

# Ride Along (2014)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 40 min.

Our content advisories (1-10): Violence 4; Language 5;  
Sex/Nudity 2.

Our star rating (1-5): 1.5

Tim Story directed one of my favorite comedies of 2002 *Barber Shop*, and it also starred former rapper Ice Cube, but that is the only thing the excellent older comedy has in common with this new one. The directors latest work is an odd couple police comedy about a motor-mouthed high school security guard in love with a girl whose overly protective cop brother is dead set against him marrying her.

Set in Atlanta, Ben (Kevin Hart) sees wedding bells ahead in his relationship with Angela Payton (Tika Sumpter), but her brother James (Ice Cube), who has virtually raised her, thinks he is a loser. Thus when Ben is accepted into the Police Academy, he is elated. Confronting her still unconvinced brother, he accepts the challenge to ride along with him for one day. James is certain that the punk will drop out, that he could not "survive for one day on the street." Thus begins a wild day of action, concluding with a life threatening encounter with drug lord Omar (Laurence Fishburne, incredibly overweight since I last saw him on the screen.)

Best part of this so-so comedy are the rapid-fire, almost manic, speeches of Kevin Hart. Approaching the screening with low expectations, both of my fellow screen critics with whom I sat were as surprised as myself that we enjoyed the film. But then, none of us wanted to see it again, either. My advice: if you want an evening of laughter at the antics of an underdog determined to prove himself, see the film—but wait until it comes to a cheap seat theater or to streaming video. I do not plan to add discussion questions to the review.