



7/3 BEIRUT DRAMA \$6 MILL BO
1492 SCREENS R 109 MINUTES DVD/COMBO
DIGITAL COPY WITH THE COMBO
28 DAYS BEFORE REDBOX

Jon Hamm (TV—MAD MEN, 30 ROCK, ---FILM---BABY DRIVER, MILLION DOLLAR ARM, BRIDESMAID, THE A-TEAM)

Brad Anderson's *Beirut* doesn't quite make foreign espionage look fun, but it shows how it might appeal to the sort of masochist who's also an adrenaline addict. That's an important distinction made by Anderson and screenwriter Tony Gilroy, who understand that it's not clever banter or gadgets that make people want to risk their lives doing thankless work for which they'll never receive public credit. Instead, it's the constant

movement, the high stakes, the endless opportunities to outsmart their opponents.

That's why Mason Skiles (Jon Hamm) returns to Lebanon in 1982 for the first time since his wife died in his arms a decade earlier. Then, Mason was an American diplomat trying to stay friendly with Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel, and in the film's opening scenes, he describes his job with a casual, almost mischievous tone. Negotiation is a second language for Mason and a source of constant excitement and stimulation. But, one night, Palestinian terrorists kill Mason's wife, Nadia (Leila Bekhti), and take Karim (Yoaou Saian Rosenberg), the 13-year-old Lebanese orphan the couple hoped to adopt. Karim's brother, Abu Rajal (Hicham Ouraqa), helps carry out the attacks, which makes the boy's abduction a family reunion as much as a kidnapping.

Over the next 10 years, Mason leaves the U.S. government, becomes an alcoholic, and opens a small mediation business in Boston where he settles local labor disputes. His clients are no less difficult to manage than politicians, but the stakes are lower, which wears on him. He looks like a distressed babysitter watching business and union leaders throw fits at each other. So when he's approached in a bar with an offer to return to Lebanon for what's billed as a speaking engagement, he doesn't need much convincing. Once in Beirut, Mason learns that an old colleague, Cal Riley (Mark Pellegrino), has been kidnapped by Palestinian terrorists, and Mason has been asked to negotiate a deal for Cal's freedom that involves Karim and Abu Rajal.

Beirut locks into place when Mason is at the negotiating table and it delivers on the simple thrill of watching him stay two steps ahead of everyone else in the room

That tension can rewire your emotional circuitry, and there are a few, bracing moments when Anderson's film seizes on it, like when a C.I.A. agent lets out a deranged laugh after driving a van through a Palestinian barricade and avoiding the bullets fired at him and his companions. But *Beirut* isn't the exclamatory type. It's not the slow-burn type either. Instead, it falls somewhere in the middle, moving at the pace of endless, stressful, relentless work. The kind you have to be a little crazy to love.





7/3 BLOCKERS COMEDY

\$61 MILL BO 3418 SCREENS R 102 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO 28 DAYS BEFORE REDBOX DIGITAL
COPY WITH THE COMBO

**John Cena (DADDY'S HOME 2, THE WALL, SISTERS,
TRAINWRECK, HOME AGAIN)**

From Bob Clark's *Porky's* to Greg Mottola's *Superbad*, Hollywood has consistently privileged the spectacle of male teenage horniness. The archetypal high school sex comedy often sees a small group of likable, somewhat nerdy boys on an epic quest to get laid, with the female characters treated more as prizes to be won than as sexual beings in their own right. These films are one piece of a broader culture that relentlessly sexualizes young women while at the same time idealizing their purity and innocence.

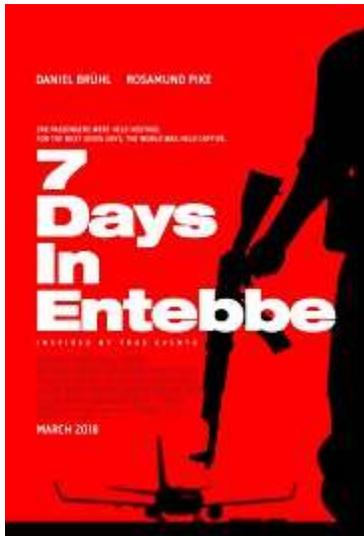
It's to the credit of Kay Cannon's *Blockers* that it does neither, instead confronting these hypocritical narratives head-on. The film essentially dramatizes the conflict between feminine sexual urges and puritanical social disapproval by pitting three high school seniors—Julie (Kathryn Newton), Kayla (Geraldine Viswanathan), and Sam (Gideon Adlon)—determined to get laid on their prom night against their parents. The idea of these girls losing their virginity drives Kayla's uptight father, Mitchell (John Cena), and Julie's over-protective mother, Lisa (Leslie Mann), so crazy that they are, among other things, pushed to commit a break-in and engage in "butt-chugging."

Cannon approaches the randiness of her female characters with unvarnished frankness: These girls drink hard, take drugs, and speak with unapologetically foul-mouthed candor, regularly saying stuff like, "I'd rather eat 10 dicks than one Mound." But they're also diverse in their attitudes toward sex. Julie wants it to be perfect—a tender, meaningful encounter with a guy she really cares for—while Kayla just wants it to happen and happen soon. Sam, on the other hand, is increasingly unsure if she wants to do it with a guy at all, as she finds herself far more infatuated with a nerdy-cute lesbian girl, Angelica (Ramona Young), than with her oafish prom date, Chad (Jimmy Bellinger).



With its raunchy, rapid-fire dialogue and one-crazy-night narrative, *Blockers* clearly owes a debt to *Superbad*, and it's no surprise to see that film's screenwriters, Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, credited as producers here. But comparisons to Mottola's coarsely funny yet emotionally resonant sex comedy tend to highlight both what's admirable and ultimately disappointing about this film. Cannon's inclusive, sex-positive vision of the fluidity and nonspecificity of female sexual desire offers a welcome contrast to *Superbad's* male-centric and relentlessly heteronormative point of view, but *Blockers* lacks the lived-in feel of Mottola's film, the sense it gave of watching true friends wrestling with their transition into adulthood. Viswanathan, Newton, and Adlon generate a bit of chemistry throughout, but it's undermined by the fundamentally mechanistic nature of Brian and Jim Kehoe's screenplay, which ultimately forces these girls' experiences into neat little scenarios that are constructed every bit as didactically as a workplace training video, but much funnier..

This will rent as well as **FIFTY SHADES FREE, MOLLY'S GAME, A BAD MOM'S CHRISTMAS, ROUGH NIGHT, GIRLS TRIP and HOUSE.**



7/3 7 DAYS IN ENTEBBE ACTION
\$7 MILL BO 1639 SCREENS PG-13 107 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO 28 DAYS BEFORE REDBOX
DIGITAL COPY WITH THE COMBO

Rosamund Pike (HOSTILES, RETURN TO SENDER, GONE GIRL, JACK REACHER, THE DEVIL YOU MAY KNOW, WRATH OF THE TITANS)

The film immediately begins with German bookseller Wilfried Böse (Daniel Brühl) and fellow Revolutionary Cells member Brigitte Kuhn (Rosamund Pike) taking over a plane traveling from Tel Aviv to Paris (by way of Athens), alongside two Palestinian terrorists, with the intention of securing the release for over 50 Palestinian “freedom fighters” locked up in Israel and four other countries. The captors eventually find safe haven in Entebbe, Uganda under the regime of His Excellency General Idi Amin Dada (Nonso Anozie, supplying more comic relief than menace). The terrorists make a point of separating the Israeli passengers from the gentiles—a condition of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (backers of the operation) that becomes an immediate problem for Böse, well aware of how it looks for Germans to be threatening Jews with summary execution.

The film jumps between the terrorist-hostage standoff and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s (Lior Ashkenazi) cabinet deliberations, and nearly every exchange of dialogue sounds like sparring blocks of Wikipedia-like information, with career Israeli politicians summarizing the past few years’ worth of events to each other for a presumptively ignorant audience. Despite these oversimplifications, the tit for tat between Rabin and his hardliner gadfly, Defense Minister Shimon Peres (Eddie Marsan), isn’t uninteresting, as it constantly racks focus back to the political expenditure of negotiating—or even *appearing* to negotiate—with terrorists in the eyes of the media.



Playing the more devout anti-Israeli terrorist, Pike is convincing enough as Kuhn, and the case could be made that the Revolutionary Cells member—barking commands, popping amphetamines, slowly losing her grip on reality—is the sole tragic protagonist on the terrorists’ side, as Brühl is given little to do but furrow his brow and spew RAF-era Radical Theory for Dummies.

As the Israelis begin to decide on a course of action, a third plotline opens up concerning an Israel Defense Forces commander, Zeev Hirsch (Ben Schnetzer), and his bohemian girlfriend, Sarah (Zina Zinchenko), who’s upset that Zeev has to report to duty instead of seeing her dance recital (performed by the real-life Batsheva Dance Company). Sarah’s insistence that Zeev is in a position to choose between the mission and attending her concert makes for a particularly maddening through line, as this oversimplified disagreement is all the film will tell us about these two characters.



Finally, Rabin initiates Operation Thunderbolt, wherein a 29-man IDF unit, led by the current prime minister’s brother, Yonatan “Yoni” Netanyahu (Angel Bonnani), raided the Entebbe airport and saved the hostages. This high-stakes operation ought to at least provide a high-octane payoff (Netanyahu was the lone IDF soldier killed, and the film probably wouldn’t exist if the raid had ended in failure). Padilha instead ends up delivering what appears to be an operatic salute to the IDF, crosscutting the raid with Sarah’s performance back in Tel Aviv and aligning the troops’ efficiency with the choreography of limber bodies in tandem—and the widespread applause that follows.

This will rent as well as **WINCHESTER, RED SPARROW, 15:17 TO PARIS, ACT OF VIOLENCE, THE FOREIGNER, and THE HITMAN’S BODYGUARD.**



7/17 A QUIET PLACE SUSPENSE THRILLER
\$148 MILL BO 3217 SCREENS **PG-13** 90 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO DIGITAL COPY WITH THE COMBO

Emily Blunt (THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN, THE HUNTSMAN: WINTERS WAR, LOOPER, THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU, CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR)

Survival is the implicit goal of characters in horror films, but a certain subset of these films are able to turn the act of survival into an existential quest, a powerful statement of defiance against the vagaries of the unknown. In these films, the world has usually turned against humanity in some way—a zombie apocalypse, an alien invasion, or simply the indomitability of nature itself—and the relative resourcefulness of characters who were previously reliant on now-absent tools or

technologies provide the major dramatic beats as outside forces close in, driving these characters into action.

The film's opening scene takes place approximately three months after these creatures have somehow made their presence known, with the Abbott family—Lee (Krasinski) and his wife, Evelyn (Emily Blunt), along with their three children—scrounging for supplies in an abandoned supermarket, padding around barefoot so as not to alert the monsters of their presence. But things don't end well for the family's youngest son (Cade Woodward), when a beeping sound produced by the toy his father forbids him to take from the store betrays his location. The film then catches up with the Abbotts one year later at their farm compound, fractured and hardened but still persisting in spite of the odds. They've found a precarious but so far effective way to survive, farming and fishing their way to dinner each night, while Lee toils away in his basement man cave, which is equipped with a whiteboard whose messages too obviously clue us into what he's trying to accomplish: to create a weapon to use against the monsters by identifying an exploitable weakness.



Evelyn is now pregnant with yet another child, and its impending birth is *A Quiet Place's* ticking time bomb: How will the family continue to survive with a screaming baby around, and how will Evelyn soundlessly give birth in the first place? Both questions are answered in due course as Krasinski's film settles into a night-of-terror set piece that sends each character hurtling into dangerous confrontations with the beasts that are hunting them.



But when the bonds between the Abbotts are tested by the external threat of the alien invaders—however flimsy the bonds might sometimes seem to be—the viscerally physical ways in which they protect each other from harm are powerful, and it becomes clear that these characters have had to learn different and perhaps more subtle methods of communication due to the circumstances in which they've found themselves. For example, every moment of eye contact between Lee and Evelyn carries far more weight in this world than in one where they could actually strike up a conversation whenever they wanted. The pleasure of *A Quiet Place* is in Krasinski's commitment to imagining the resourceful ways in which a family like this might survive in this kind of world, then bearing witness to the filmmaker's skillfully constructed methods of putting them to the ultimate test, relentlessly breaking down all of the walls the family has erected to keep the monsters out.

This will rent as well as **ANNIHILATION, GAME NIGHT, INSIDIOUS: THE LAST KEY, HAPPY DEATH DAY, and MAZE RUNNER: THE DEATH CURE.**



7/10 CHAPPAQUIDDICK SUSPENSE
\$20 MILL 2183 SCREENS PG-13 101 MINUTES
DVD/BR

Ed Helms (HANGOVER, VACATION, THE CLAPPER, WE’RE THE MILLERS, HANGOVER II)

Jason Clarke spends much of *Chappaquiddick* with his mouth slightly open, as if he’s struggling to express feelings he can’t sort out. Whenever he talks, he never seems entirely satisfied. In director John Curran’s film, Clarke plays Ted Kennedy in the moments before and after he drove his car into a tidal pond on Chappaquiddick Island, off Martha’s Vineyard, in 1969. Ted survived, but his passenger, 28-year-old Mary Jo Kopechne (Kate Mara), did not.

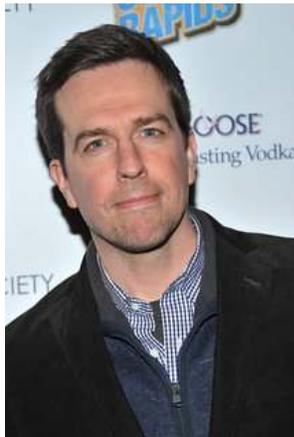
Kopechne had worked for Bobby Kennedy’s 1968 presidential campaign, and before the accident, she and five other women from the campaign were invited to Chappaquiddick Island for a party with Ted and five other married men that was framed as a reunion, though it’s hard not to sense the sexual undertones. During the party, Ted and Mary Jo get in Ted’s car. Ted would later insist that he was driving to the ferry so they could leave the island and, separately, retire for the night. *Chappaquiddick* suggests he was drunk and historians believe they were headed for a tryst on the beach.

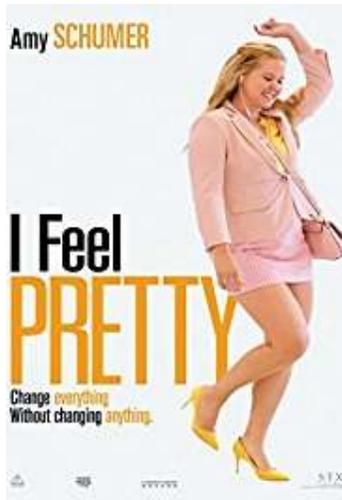
After the accident, Ted, a Massachusetts senator who hoped to run in the next presidential election, doesn’t know how to respond—whether to be honest and report the accident, blame Mary Jo, stay silent, or resign.

That’s why you notice his mouth. Clarke lets you know that Ted can’t square his head and his heart, or figure out what’s in either. He never really does, but a well-dressed army of lawyers, public relations men, and political operatives come up with an alternative. Most of them are friends of Joe (Bruce Dern), the Kennedy family patriarch, and their disinterest in the moral implications of Ted’s actions lets you know that they’ve done this before.

But Ted hasn’t, and Clarke suggests that the senator is conflicted—about the scandal, about his profession, and about being a Kennedy. So he leaves his mouth open and sets his eyes with the distant look of a man who’s always a little lost in his head. That’s the main idea behind Clarke’s compelling performance, which he delivers with a kind of sculptural precision. But he doesn’t hint at Ted’s inner life beyond that one idea. Surely, even a man under duress has more than one thought on his mind.

This will rent as well as **LBJ, RED SPARROW, I TONYA, LAST FLAG FLYING, STRONGER, and WIND RIVER.**





7/17 I FEEL PRETTY COMEDY
\$47 MILL BO 2587 SCREENS **PG-13** 110 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO DIGITAL COPY WITH THE COMBO
28 DAYS BEFORE REDBOX

**Amy Schumer (TV—INSIDE AMY SCHUMER—FILM—
TRAINWRECK, SNATCHED)**

In one of the most famous episodes of *Inside Amy Schumer*—an extended black-and-white parody of Sidney Lumet's 1957 classic film *12 Angry Men*—a group of guys debate whether comedienne Amy Schumer is hot enough to even be on television. "It's just another example of an average-looking chick who watched too much *Top Model* and now thinks she belongs on the cover of *Fuckable* magazine," one of men sneers with indignation.

Abby Kohn and Marc Silverstein's *I Feel Pretty* also focuses on the psychological impact of being an "average-looking chick" in a world that seems to prize hotness above all else. Schumer plays Renee Barrett, an insecure New York City woman who, after hitting her head in a SoulCycle class, wakes up thinking she's been transformed into a world-class beauty with a perfect body. She's the same woman she's always been, only now she's filled with inflated self-confidence, which allows her to do all the things she was too afraid to try before, like talk to men and apply for her dream job.

Kohn and Silverstein's screenplay never really taps into the inherent absurdity of its premise. Instead, with scene after scene playing on the ostensibly hilarious disconnect between Renee's average looks and her boundless self-assurance, *I Feel Pretty* stretches its one-joke premise to the breaking point. Renee, while she doesn't conjure the image of a classic bombshell, is hardly as grotesque as the film makes her out to be: stationary bikes collapse under the weight of her body; strangers mistake her for a man; and her gung-ho performance in a wet T-shirt contest is treated as if it were an outlandish spectacle on the order of Chris Farley's Chippendales routine.



In many ways, Kohn and Silverstein's film wants to have its cake and eat it too, mocking Renee's boorishness and delusional self-esteem while simultaneously criticizing the societal standards of beauty that are the source of her insecurities. But if there's a bit of hypocrisy here, it's at least leavened by the earnestness with which *I Feel Pretty* treats Renee's desire to be accepted. The film captures the small indignities of trying to conform to norms of feminine beauty, like shopping for makeup and squeezing into Spanx. Schumer taps into the raw sense of despair that grip women in the face of such societal pressures, capturing Renee's shame in feeling unattractive with surprising pathos, while still getting the chance to display her penchant for playing messy but blithely self-confident women.



The film contorts itself trying to find its way to a preordained conclusion: Renee giving a big presentation to launch a new line of cosmetics aimed at average women. Essentially a retread of the Dove Real Beauty campaign, the speech doubles as the film's take-home bromide: Have confidence in yourself no matter what you look like. Not a bad message, but the fact that it comes in the form of a sales pitch for beauty products demonstrates the limits of the film's insights. Rather than pointing the finger at a society that induces such wrenching insecurity—something *Inside Amy Schumer* did so acerbically—*I Feel Pretty* suggests the onus is on women to change their attitudes.

This will rent as well as **PITCH PERFECT 3, MOLLY'S GAME, GAME NIGHT, MOM AND DAD, and GIRLS TRIP.**



7/17 DISOBEDIENCE DRAMA
\$3 MILL BO 987 SCREENS **R** 114 MINUTES
DVD/BLU RAY

Rachel Weisz (MY COUSIN RACHEL, THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS, THE BOURNE LEGACY, THE LOBSTER, 360, THE DEEP BLUE SEA)

Disobedience's opening sequence may be cause for alarm. A rabbi, Rav Kruschka (Anton Lesser), delivers a sermon at a North London synagogue about angels and beasts, free will, and choosing the tangled lives we live. His tone is doctrinaire, poisonous even, so it's perhaps no surprise that the frail-looking man drops dead on the spot. Meanwhile in New York, his daughter, Ronit (Rachel Weisz), is seen putting his words

into action—less person than exemplar. Ronit, a photographer, is in session when she receives a phone call, presumably the one alerting her to her father's death, after which she's seen impassively skating around an ice rink, with a time-out for a random hookup with a man inside a bathroom stall.

Just as we hardly know it's London that Ronit returns to and that it's New York where she lives, we hardly know this woman. Lelio's

eschewing of the specifics of place makes sense though, as the London and New York of this film aren't exactly poles of desire for Ronit. But while we'll learn why she turned her back on the Orthodox world she was born into, the textures of her personhood will remain foreign to us. For one, we'll never comprehend why exactly she chooses to photograph any part of that or any other world. Here, it's as if her camera only exists to allow for the moment where she asks to take her long-ago lover's photograph, but in this scene, like the film's final one, there isn't even a sense that Ronit is looking to reclaim something that was never hers.

But many of us can remember a time where it seemed as if every song on the radio was in conversation with the heartache of a bad breakup. Lelio is nothing if not a romantic, and it's around the point that Ronit and Esti find themselves alone for the first time in however many years that the film's style vibrantly keys itself to the characters' passions. The magical realism that *A Fantastic Woman* flirts with is *Disobedience's* guiding principle. Lelio increasingly embraces symmetry, and he positions persons within the frame in totemic fashion, with the dollops of Matthew Herbert's dazzling musique concrète-style score underlying the sense that the characters are entering a trance of their own making. It's perhaps natural that Lelio films Ronit and Esit finally talking about their romantic past in a single long take, and it's some kind of masterstroke how the tension of their reminiscences and flirtations is rhymed to our wonderment over when the shot will dare to cut away.



Disobedience also benefits from its fairness of judgment. Lelio understands that the community at the center of the film is rooted in old-school tradition, but as it's physically rooted in a cultural capital of the world, no one here is a stranger to gays and lesbians, and so the reactions to Ronit and Esit's rekindled love affair never rise to the level of the hysteric. Whether at a dinner table or in the midst a religious practice, men and especially women play their roles with an almost self-aware sense of expectation. Ronit is asked at one point why she isn't married, and while her response rankles, it's understood as a matter of course. In fact, in the subtlest of glances exchanged between the women of this community, one senses a certain respect for Ronit having broken away from tradition to find her own path through life.

This will rent as well as **EVERY DAY, LOVE SIMON, PHANTOM THREAD, CALL ME BY YOUR NAME, LBJ, and THE GLASS CASTLE.**





7/17 ISLE OF DOGS ANIMATION
\$34 MILL BO 2138 SCREENS **PG-13** 101 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO DIGITAL COPY WITH THE COMBO 28
DAYS BEFORE REDBOX

VOICES OF: Bryan Cranston, Edward Norton

“Isle of Dogs” reminds me of a mountain of rich chocolate ice cream: it’s tantalizing to look at and you can’t wait to dive in, but after you get two thirds of the way through, brain freeze and the overwhelming sweetness cause you to push the dish away. The cloying saccharine feeling comes in the form of the film’s script, a disappointing case of too many cooks in the kitchen (with four “story by” credits, including director / screenwriter Wes Anderson, Roman Coppola, Jason Schwartzman, and Kunichi Nomura), but the cherry on top is Anderson’s signature meticulous visual organization and balanced, proportional order that won’t disappoint his longtime fans.

This beautiful looking film is absolutely pitch perfect in the classic Anderson style, brimming with a symmetrical, colorful, indie hipster aesthetic. Everything here is astonishingly stunning to look at, from the charming stop-motion animation jerk of a dog’s strut to brief forays into chromatic-hued, hand drawn sketches to a character’s perfectly lopsided freckles. This movie is not only stunning, it’s the best looking film since last year’s “Blade Runner 2049” (although in a completely different, winsomely twee way). Complementing the knockout visuals is a charming story about a young boy’s undying devotion for his dog and a dog’s everlasting loyalty to his master. It’s a real love letter to our four-legged friends and may bring tears to the eyes of anyone who has ever lived with a companion animal.



The film is set in Japan with a large amount of dialogue spoken in the native tongue (the barks from the dogs, a title card teases, have been translated into English). After an outbreak of canine flu leads to all dogs being quarantined on Trash Island, a heroic young boy named Atari (Koyu Rankin) commandeers a plane and crash lands on the island to rescue his dog Spots (Liev Schreiber). Atari seeks help from a pack of exiled canines including Boss (Bill Murray), Duke (Jeff Goldblum), Rex (Edward Norton), and Chief (Bryan Cranston). As the gang of misfits traverse the landscape and news of their adventure reaches the mainland, they inspire a group of pro-dog student activists to help uncover and expose an evil government conspiracy.

This will rent very well like **PADDINGTON 2, FERDINAND, THE STAR, SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE, and POWER RANGERS.**



7/17 RAMPAGE ACTION/ADVENTURE
\$91 MILL BO 3526 SCREENS **PG-13** 107 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO DIGITAL COPY WITH THE COMBO
28 DAYS BEFORE REDBOX

Dwayne Johnson (JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE, SAN ANDREAS, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE, FAST AND FURIOUS 6, GRIDIRON GANG)

It's safe to say that no one who's going to see *Rampage* is expecting a smart night at the multiplex, but it's also safe to say that the film's target audience is expecting briskly paced carnage—at least of the same sort that director Brad Peyton previously splattered about in the junky earthquake epic *San Andreas*. Maybe the fact that Peyton's latest has *four* credited screenwriters should've been a clue, but brisk is hardly the word for *Rampage*. It's a wonder that a video game from the 1980s could efficiently set its premise up in a single cut scene, but a major Hollywood production in 2018 can't seem to get beyond mere exposition in its 107-minute running time.

For those who never dropped a quarter to play a video game, the arcade classic *Rampage* offered players the chance to destroy one city after another as one of three giant monster archetypes: a crypto-King Kong gorilla, a pseudo-*Godzilla* lizard, and a “we need a third giant animal” wolf. In the game, each character is actually a human who, thanks to exposure to various forms of radiation or hormones, transforms into a demolition-minded beast. So long as they're destroying buildings and avoiding tactical military strikes, the game carries on, simple as that. From a formal standpoint, that's pretty close to the experience *San Andreas* provided, for better or—during occasional forays into the protagonists' marital woes—worse. The longer the Earth opens up and makes mortar crumble and glass shatter, the more the film carries on.



Not so with *Rampage*. As with *San Andreas*, Dwayne Johnson's broad shoulders take center stage as the world collapses around them. This time he plays Davis Okoye, the lead primatologist at a San Diego wildlife refuge. Much like Chris Pratt in *Jurassic World*, we're meant to buy that he's preternaturally gifted at communicating with the animal kingdom, presumably because he knows a half-dozen words in sign language. Davis has all the time in the world for the reserve's albino gorilla, George, and very little time for basically the entire human genus, even including the thigh gap-flaunting blond intern who asks him to teach her the ways of domination in the animal kingdom.

Another big renter like **JUSTICE LEAGUE, MAZE RUNNER: THE DEATH CURE, JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE, RED SPARROW, FIFTY SHADES FREE, and THE GREATEST SHOWMAN.**



7/17 SUPER TROOPERS 2 COMEDY
\$31 MILL BO 2165 SCREENS R 99 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO DIGITAL COPY WITH COMBO
28 DAYS BEFORE REDBOX

The good news is that Broken Lizard fans don't need to set the bar too low for "Super Troopers 2," the long-awaited (by some) sequel to 2001's idiot cop film "Super Troopers." Anyone who thought the gags from the original (like chugging maple syrup in a diner and an extended bit where deputies repeatedly say "meow" to confused motorists) were ridiculously funny (and you know who you are), will unquestionably enjoy round two.

The bumbling law enforcement team of misfits from Vermont, including Thorny (Jay Chandrasekhar), Rabbit (Erik Stolhanske), Farva (Kevin Heffernan), Foster (Paul Soter), and Mac (Steve Lemme), is back in action. This time an international border dispute has been sparked between Canada and the U.S. and the gang is sent up North to set up a

new Highway Patrol station. The newfound power goes straight to their heads and absurdity soon follows. There actually is a plot, although it's a recycled one involving drug and gun smuggling.

There's plenty here to appease both diehard fans and those new to the party. The film has an appropriate amount of throwback references to the original and the characters are still lovably goofy and moronic. Plus, there's something about lampooning cops that is just inherently funny.

The supporting cast fits right in among the madness too, providing some of the film's best moments (the scene where three dimwitted Mounties debate the career of Danny DeVito is headed for cult status). The opening bit has two very entertaining cameos (that I won't spoil here), Rob Lowe is perfectly silly as the ex-hockey star mayor (and brothel owner) of a small Canadian town, and Emmanuelle Chriqui shows off her comedy chops with an exaggerated French-Canadian accent that works in all of its outrageous, cartoonish glory.



The film retains its low budget B-movie feel and instead of focusing on the actual craft of making a film, they (smartly) turn the spotlight directly on the wisecracks. This proves to be both a blessing and a curse. Broken Lizard's signature chaotic comedy routines, where every little semi-funny idea is attempted for laughs, is no different here. There are the required fart and dick jokes (most of them funny, believe it or not), and then some not-so-progressive bits that poke fun at homosexuals, women, and the handicapped (also worth a couple of chuckles, although you may feel bad about yourself for laughing). The jokes are sometimes vulgar and not at all clever, but the shenanigans (see what I did there?) are sure to please fans. It's low brow, but it's funny.

This one will rent as well as **DEATH WISH, A BAD MOM'S CHRISTMAS, BAY WATCH, HOUSE 2, and FATHER FIGURE**



7/17 TRAFFIK THRILLER
\$11 MILL BO 1934 SCREENS **R** 95 MINUTES
DVD/BLU RAY

Paula Patton (THE PERFECT MATCH, ABOUT LAST NIGHT, BAGGAGE CLAIM, 2 GUNS)

Brea (Paula Patton) is a *Sacramento Post* journalist with integrity, but when a fellow reporter scoops her story on government corruption, she is let go by her editor (William Fichtner). Later that night on her birthday, mechanic boyfriend John (Omar Epps) plans to take Brea on a romantic getaway in a plush glass house in the mountains, owned by the company of John's sport-agent friend Darren (Laz Alonso). Brea knows that John wants to propose, but first he surprises her with a muscle car he built back up for her. Before the couple reaches their getaway home, they stop at a gas station, where Brea encounters a strung-out, victimized woman (Dawn Olivieri) in the restroom. Brea has the feeling this woman is asking for help but stays out of it, and on their way out of the gas station, she and John evade a troupe of leering, menacing bikers. Once Brea and John begin their weekend with a little canoodling in the pool, Darren and long-suffering wife Malia (Roselyn Sanchez) show up unannounced. A ringing phone interrupts them, but it seems to be coming from a satellite phone that the woman at the gas station put in Brea's purse. Things go from bad to worse when Brea unlocks the passcode on the phone, making a shocking discovery with incriminating evidence of women being sold, and the owner of the phone shows up to reclaim it.

A grimy, nasty, exploitative B-movie uncomfortably blended with loftier aspirations, "Traffik" wants to have it both ways, simultaneously hoping to thrill and pretending to have something more socially woke on its mind, but does neither very convincingly. First things first, director Deon Taylor does effectively set up a tense situation, even if the first 30 minutes is a long setup—the lengthy romantic montages between Brea and John in an infinity pool look like soft-core Cinemax leftovers—until it gets there. There's a decent cat-and-mouse game in the woods, followed by Brea hiding out in a car that inevitably won't start.

Will rent as well as **PROUD MARY, DETROIT, MOTHER, KIDNAP and UNFORGETTABLE.**





7/17 **TRUTH OF DARE** HORROR
\$41 MILL BO 2856 SCREENS **PG-13** 100 MINUTES
DVD/COMBO DIGITAL COPY WITH THE COMBO
28 DAYS BEFORE REDBOX

Lucy Hale (TV---LIFE SENTENCE, PRETTY LITTLE LIARS, HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER)

When we meet Olivia (Lucy Hale) at the start of *Truth or Dare*, a startlingly mean-spirited but otherwise dimwitted horror film, she seems like a decent person, as she's planning to spend the spring break of her senior year of college volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. But her friends put a wrench in her do-gooderism by spirited her away with them to Mexico, where they booze it up, beach it out, and tongue kiss like crazy. They're very Ugly Americans, setting themselves up to seem like they deserve all the devastation and death they'll soon encounter while also establishing the film's central theme: Is it possible to thrive in life while being a good person?

While in Mexico, the friends are led to a cursed mission church by a cutie, Carter (Landon Liboiron), who picks up Olivia at a club on her last night in town. He initiates a game of Truth or Dare that will follow them back to California, because the game itself is possessed by a demon, who demands that you play...or die. At any moment, a roomful of strangers, your closest friends, or dead bodies could transform into fiends who demand the revelation of sensitive secrets or the performance of mean-spirited stunts: coming out to a homophobic parent, breaking your best friend's hand, or having sex with your best friend's boyfriend.



The dares can also be deadly, like finishing a bottle of booze while walking along the edge of a roof, or stealing a cop's gun and making him beg for it. Carter shares this infectious game with Olivia and her friends like an S.T.D., similar to the man who passes off the stalking presence in *It Follows*. This is, overwhelmingly, a silly horror flick unconcerned with its silliness: Throughout, it spends a lot of screen time digging into exposition and explanation, including having its American characters interrogate the rural Mexican ones, who conveniently speak—and write—in excellent English.

But every once in a while there are flashes of the delicious darkness that one wishes *Truth or Dare* had embraced more often. The amiability of the film's archetypal group of college pals is built upon a delicate web of deceit that quickly comes unspun when they're forced to tell the truth, and the disclosures become increasingly vicious: one character must confess, mid-coitus, to loving someone else; another must declare a cringe-inducing connection to a friend's father's recent suicide. In this most cynical and black-hearted of films, even the kindest of people are laden with sinister secrets.

This will rent as well as **ANNIHILATION, MOLLY'S GAME, INSIDIOUS: THE LAST KEY, A MOM'S BAD CHRISTMAS, FRIEND REQUEST** and **JIGSAW**.