

11/3 1 **INSIDE OUT** FAMILY

\$344 MILL BO 4382 SCREENS PG 94 MINUTES

VOICES OF Amy Poehler, Bill Hader, Lewis Black

Inside Out begins alongside the life of Riley (voiced, as a tween, by Kaitlyn Dias). As she begins to make sounds and express feelings, Riley's brain spawns new emotions, and first comes Joy (Amy Poehler), who makes Riley giggle as the newborn looks, gauzy-eyed, at her parents (Diane Lane and Kyle McLachlan). Joy, a densely packed mass of radiant particles, is subsequently joined in Riley's control room by Fear (Bill Hader), Anger (Lewis Black), Disgust (Mindy Kaling), and Sadness (Phyllis Smith), who

genially and alternately take the reins of a panel that transforms Riley's reactions into gestures and, later, sentences. These reactions transform, one by one, into memories, which take the form of tiny, translucent orbs. They roll, like bowling balls, onto neat shelves stocked with moments, all color-coded to match the presiding emotion of each memory. At age 11, Joy is the dominant force in Riley's mind, but her relentless cheer is imperiled when Riley's parents uproot her from Minnesota to San Francisco, as her father pursues a startup venture and the family moves into a narrow, shabby fixer-upper.

Despite these gestures to Silicon Valley and gentrification, *Inside Out*'s values and concerns are reassuringly timeless. Riley isn't beholden to neuroscience or contemporary debates about creative genes and parenting strategies; she's an athletically inclined pre-teen trying to, with Joy's encouragement, make the best of an abrupt transition. Her struggles begin when, back in the control room, Sadness begins to obtain some unique powers. With just a touch, formerly happy memories become tinged with pain, and Sadness herself becomes morbidly fascinated with exploring her potential. Joy, rendered by Poehler as a slightly gentler, but even more chipper, version of her control-freak Leslie Knope, cannot abide Sadness's incursions. (Smith does an outstanding job of conveying the variegated hues and motives of melancholy.) After Sadness commandeers Riley's first day at her new school, in the form of a devastatingly uncomfortable introductory speech to her classmates, the two battle over Riley's sacred core memories. In the process, Joy, Sadness, and all of Riley's most pivotal remembrances are sucked out of the control room and into the expanse of Riley's brain.

Every step of this journey can feel, all at once, both on the nose and dazzlingly inventive. The best analogue for Riley's mind is a Hollywood studio backlot, where rickety old sets crumble as more modern, complex new products are developed. This gives Docter excuses to pay homage to both abstract films (in the realm of abstract learning) and B-movie aesthetics (in a hilarious dream production factory), and it gives *Inside Out* an aura of relentless ingenuity even as the film comes to seem like it was plucked from a Pixar Narrative Generator algorithm. (Michael Giacchino, the studio's resident composer, contributes an uncharacteristically forgettable score, but the production design, where Day-Glo coloring mingles with the alluring curves of an Apple-designed contraption, is remarkable, and should make for a rewarding 3D viewing experience.) With *Monsters, Inc.* and *Up*, Docter has proven himself Pixar's resident nostalgist and most capable tearjerker, but *Inside Out* may be his most complete and poignant work. In order to restore Riley to her natural charm and perseverance, Joy and Sadness must work together, and thereby allow Sadness to take a greater role in Riley's future. Once *Inside Out* reestablishes its nuclear family, the film also shakes off its emotional shackles, unearthing some exquisite harmony in simply feeling mixed up and confused.

This will be as big as **PITCH PERFECT 2, HOME, INSURGENT, THE DUFF, STRANGE MAGIC, GET HARD, PENGUINS OF MADAGASCAR, and PADDINGTON.**





11/3 3 THE END OF THE TOUR DRAMA \$4 MILL BO 984 SCREENS R 106 MINUTES

Jason Segel (BAD TEACHER, FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS, THIS IS 40, THE FIVE YEAR ENGAGEMENT)
Jesse Eisenberg (THE SOCIAL NETWORK, THE DOUBLE, NOW YOU SEE ME, TO ROME WITH LOVE, THE EDUCATION OF CHARLIE BANKS)

"Where'd you get this number?" Listening on a pay phone, David Lipsky (Jesse Eisenberg) looks genuinely stunned. "You'd do me a favor by losing it," adds the man he's about to meet face to face, the man who's the subject of his ambitious first feature for *Rolling Stone* magazine, the man who will introduce himself as Dave Wallace (Jason Segel).

That meeting occurs a few seconds later in *The End of the Tour*, a film recounting five days the writers spend together at the end of Wallace's book tour for *Infinite Jest*. They stand in Wallace's driveway in Bloomington, Illinois, attended by his two big bouncy dogs, galumphing into snow banks. Wallace reassures his visitor that his question was mostly a joke. Now Lipsky looks unconvinced.

The *Rolling Stone* piece was never published, the book, based on the unused interview tapes, followed Wallace's 2008 suicide, and the movie has generated some controversy, much of it centered on the impossibility of doing justice to Wallace, as a personality, as an icon, as a singularly brilliant person.

Yet the movie does work toward addressing these concerns, using Lipsky's profound insecurities and vexing misunderstandings to situate viewers. Lipsky wants to know "what it's like to be the most talked about writer in the country," you know he's in trouble and also that this is the point, for you to know that.

This sort of po-mo circularity is, of course, apt in imagining Wallace—or imagining Lipsky's imagining. "It's as though Paul Bunyan had joined the NFL," Lipsky says of his subject, not quite placing himself in the metaphor. Wallace agrees to the interview—a point Lipsky makes whenever he feels resistance to an annoying question—but his work and conversation reveal the inadequacy of such rituals.

Wallace seems to entertain Lipsky's efforts to share insights regarding celebrity, addiction and the odd perfections of *Die Hard* and *The End of the Tour* allows you to remain daunted by Wallace's genius while not asking you to sympathize too much with Lipsky's twitchy narcissism and frequent incomprehension. It's a movie about two writers with very different relationships to greatness, one covetous and the other disappointed. Lipsky believes the mythology that Wallace critiques in his book, that greatness is a thing to be achieved, a thing that can save you. Though he's read Wallace's book, its ruminations on pretty much exactly the complications of this experience, Lipsky doesn't get what Wallace is talking about.

The film makes clear that Lipsky's concern with his own part in the interview shapes any possible interaction. "Reading you is another way of meeting you," Lipsky essays, "Your work is so personal." Sitting across from Lipsky in a diner, Wallace nods at the fantasy. Watching Lipsky fidget and project, you're increasingly aware of your own efforts to grasp a phrase or a moment, your own discomfort and wonder. Wallace looks large no matter where he appears, whether in the close spaces of his one-story home or as he looms against long stretches of highway glimpsed during transport to and from the reading in St. Paul, Minnesota. Lipsky, by contrast, looks small, his eyes darting and his shoulders hunched.

Wallace is lost in his own way, of course, as the framing story of his suicide indicates. With Lipsky, he gestures toward his dogs more than once, as examples of companionship and loyalty, of joyful,



earnest experience, a relationship that is, for him, is “easier” than with another person, a girlfriend, for instance. “You don’t feel like you’re hurting their feelings all the time,” he says. And yet he looks out for them, asking Lipsky to leave his bedroom door open so they might wander the house freely at night. When they snuffle up to him, waking him, Lipsky pushes them away, unable to focus on anything but himself.

An interesting film that will rent as well as **THE AGE OF ADELINE**, **TRUE STORY**, **FOCUS**, **THE LOFT**, and **INHERENT VICE**.



11/3 1 VACATION COMEDY

\$59 MILL BO 2947 SCREENS R 99 MINUTES

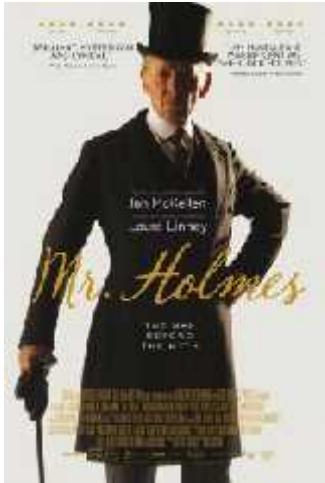
Ed Helms (TV---THE OFFICE, ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT, THE MINDY PROJECT---FILM---HANGOVER, HANGOVER II)
Christina Applegate (HALL PASS, GOING THE DISTANCE, EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH, MARS ATTACKS!)

The new *Vacation* film doesn't play by the rules. Sadly, it should. It violates the first mandate of a comedy: it's not very funny. Its gross-out gag filled script is hit or (mostly) miss at best. It then bends the requirements of a reboot/revamp/remeake of the 1983 film of the same name. Instead, this is basically a sequel, several years in the making, that wants to channel the hilarious original while coming up with a bad taste version all its own. It fails so miserably that the truth in advertising watchdogs should demand a cease and desist for the use of the *Vacation* name.

Indeed, just like his daddy, Rusty ends up in a worthless auto, his Wally World destination sidetracked by visits to his sister Audrey (Leslie Mann) and her Fox News fearing weatherman hubby, Stone Crandall (Chris Hemsworth, proving Thor can do comedy as well). We also have to contend with “the perfect family” (Keegan Michael-Key and Regina Hall), a suicidal river raft guide (*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*'s Charlie Day, one of the few sources of energy in this limp excuse for entertainment), and, of course, a last minute cameo from Clark (Chevy Chase) and Ellen (Beverly D'Angelo).

A fun remake that will rent as well as **HOT PURSUIT**, **GET HARD**, **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**, **THE DUFF**, and **THE WEDDING RINGER**.





11/10 3 MR. HOLMES DRAMA
\$16 MILL BO 1548 SCREENS PG 104 MINUTES

Ian McKellen (TV—VICIOUS—FILM—X MEN: THE LAST STAND, THE LORD OF THE RINGS, THE DA VINCI CODE, THE HOBBIT)

Laura Linney (HYDE PARK ON THE HUDSON, THE FIFTH ESTATE, THE NANNY DIARIES, THE SQUID AND THE WHALE, MYSTIC RIVER)

It's a brazenly reflective role for McKellen, a student of behavior like the fictional sleuth, and his tempered, witty performance is genuinely rousing. He's in nearly every scene, and he gives a pulse to the film's complacent view that those who write, play music, or practice any artistic occupation can use these outlets to overcome grief and memory loss, among other things.

As Holmes attempts to remember the details of the story that led a client's wife, Ann (Hattie Morahan), to kill herself, following the loss of her glass harp, he's also attempting to settle a bit of a feud with Tamiki Umezaki (Hiroyuki Sanada), the Japanese man who searches for special plants for Holmes that might help his memory. In one scene, Tamiki finds a desperately needed plant in the aftermath of Hiroshima, a symbol of how death and tragedy can often spur expression and subsequently soothe painful memories, as it is this very plant that supposedly helps Holmes remember the roots of Tamiki's father's familial abandonment and Ann's horrible death. *Mr. Holmes* is ultimately about the power of art to work out grim and horrifying life events, a young woman's loss of several children only being the most prominent. And yet the director barely conveys the details of learning, practicing, or personalizing an art form, how such immersive studies grow and augment over time. In effect, he ignores the delights and hardships of becoming an artist in lieu of simply presenting the long-touted liberating effects of art.

Most of the film's scenes unravel in Holmes's country home, which is looked after by Mrs. Munro (Laura Linney) and her son, Roger (Milo Parker), and even here, Condon parallels the workaday struggle of Linney's mother figure with her ability to teach and offer sage wisdom to Holmes and Roger, who begins emulating the cold, clinical investigative mind of the retired investigator. The most pervasive symbol, however, is the beehive that Holmes fervently tends to, and the script reiterates the differences between a bee and a wasp, the former of which leaves its stinger in. Of course, the director means to say that great artists leave a bit of themselves in their art, whereas the more aggressive and lesser talented ones give nothing of themselves to their creations.

This one will rent as well as **FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD, THE WATER DIVINER, WOMAN IN GOLD, WELCOME TO ME, WHILE WE'RE YOUNG** and **STILL MINE**.





11/10 2 SELF/LESS THRILLER

\$14 MILL BO 1836 SCREENS PG-13 117 MINUTES

Ryan Reynolds (**WOMAN IN GOLD, A MILLION WAYS TO DIE IN THE WEST, R. I. P. D., SAFE HOUSE, THE CHANGE-UP**)

Matthew Goode (TV—**DOWNTON ABBEY--THE IMITATION GAME, LEAP YEAR, A SINGLE MAN**)

Ben Kingsley (**EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS, LEARNING TO DRIVE, ENDER'S GAME, HUGO, SHUTTER ISLAND**)

If decades of science fiction tales have taught us anything, it's that immortality always seems to come with some sort of catch. The film starts off well; as usual, Ben Kingsley is brilliant in his role as the snarky, mega-rich Damian Hale, who has just received a fatal cancer diagnosis. To escape his fate, Hale turns to a secret organisation specialising in a medical procedure called "shedding" (available exclusively for those at the highest levels of society, of course). This essentially moves his mind into a younger body – lab grown, he's assured by the organisation's head, Albright (Matthew Goode). Damien spends a few months indulging himself in his brand new identity, but then things start to go wrong. He has been told that hallucinations are normal, but the ones he begins to experience feel a little too real. Immortality does indeed appear to have some side effects. There may be nothing unique or particularly mind-blowing about *Self/less*, but it is a little less action-focused than many of this summer's sci-fi offerings and, if nothing else, it introduces us to an intriguing concept.

This one will rent as well as **EX MACHINA, MCFARLAND USA, WELCOME TO ME, JUPITER ASCENDING, STILL ALICE, and THE GUEST.**





11/10 1 TERMINATOR GENYSIS SCI FI/ACTION
\$89 MILL BO 3492 SCREENS PG-13 126 MINUTES

Arnold Schwarzenegger (KINDERGARTEN COP, EXIT WOUND, CONAN THE BARBARIAN, END OF DAYS, COLLATERAL DAMAGE)

Jason Clark (CHILD 44, DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES, ZERO DARK THIRTY, WHITE HOUSE DOWN, LAWLESS)

The film's greatest attribute is its redirection of focus back onto Sarah. The series is at its best when it filters John's messianic narrative through the perspective of its Mary figure, altering the emotional arc from a hero's triumph to the sacrifices of someone fated to be a footnote in history despite being tasked with all the grueling work of preparation. Emilia Clarke impresses as a toughened Sarah, but she truly excels when chafing against the expectation of falling for a man destined to be the father of her child without her say-so. When John emerges from a changed future as a man-machine hybrid, he embodies Sarah's conflicted feelings and resentment of existing solely to give birth, and on occasion it seems that she fears the prospect of motherhood more than the apocalypse. **Terminator Genisys** may not be a great movie, but Sarah's arc manages to do what the franchise's previous film shied away from: radically altering the parameters of not only the series' timeline, but its philosophical and emotional underpinnings.

This will rent as well as **MAD MAX: FURY ROAD**, **KINGSMEN: THE SECRET SERVICE**, **THE GAMBLER**, **AMERICAN SNIPER**, and **UNBROKEN**.



11/10 1 TRAINWRECK COMEDY
\$104 MILL BO 3956 SCREENS R 125 MINUTES

Amy Schumer (TV—INSIDE AMY SCHUMER, A DIFFERENT SPIN WITH MARK HOPUS)
Bill Hader (TV—BROOKLYN NINE, BOB'S BURGERS, SOUTH PARK, THE MINDY PROJECT---FILM—ACCIDENTAL LOVE, 22 JUMP STREET)

Trainwreck takes a step that seems daring, but shouldn't be, relocating the female character usually relegated to the periphery in a romantic comedy—say, the drunk disaster at the heroine's wedding—and putting her front and center.

Written by Amy Schumer and directed by Judd Apatow, the film focuses on Amy (played by Schumer), another variation on the stock character from her TV show. Narcissistic and cutting, she's racked up several lifetimes' worth of one-night stands, terrified of commitment, and inclined to over-share. While the character tends toward dirty humor, she's not so much intentionally shocking, *a la* Sarah Silverman, but

rather, so self-involved that she's unconcerned with how anyone else might take her revelations, as when she compares sleeping with her pseudo-boyfriend Steven (John Cena) to "having sex with an ice sculpture."

No matter how potty-mouthed or frequently blackout drunk this Amy may be, however, she's living in a New York-set rom-com, which means that she's working at a glamorous men's magazine. This allows for some basic gags (the first scene has her horrified at waking up in a random guy's place on Staten Island) as well as some situational comedy. Called S'Nuff, the publication looks like a toxic mixture of *Buzzfeed* and *Maxim* (and it's probably only about five minutes away from becoming reality).

Although it's never quite clear what Amy writes for S'Nuff, her editor Dianna (Tilda Swinton) assigns her to write a profile piece on slightly nerdy sports doctor Aaron (Bill Hader, the straight-arrow for once), who will be her romantic challenge for the film. As in most such movies, the blonde star has a best friend with whom she commiserates (Vanessa Bayer, one of a squad of *SNL* cast members in small roles). Their girl-talk isn't so much focused on trying to find the right guy, but on Amy's terror that one of the men she meets (a number of them listed in credits as "One-Night Stand Guy") might actually want her to spend the night or (ick) call her to meet again.

Amy's fear of commitment is traced right back to her father Gordon (Colin Quinn), seen in the opening scene lecturing a young Amy and her sister Kim about the dangers of settling down. As an adult, Amy follows the hard-drinking, acerbic Gordon's advice to the letter, even as she might hope that all her selfish and destructive behavior will be overlooked because she was such a fun party-girl. By contrast, Kim (Brie Larson) has married a regular and unassuming guy (Mike Birbiglia), with whom she is raising his son and is pregnant with her first. As they embody a funny and touching triangulation of differing worldviews, anger-edged love, and comedy, Amy and Kim are engaging as sisters, their conversations and their tensions convincing, as Amy mistakes Kim's concern for scorn and her refusal to get sucked into Gordon's misanthropy for some kind of jealousy.

But *Trainwreck* doesn't focus on this dynamic. Instead it veers off course not long after Amy and Aaron start turning into a real couple. To the film's credit, it riffs on but doesn't overdo the opposites-attract dialectic, even though Amy is so clueless about sports that when an underhandedly charming LeBron James (playing himself) stops by to see his buddy Aaron, her only comment is, "He's tall."

James' scenes are some of the film's best, but they also signal a problem that nearly kills all the good will they engender. After a tragedy throws a bomb into Amy's already stressful family situation, *Trainwreck* turns from self-aware rom-com—the kind that wants to have a lovers-in-bloom montage, but still comment ironically on it—to a more standard Apatow narrative about a young adult learning to put away childish things.

This is a a funnier than average summer comedy that allows its female star to be a train wreck and not feel the need to punish her for it.

This will be as big a renter as **GET HARD, TAMMY, PITCH PERFECT 2, THE LONGEST RIDE, PAUL BLART 2 and NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 3.**





11/17 1 THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. ACTION
\$42 MILL BO 2135 SCREENS PG-13 116 MINUTES

Henry Cavill (MAN OF STEEL, THE COLD LIGHT OF THE DAY, IMMORTALS, WHATEVER WORKS, BLOOD CREEK)

Armie Hammer (ENTOURAGE, MIRROR MIRROR, THE LONE RANGER, J. EDGAR, THE SOCIAL NETWORK)

"You two are supposed to be looking after one another. Why am I playing mother?" Gaby (Alicia Vikander) casts a stern look in the direction of CIA agent Napoleon Solo (Henry Cavill) and KGB agent Illya Kuryakin (Armie Hammer), squabbling over who's in charge of their secret mission. Namely, they're looking for Gaby's father, an East German nuclear physicist, apparently kidnapped so that he might

design a bomb.

Standing on a street in Berlin, the men are briefly struck by Gaby's upset and so briefly pause their chest-puffing when she threatens to walk away. Living inside *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, which is to say, Guy Ritchie's movie update of the mid-'60s TV show, all three are caught up in kitschy templates, including Napoleon's insufferable arrogance, Illya's brutal vulnerability, and Gaby's colorful minidresses..

At first glance, that plot centers on the boys' evolving relationship, with the girl included to make sure you're clear that the boys are not gay (at least not in relation to each other). They come together during an opening gambit, when Napoleon means to bring Gaby over to the West and Illya means to stop him. The superhuman Russian chases their car on foot along dark night streets, they shoot and careen and fight by hand. While their contest is predicated on who has hold of Gaby, they all learn late in the next scene that they've been set up on something like a blind date, as their spy agencies want them to work together in order to thwart the couple who have commissioned the bomb, a wealthy Italian race car driver named Alexander (Luca Calvani) and wife Victoria (Elizabeth Debicki). The plan is that the "little chop shop girl", as Illya likes to call Gaby, will convince her dad to come along once they locate him.



No matter the common reality of such backroom collaborations, as agencies and governments work around long term hostilities to achieve short term goals, the jokey gimmick here is premised on the absurdity of ideological fronting. Here everyone has the same end in mind, power and control, with Illya, Napoleon, and Gaby each engaged in their own version of that pursuit. A onetime thief whose skills made him worthy of employ by the CIA, Napoleon's "light fingers" and cocky attitude make him an apt representative for American values, so-called, which is to say, he tends to lord over the others his intelligence and leadership.

A fun film from a hit TV show from years ago. This will rent as well as **MAD MAX: FURY ROAD**, **PAUL BLART 2, THE GUNMAN, RUN ALL NIGHT, A MOST VIOLENT YEAR** and **INHERENT VICE**.





11/24 3 AMERICAN ULTRA COMEDY
\$16 MILL BO 2136 SCREENS R 90 MINUTES

Jesse Eisenberg (THE SOCIAL NETWORK, THE DOUBLE, NIGHT MOVES, NOW YOU SEE ME, TO ROME WITH LOVE)

Connie Britton (TV—NASHVILLE, FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS, THE WEST WING—FILM—FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS, THE TO DO LIST, THIS IS WHERE I LEAVE YOU)

Kristen Stewart (STILL ALICE, SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN, ON THE ROAD, THE TWILIGHT SAGA, THE RUNAWAYS)

The stoner. At first, Hollywood wanted nothing to do with the dope fiend, making mocking cautionary tales like *Reefer Madness*. Over time, pot went from pariah to possible plot point, the '60s ushering in a detente, of sorts, with dope. Fast forward a few years and a couple of comics named Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong converted marijuana to movie (previously recorded album) magic.

Jesse Eisenberg is a fine actor and he does his best as nested government agent Mike Howell. You see, our hero is one of those brainwashed, waiting to be activated spies, someone who needs a set of unusual code words to come out of his stupor. He works a dead end (Kevin Smith inspired) job at a convenience store and pals around with Phoebe Larson (Kristen Stewart - yes, Bella from *Twilight*) whose a receptionist for a bail bondsman. Both hate living in West Virginia, but she can't leave, as she suffers from anxiety attacks when the subject is broached.

One day, Victoria Lasseter (Connie Britton) walks into Howell's life. She was his CIA handler. Our hop head has no memory of this. Apparently, he was part of a secret government program, now long decommissioned (read: destroyed). He's the last survivor agent, and is in dire straits thanks to Adrian Yates (Topher Grace). He annihilated Victoria's project and now wants Mike dead, too. Thus the dynamic is set up: unknown super spy does incredible things that he can't account for. Competing forces try to influence/destroy him. Lame action sequence follows lame action sequence. People smoke pot.

Add in Walter Goggins as a psychotic hitman type and John Leguizamo as Mike's dealer and quasi-mentor, and you have a cast that could have knocked this out of the park. Instead, *American Ultra* borrows heavily from the drug it uses as a narrative thread, turning mellow and eventually meaninglessly inert when it should be hyper and stylized.

This will rent as well as **HOT PURSUITS, RESULTS, ALOHA, PAUL BLART 2, UNFINISHED BUSINESS, GET HARD and THE WEDDING RINGER**.





11/24 1 NO ESCAPE ACTION
\$27 MILL BO 2297 SCREENS R 103 MINUTES

**Owen Wilson (THE WEDDING CRASHERS, ARE YOU HERE, MIDNIGHT IN PARIS, INHERENT VICE)
Pierce Brosnan (THE WORLD'S END, THE LOVE PUNCH, THE NOVEMBER MAN, MAMMA MIA!, THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH, SHATTERED)**

"I wasn't planning for things to work out like this." Of course he wasn't. Jack (Owen Wilson) is doing his best to explain to his wife Annie (Lake Bell) just how they've ended up in an exotic, impoverished "Third World" country and she's ended up in tears on the floor of their hotel room. As

Jack talks, Annie cuts in, "I can't comfort you right now."

In this moment, early in *No Escape*, Jack and Annie can't quite come to terms with each other's needs and disappointments. He's an engineer feeling stuck with his new mid-management job, working for a global corporation looking to privatize water. She's a mother of two young girls, Lucy (Sterling Jerins) and Beeze (Claire Geare), anxious for their safety in a place in "Asia", as Austin, Texas home.

Lucky for both of them, they're about to run smack into chaos, a violent coup. Jack comes upon the insurrection when he heads out into the street in search of an English language newspaper. Alarmed by the confrontations between angry protestors wielding stones and machetes against a line of soldiers whose riot shields offer little protection, Jack scampers back to the hotel, the camera following him through narrow alleys and past bloody victims.

To indicate the doubled sensation of time both slowing and racing, the film initiates a trick it repeats more than a few times: slow motion, fragmented images and muffled sound create the sensation that you're back on the beach in *Saving Private Ryan*, unsure what's just out of frame, but aware that it's bad.

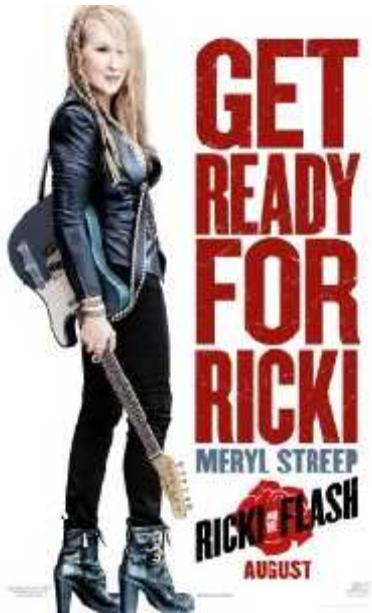
These sequences tend to indicate Jack's experience. He's remarkably cagy at times, peering through smoke or shards of office furniture to spot the one possible escape route in any given crisis, carrying a daughter over his shoulder or tossing them one by one from one building roof to another (again, broken slow motion suggests his worry, as you watch the child fly through the air from a view approximating his). He's helped in this by Hammond (Pierce Brosnan), who's easy enough to spot as a hardened government-military operative type, but who intimates to Jack that he's just a hard-drinking, karaoke-singing white guy in town in pursuit of "the girls". He's good at showing up during especially dire situations, leading the frightened family through scary streets and shooting with remarkably sharp aim at all assailants.

Besides rescuing the family and providing access to the semi-comic stylings of his sidekick, a local-seeming sure-shot agent who goes by the name of "Kenny Rogers" (Sahajak Boonthanakit), Hammond provides a bit of explanation for Jack, as stubbornly clueless a hero as you can imagine. Hammond doesn't so much correct his myopia ("I have to save my family!") as he provides something like background: "Guys like me pave the way for guys like you," he says. When infrastructures are decimated and populations suffer, corporations arrive on scene to rebuild and reap profits. "It's all a fuck job," Hammond observes. The protestors, the guys with masks on their faces and machetes, "are just trying to protect their families, just like you."

It's no surprise that Jack doesn't quite grasp the concept, worried as he is about his own moral standing ("I killed someone") and only sort of placated by Hammond's instruction, which sounds a lot like his own narrow, self-sustaining view of the world: "There's no good or bad here. Just get your family the hell out."

This will rent as well as **RUN ALL NIGHT, 3 DAYS TO KILL, TAKEN 3, THE GUNMAN, A MOST VIOLENT YEAR** and **THE GAMBLER**.





11/24 1 RICKI AND THE FLASH

MUSICAL/DRAMA

\$26 MILL BO 2046 SCREENS PG-13 101 MINUTES

Meryl Streep (THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA, SOPHIE'S CHOICE, THE GIVER, AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, THE HOURS)

Kevin Kline (A FISH CALLED WANDA, SILVERADO, NO STRINGS ATTACHED, IN & OUT, DE-LOVELY, FRENCH KISS)

If Bonnie Raitt had spent the last 40 years working at Hot Topic, she'd probably look a little bit like Ricki Rendazzo (Meryl Streep), an aging rocker who divides her time between gigs at a roadhouse bar in the San Fernando Valley and day shifts at a yuppie food emporium. Despite leers from an unlikely proportion of average citizens, Ricki wears her chunky heels, tie-dyed pants, and wristband tattoos like a badge of honor, but she only seems to fully inhabit her own skin on stage, husking her way through blues-rock covers of Tom Petty's "American Girl" and Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance." Her Two-Face-style mane of hair—half a trio of braids, half a flowing side part—transparently underlines the identity crisis at the ultimately throbbing heart of *Ricki and the Flash*.

The film itself often feels like the product of conflicting impulses. The front end of Diablo Cody's screenplay is quippy and barbed, setting up Ricki as an anti-Obama, Support Our Troops mouthpiece surrounded by a family of composting, Kombucha-drinking liberals. Many years after abandoning her family to live out her artistic dreams, a broke Ricki is summoned to Indiana, where her daughter, Julie (Mamie Gummer), has become suicidal in the wake of a brief marriage and hasty divorce. A series of uncomfortable reunions ensue, as Ricki, née Linda Brummell, attempts to restore bonds with her prim ex-husband, Pete (Kevin Kline), and their two sons, engaged Josh (Sebastian Stan) and gay Adam (Nick Westrate).

Once the film abandons its schematic setup and embraces a more naturalistic narrative and emotional approach, the film plays like a hybrid of two of the director's best films, the ne'er-do-well comedy *Melvin and Howard* and the profoundly empathetic *Rachel Getting Married*. The lengthy wedding sequence that serves as the culmination of *Ricki and the Flash* is something like the evil twin of the nuptials in Demme's last narrative feature: Rather than a homespun, effortlessly multicultural affair, this one is garishly pretentious in its mix of lavishness and perceived eco-friendliness. Rather than another excuse for on-the-nose culture-clash humor, the setting becomes a final stage for Ricki to conquer, and the result is a sequence of sustained, lump-in-throat catharsis. Much of its uneven, unresolved energy (epitomized by Streep's creaky performance as an alternately nervous and determined artist) is a boon to their film's finale. *Ricki and the Flash* emphatically reinforces its concern with the anxieties and resentments always swirling around familial love, even as the unifying power of music wins the day.

This will rent as well as **ALOHA, THE 2ND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL, THE BOY NEXT DOOR, DANNY COLLINS, INTO THE WOODS**, and **ST. VINCENT**.





**11/24 2 SHAUN THE SHEEP MOVIE FAMILY
\$17 MILL BO 2623 SCREENS PG 85 MINUTES**

This sweetly silly little-sheep-in-the-big-city cartoon has generous lashings of Aardman Animations' trademark warmth, visual inventiveness, and satisfying Claymation tactility. Settings, machines, and props are always finely detailed, down to the texture of a painted wall, while faces and bodies are highly stylized and exaggeratedly expressive. And the fixes the characters get into are always endearingly goofy.

An opening montage that's all rhythmic sounds and movements timed to cheery background music establishes the comfy but predictable routine that defines the existences of Shaun the sheep and his barnyard buddies. It's a lovely life on a small family farm, overseen by a benevolent

farmer and punctuated by nothing more traumatic than the occasional shearing. But the clever and ambitious Shaun decides he wants a break, so he organizes a vacation trip with his ovine pals to, as the road signs say, "The Big City." There they experience a series of benign mishaps and adventures. Taken individually, each of these has its charms, but it's difficult to sustain the suspense in a series of near misses punctuated by the occasional moment of tenderness in sunny children's movies like this one, when you know nothing bad will ever happen to anyone except for the villain, who has it coming in spades.

The animals often indulge in the kind of harmlessly impulsive misbehavior that little kids specialize in, wreaking havoc in a fancy restaurant or making a mess of the farmer's house when he's away. But if slapstick or burp and fart jokes aren't for you, you'll find plenty of other kinds of humor here, like the way the sheep lull the farmer to sleep by jumping over and over a gate, or the Adopt a Stray day at the animal shelter where the sheep and their dog pals temporarily find themselves, which ends with a triumphant iguana blowing raspberries at all the other dejected, rejected animals as its new owners carry it home.

With grunts, muffled laughs, and other sounds replacing human speech, and with most of the action involving animals that communicate in bleats, barks, and the occasional chalkboard diagram (Shaun, the group leader, sometimes lays out his plans in the form of an elaborate drawing or a pantomime), this is essentially a silent movie in the Buster Keaton/Harold Lloyd tradition, a series of highly kinetic, sometimes brilliant sight gags set to music. That formula works wonderfully in some scenes, like the opening montage and the frenetic destruction of the restaurant, which is scored by silent-movie-style piano music. It works less well when the animals are first introduced to the Big City, in a scene set to a song (Eliza Doolittle's "Big City") whose lyrics spell out what the characters are experiencing. But that kind of literal-mindedness is rare in this generally inventive and light-footed movie.

This will rent with films like **STRANGE MAGIC, HOME, MAX, TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES, HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, and THE LEGO MOVIE.**

