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## Dial 100 Movie Review: The Thriller Loses Its Fizz Midway, And Even Manoj Bajpayee Can't Save It



The narrative of Dial 100 is jerky, and the way the crime unfolds is hardly smooth. Too many rough edges to ignore.

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**GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN**

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Manoj Bajpayee and Neena Gupta in Dial 100 official poster

**D**ial 100  
Director: Rensil D'Silva

Cast: Manoj Bajpayee, Neena Gupta, Sakshi Tanwar, Svar Kamble



There are many implausibilities in Dial 100, penned and directed by Rensil D'Silva — a problem with much of Indian cinema which tolerates and thrives on lazy writing. It has become a matter of habit with us to not just bear shoddy scripting, but also celebrate it. Dial 100 could have been a neat edge-of-the-seat thriller, but what begins with a bang ends in a whimper, to use a cliché.

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The story could have been amazingly narrated. It begins on a rainy night in Mumbai, and plays out till dawn, and a lot happens. As the movie starts to roll, we see Senior Inspector Nikhil Sood (Manoj Bajpayee) driving down to the police control room, and he is in charge of calls from men and women threatening to commit suicide. One such caller, and she is Seema Pallav (Neena Gupta), as we learn later, phones, and says that she has a couple of guns and wants to end her life. While Sood tries to coax and cajole her out of this, he is interrupted by a call from his wife, Perna (Sakshi Tanwar), who says that their 18-year-old son, Dhruv (Svar Kamble), has gone partying with his friends. She is afraid that he has once again fallen into bad company – as it happened earlier.



As the door of this thriller opens wider, we are made privy to several aspects like a hit-and-run case, loss of a son, only child in fact, and the elaborate cover-up by cops bribed by a rich father. The last part has been beaten to death in cinema, but the path to the climax affords many opportunities, some of which are wasted. One never understands why a seasoned policeman like Sood should have acted as a one-man army, when he had his colleagues all around him, and they could have helped stop a grieving woman from walking to the precipice, dragging his own wife and son along.

While Gupta's character is wafer thin, giving her little scope to show what a great performer she is, Bajpayee gets the focus of the director. His part has been etched out with a lot of care, and offers ample scope to display his arc – first as a firm police officer and later as a helpless father and husband, who finds that his uniform is of little use in a situation where he has been pushed into. His empathy for Pallav while she is on the phone with him and his utter helplessness later sandwiched between his absolutely professional advice to his son as he walks towards impending doom have all been portrayed with the classy Bajpayee touch.

Otherwise, D'Silva's work is somewhat flat. There is not enough fizz in the drink to get us heady. The narrative is jerky, and the way the crime unfolds is hardly smooth. Too many rough edges to ignore.

*(Gautaman Bhaskaran is author and movie critic)*

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