzz as it is set to be released next month) does bring a style to it all that works for the material — washed out colors and grainy looking shots that give this a grimy feel.

Unfortunately, it is the substance that is a little uneven, with the film more determined to be judgemental than let the audience be the judge. There are some political overtones that I don’t feel hit the mark, making “Primetime” a movie where the message is heavy-handed.

It’s a credit to the three leads that they are able to make up for those flaws. In any other film the uneasy execution of the material might be a fatal blow, but in “Primetime” the performances and style prove to be enough. It may leave a little to be desired, but the performances are good enough to make it a satisfying experience.

GRADE: B

8 sailors in Lincoln carrier group attempted suicide on extended deployment, Navy leader says

By **BEN FINLEY and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Eight sailors attempted suicide while deployed with the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group, which spent a record-setting uninterrupted time at sea supporting the Iran war, the Navy’s top civilian leader said this week.

Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao provided the information to Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand in a letter dated Tuesday after the New York Democrat inquired last month about the strike group’s crew. The Lincoln’s extended deployment drew the nation’s attention following reports of crew stress and poor mental health, as well as supply shortages, including food and hygiene products.

Eight attempts in a strike group of 6,000 sailors over 10 months is actually low, experts say. The Navy reported 356 suicide attempts across the service in 2024, while there were more than 1,500 attempts among all active duty personnel that year, according to the latest annual report.

However, the reported attempts are not the best measure for conditions on the Lincoln and its supporting destroyers, particularly with no other

additional details, said Dr. Harold Kudler, a former national lead for mental health services at the Department of Veterans Affairs and a retired VA psychiatrist.

“But something happened to get those families upset. Something happened to raise concerns about the health and well-being of those troops,” Kudler said, referring to media reports that quoted sailors and their families.

Gillibrand had asked Cao several questions focused on ship conditions, including about the availability of mental health support and healthy food as well as hygiene. The senator also asked if there were any suicides.

“There have been no suicides on board during this deployment,” Cao wrote in the letter, which was obtained by The Associated Press and reported earlier by CNN. “Since the beginning of LINCOLN’S deployment, there have been a total of eight suicide attempts across the strike group — this number includes the LINCOLN crew and Sailors from the carrier wing, strike group and destroyer squadron staff, escorting destroyers, and all embarked aviation squadrons.”

September is National PAD Awareness Month

If you're experiencing these symptoms:

- ✗ **Leg pain or cramping** when you walk that eases when you stop
- ✗ **Numbness or weakness** in your leg or foot
- ✗ One foot noticeably **colder** than the other
- ✗ **A sore or wound** on your foot or leg that's slow to heal
- ✗ Skin **discoloration** or hair loss on your lower legs

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