

10/7 1 EDGE OF TOMORROW ACTION
 \$99 MILL BO 3476 SCREENS PG-13 113
 MINUTES

Tom Cruise (RISKY BUSINESS, COCKTAIL TOP GUN, THE COLOR OF MONEY)

Emily Blunt (THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU, YOUR SISTER'S SISTER, THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA, SUNSHINE CLEANING)

Bill Paxton (2 GUNS, HAYWIRE, TWISTER, APOLLO 13, CLUB DREAD)

This movie may well serve as the new benchmark for the microchipping of Cruise's now well-tamed pit-bull nature. Based on the Japanese sci-fi light novel *All You Need Is Kill*, the film takes place a dozen or two years in the future. A race of aliens has landed in central Europe and quickly decimated all defenses,

owing to their seemingly preternatural ability to anticipate all military forces' next moves. That and the fact that the Mimics, as they're known, are thrashing beasts whose lashing tendrils damn near break the sound barrier as they decimate their prey. (They're in effect a \$180-million adaptation of the tornado scribbles in a kids' flipbook, the unholy love children of the Tasmanian Devil and Stephen King's Langoliers.)

Cruise plays Major William Cage, a public-relations avatar within the ranks of the U.S. military whose main function is to give square-jawed face at press conferences. As forces gather to storm the beaches of Normandy, Cage is summoned to film the assault. Within seconds, his façade of poise drops and he admits that he hasn't been within a whiff of combat. He's charged as a deserter and sent straight to the front lines, where he's killed within minutes. And then he wakes up at the start of the day. And then again, eventually realizing that he's caught up in a time loop, destined to continue his impossible mission unless he can manage to somehow survive the sandy slaughter.

Though the battle sequences are filmed like an interstellar **SAVING PRIVATE RYAN** director Doug Liman gives this grim temporal coils the exact sort of **GROUNDHOG DAY** playfulness the scenario begs for. Had they cast any other action-movie stud in the lead role, the movie would've remained a clever, knowing nod toward the Sisyphean self-image held by most FPS gamers (who would probably just as soon fire up their own Xbox 360s than watch Cage fail over and over and over). But Cruise's participation transmutes, as it around him, turning the dead ends, and hard lessons his own career. Or, rather, the would love for everyone to conquering, lawsuit-filing, actually has.



If you did well with **AMERICA, BRICK SPEED, NOAH, SABOTAGE, LONE SURVIVOR** then this will be a hit too.

films like **CAPTAIN MANSIONS, NEED FOR 300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE**



10/7 1 MILLION DOLLAR ARM DRAMA
\$37 MILL BO 2395 SCREENS PG 124 MINUTES

John Hamm (TV'S MAD MEN, 30 ROCK, --FILM— FRIENDS WITH KIDS, BRIDESMAIDS, THE TOWN, THE A-TEAM)

Alan Arkin (THE IN-LAWS, ARGO, LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS, RAFFERTY AND THE GOLD DUST TWINS)

The true story of the first two Indians ever signed to a major league baseball team. the account of one rich white guy's journey toward realizing that baseball is supposed to be fun and Lake Bell is cute enough to settle for.

If you're peddling an iffy product to your unwitting customers, it helps to hire Don Draper for the sales pitch. Jon Hamm sells J.B.

Bernstein, a struggling L.A. sports agent who decides to organize a nation-wide talent search in India, looking to bring back cricket players capable of transitioning into American professional baseball. His professed goal: tapping that billion-strong South Asian market.

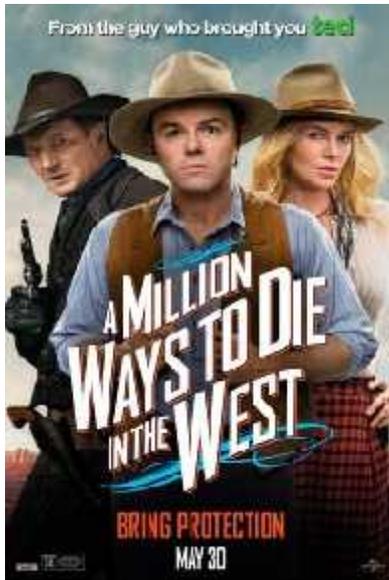
There are scenes devoted to the athletes' point of view (phone conversations with family or moments of self-doubt), but they mostly come off as lip service, their anguish reduced to set dressing for Bernstein's predictable character arc. If Rinku and Dinesh don't suffer as much cultural stereotyping as they could have, it's only because they're thinly written to the point of becoming faces slapped on a set of values (determination, piety, humility) to be endorsed by the filmmakers.

The film blurs the inherent promise of two separate fish-out-of-water narratives. The initial novelty of seeing Hamm and

Alan Arkin transplanted into the Indian setting is undercut rapidly by a wearying succession of Americans-abroad clichés. The usual checklist has been accounted for, from cows and bribery to indigestion and the Taj Mahal. There's even a helpful local guide (Darshan Jariwala) to tick off the entries just in case ("Indians like honking and bypassing the system"). Back in California, there's little effort to engage substantively with the culture shock being experienced by Rinku and Dinesh, the focus remaining mostly on their awed reactions to the conspicuous consumption around them.

CHECK YOUR RENTALS ON THE FOLLOWING: **NEED FOR SPEED, BLENDED, NOAH, 42, GRUDGE MATCH, ANCHOR MAN 2** and **RUSH** for similar rentals.





10/7 1 A MILLION WAYS TO DIE IN THE WEST COMEDY

\$43 MILL BO 2763 SCREENS R 116 MINUTES

Seth MacFarlane (FAMILY GUY, AMERICAN DAD, THE CLEVELAND SHOW)

Liam Neeson (GREY, NON-STOP, TAKEN, BATTLESHIP, SCHINDLER'S LIST, CLASH OF THE TITANS)

Charlize Theron (PROMETHEUS, IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH, THE ITALIAN JOB, REINDEER GAMES)

The main draw of Seth MacFarlane's movie is less its recreation (or demystification) of mildewed stereotypes from Hollywood's golden era than it is MacFarlane himself, starring as a churlish sheep farmer named Albert. The film's obsession with anachronism is made explicit

whenever Albert goes on an extended rant about how much frontier life sucks, which is often—establishing his character as a decidedly 21st-century wet blanket stuck in the wrong place at the wrong time. The supporting performances (Liam Neeson as a sadist, Charlize Theron as a fish-out-of-water gunslinger who woos Albert, Sarah Silverman as a bubbly hooker, Neil Patrick Harris as a prissy moustache connoisseur) are uniformly game, but it doesn't make much of a difference. Albert's whiny point-scoring is such an explicit appeal for audience sympathy that the dialogue feels derived from a malnourished stand-up routine.

When two men in a saloon have a confrontation, the place immediately explodes into a miasma of impossibly fake fist-swinging stage combat, whereby MacFarlane and Giovanni Ribisi, as Albert's best friend Edward, have fun pretending to punch each other just to avoid drawing attention to themselves. But if the fourth-wall-busting finale of *BLAZING SADDLES* was the film inevitably coming up for air, MacFarlane's screenplay (co-written by regular collaborators Alec Sulkin and Wellesley Wild) jackknifes in and out of committing to its 1882 Arizona backdrop just enough to keep the postmodern observations flowing from start to finish, a halfhearted study in what was left out of our shared Old West clichés and, more urgently, an attempt to marry them to our contemporary scatological ones.

MacFarlane's execution and timing are robust enough that, like the epochal record scratch, the supposedly naughty jokes usually signal a shocking overturn in both form and content. This will all have fans of **BLEND***ED*, **NEED FOR SPEED**, **300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE**, **3 DAYS TO KILL**, **NON-STOP**, **RUSH**, and **R.I.P.D.**





10/7 3 OBVIOUS CHILD COMEDY
\$4 MILL BO 214 SCREENS R 84 MINUTES

Jenny Slate (TV'S SNL, BOB'S BURGERS, PARKS AND RECREATION, HOUSE OF LIES, MARRIED)
Gaby Hoffman (TV'S GIRLS, LOUIE—FILM—ALL THAT I AM, VERONICA MARS, YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, 13)

Starring *SNL*'s Jenny Slate as Donna, a wide-eyed, abrasive comedienne in her late 20s, the film courageously fudges the line between oversharing and wooing your audience, literally: the film opens on one of Donna's sweetly foul-mouthed stand-up sets, well-received by the crowd while smoke pours out of her schlubby boyfriend's ears in the back of the room. Donna's adrenaline rush comes to a screeching halt when he corners her in the bathroom and tells her he's been sleeping with one of her friends—and just like that, their relationship is over.

The crosshatching of legit vulnerability and bottomlessly crude bluster is the engine of the screenplay, which wastes no time dropping a rough situation on its heroine and then somehow giving her plenty of space to make it worse. "When you go up there, people love you," Donna's roommate Nellie (Gaby Hoffmann) says, "Because you don't pretend to be anybody other than who you are." In her frantic post-breakup maneuvering, Donna careens from being annoying to hilarious to endearing, with room to spare for being pathetic, which is what happens when she tries winging it on stage both trashed and embittered.

Donna's drunken fling with an Affleckesque un-hipster named Max (Jake Lacy) initially threatens to sink the script's believability: In Hollywood, after all, there's always some winsomely bland dude on the sidelines ready to fill the gaping void left by a heroine's lost love. But their one-night-stand actually gets Donna pregnant, at which point *Obvious Child* becomes something else entirely—a romantic comedy centered around an abortion which, frankly, isn't the same thing proposed by the "abortion comedy" phrase ubiquitously attached to Robespierre's film. But as a study in the clash of spoonfed immaturity and frigid reality, it signals clear-eyed compassion, which is usually, in turn, undercut by another poop-and-piss joke from Donna, highlighting that accumulating wisdom is always going to be a messy process.

This will rent as well as **SINGLE MOM'S CLUB, HER, THAT AWKWARD MOMENT, ENDLESS LOVE, LABOR DAY, DATE NIGHT, GIRL MOST LIKELY, and PUNCH LINE.**



10/14 1 MR. PEABODY AND SHERMAN FAMILY
\$112 MILL BO 3187 SCREENS PG 92 MINUTES

Ty Burrell (TV'S MODERN FAMILY—FILMS—THE INCREDIBLE HULK, DAWN OF THE DEAD, FRIENDS WITH MONEY, BUTTER)
Stephen Colbert (TV'S THE COLBERT REPORT, THE DAILY SHOW)

“What did you learn today Sherman?” It’s a favorite question for Mr. Peabody (Ty Burrell), intently focused on the lessons absorbed by his boy Sherman (Max Charles). These lessons might be of the daily sort—respect your elders, do your homework—but they’re also occasioned rather sensationally, that is, by way of the WABAC machine, a super-tech red orb that carries father and son into the past so they might admire the munificent Leonardo da Vinci (Stanley Tucci) or pass judgment on the greedy Marie Antoinette (Lauri Fraser).

What you may not be expecting is the movie’s effort to make order of the short episodes that made up the original concept: while Mr. Peabody and Sherman do indeed travel to various “whens” and meet up with any number of famous personages, they do so under a narrative line concerning their relationship. It’s no longer just okay for a dog to be father to a boy. This time, the state (in both an abstract and material sense) has to get into the act, in the formidable form of Ms. Grunion (Allison Janney), a Child Protective Services agent who determines that such a pairing is wrong on its face and must be undone forthwith.

This despite a previous ruling, shown in one of the film’s flashbacks, delivered by a judge voiced by Dennis Haysbert, of all people. Mr. Peabody recalls this moment when he was legally allowed to adopt his beloved human child with huge nerdboy eyeglasses to match his own. That the movie underlines the legality of the relationship before it presents the mean-spirited and shortsighted challenge by Ms. Grunion makes clear a broader point.

This point has contexts now that may not have been so visible during the TV episodes’ run, as today, kids might recognize prejudice against so-called nontraditional family structures (that Mr. Peabody and Sherman existed in the late ‘50s suggests at least a bit of historical revisionism has been at work since then and before). Mr. Peabody’s capacity for love (or, as he puts it, “a high regard”) is related to his general brilliance, of which the film reminds you (or introduces to newcomers) with a most commonplace device: “Let me tell you about myself,” he says, before a montage shows him reading books, practicing yoga, instructing the UN on the wisdom of peace, inventing the zumba, and scaring off potential kid adopters who think he’s too “sarcastic”. He’s awesome, you see right away, and his decision to adopt the abandoned infant Sherman seems a sweet and righteous extension of his wonderfulness.

If Mr. Peabody demonstrates that he hasn’t watched much cable “news” or paid attention to the intractable machineries of the US Congress or Middle East conflicts or North Korea and Russia of late, you can chalk that up to his having better things to do, namely, spend time with his son. It’s cool, of course, that this time involves time-traveling, here to ancient Egypt (where they meet a very young and entitled King Tut [Zac Callison]) and the Trojan War (where Agamemnon [Patrick Warburton] makes his own effort to adopt “Shermanus” as a child warrior), an episodic structure that’s distracting and rambunctious but eventually comes back round to its focus on father and son.



THIS WILL RENT AS WELL AS: **BEARS, THE LEGO MOVIE, HOBBIT 2, THE NUT JOB, FROZEN, COUDY WITH MEATBALLS 2** and **CROODS**.



10/14 1 X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

ACTION

\$232 MILL BO 4156 SCREENS PG-13 131 MINUTES

Hugh Jackman (REAL STEEL, X-MEN: LAST STAND, VAN HELSING, DECEPTION, SWORD FISH)

Patrick Stewart (TED, THE WOLVERINE, X MEN: THE LAST STAND, STAR TREK: NEMESIS, SAFE HOUSE)

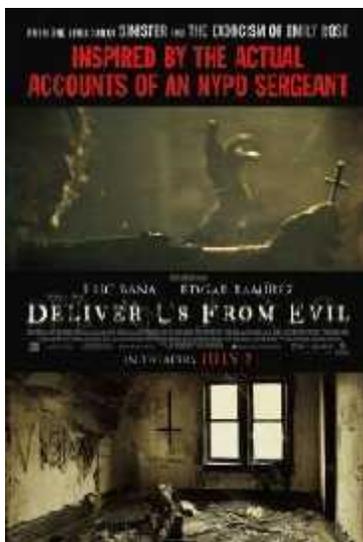
When Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) is sent back to 1973 to unite young Magneto (Michael Fassbender) and Professor X (James McAvoy) by their older selves (Ian McKellan and Patrick Stewart), he relies on Peter Maximoff (Evan Peters), a.k.a. Quicksilver, to stage a prison break out of the Pentagon. It's the first step in bringing the mutant leaders together, but the entire sequence feels as if it's lifted from an entirely different, far more fun and engaging film. Peters evokes the

wise-ass bravado befitting a teenager who can run so fast he might as well be teleporting, and his scenes radiate with a vivid understanding of a unique personality. Here, Singer encapsulates the sense of super powers as honed expressive talents that's at the heart of Jack Kirby and Stan Lee's source material, but few of the filmmaker's remaining spectacles are steeped so thoughtfully in the attitude and wit of the characters who set them in motion.

When Magneto climactically uproots Washington D.C.'s RFK Stadium, working to ensure the success of an assassination plot enacted by Mystique (Jennifer Lawrence), Singer gets the enormity of the act and wrenching sound of the destruction right, but he loses the historical underpinnings of the mutant leader's rage long before that. From the minute Wolverine travels back in time, the director shows an inability to coincide the polar-opposite tones of a groovy yet troubled past and a grim future (2023, approximately) ruled over by mutant-annihilating Sentinels, near indestructible robots that can adapt to battle any super power. When the Sentinels slaughter mutants, Singer takes his time detailing the suffering and death of his noble heroes.

This movie will be huge with all of those that liked **GODZILLA, CAPTAIN AMERICA, IRON MAN 3, BLENDED, DIVERGENT** and **SABOTAGE**. A joy ride for all.





10/21 1 DELIVER US FROM EVIL HORROR
\$33 MILL BO 2164 SCREENS R 104 MINUTES

Eric Bana (LONE SURVIVOR, CLOSED CIRCUIT, HULK, DEAD FALL, BLACK HAWK DOWN)
Edgar Ramirez (ZERO DARK THIRTY, THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM, AN OPEN HEART)

A jump scare isn't just a jump scare in the films of Scott Derrickson, which isn't to say this master of horror has entirely perfected the art of sudden dread. In one intensely jolting scene from this film, an Iraq war veteran suddenly lunges at New York City police officer Ralph Sarchie (Eric Bana) before scurrying away like some wild animal on his hands and knees, throwing himself through a second-floor window and disappearing into the dead of night. The man's rage and degradation are so freakishly visceral, so seemingly irrevocably pollutant, that they cast away all doubt about whether or not this will be just another tall tale about the veracity of possession by malevolent spirits.

Just as the war vet's dramatic exit is seemingly in homage to Jason Miller's famous nosedive at the end of William Friedkin's *The Exorcist*, *Deliver Us from Evil* begins by locating the source of its titular evil in the ancient, subterranean bowels of Iraq. The film's prologue, set in 2010, has American troops descending upon their faceless enemy in a landscape that suggests a curious gene splice of desert and forest, snakes and bats and hyenas wreaking noisy havoc all about as a sudden explosion reveals the entrance to a catacomb. Though there's no sense of the enemy having retreated inside, the Americans enter nonetheless, and amid the relics (skulls, hieroglyphics) of a past that has been rendered using the cheapest of B-movie brushes (the walls of the tomb seem as sturdy as Rice Krispies Treats), an evil force possesses the men, warping their camouflaged visages into spitting images of the mighty Pazuzu and sending them back to New York City as parkour-ing Banksy impersonators.



The story hits a raw nerve early when Sarchie explains to his wife, Jen (Olivia Munn), the horrors he's witnessed on the job in one week's time, from finding a dead baby in a dumpster to arresting a woman at the Bronx Zoo for nearly feeding her toddler to the lions. Sarchie's emotional purge, prefaced with a half-hearted apology for having screamed at his six-year-old daughter for running around excitedly during the throes of a sugar rush, is made haunting by the customarily nuanced Bana, who appears to understand his character's turmoil as a form of PTSD. But this peek at a man's repression remains just that, and rather than parallel his crisis of consciousness with whatever battlefield traumas may afflict the war vets, all dishonorably discharged from the army, the filmmakers reduce the men to mere litmus tests on Sarchie's path toward obligatory spiritual reckoning.

WILL RENT AS WELL AS: TRANSFORMERS: AGE OF EXTINCTION, OCULUS, THE QUIET ONES, OPEN GRAVE, ROBO COP, SABOTSGE, I, FRANKENSTEIN, and DEVIL'S DUE.



10/21 1 EARTH TO ECHO

FANTASY/DRAMA \$38 MILL BO PG 91 MINUTES

Teo Halm (FILM DEBUT)

Reese Hartwig (TV—BRAIN SURGE, NCIS—FILM—THE DEATH OF SOCRATES, CRAZY EYES)

The story begins with a kind of rallying cry, wherein a group of millennials, who, as is their wont, constantly filter their lives through a plethora of screens, reject their parents' assertions that they're "just kids." In order to make room for a superhighway, their New Mexico burb is set to be razed, and sensing an expiration date on their friendship, they go hunting for adventure. Presented as if it were being made in real time by the ever-recording young Tuck (*The X Factor's* Astro), Dave Green's **SUPER 8** for Beginners proceeds as a high-paced scavenger hunt, with Tuck and his buds, Alex (Teo Halm) and Munch (Reese C. Hartwig), trying to help an extra-terrestrial phone home. As the kids use the strange signals

on their cells to guide them to the assorted knickknacks the alien needs to unlock his subterranean spacecraft, the film tensely volleys from scene to scene with a desperation that feels as purposeful as the controlled chaos the little whatsit sets into motion throughout. In a dazzling highlight, Echo (think of an owl-y Gizmo in shiny, metallic drag) takes apart and rebuilds a massive truck around its driver, one piece at a time, so as to avoid colliding with the young heroes' getaway vehicle. These expensively realized effects fit comfortably enough into an otherwise low-rent found-footage chase film whose near-fetishistic nods to the Spielberg canon would likely stump the story's latter-day Goonies. But the constant foregrounding of so much well-executed incident only works to shortchange the heroes' yearnings and anxieties: Even after pretty young Emma (Ella Wahlestedt) joins the boys' sleuthing posse, the film all but forgets that she was the object of their collective affections, and just as their parents are ciphers, so, too, do these kids' feelings of resentment and exasperation about their subsequent separation from one another remain nebulous. As a result, the tacked-on resolution, in which Astro euphorically declares that distance ain't no thang, carries as little weight as the crocodile tears Alex sheds for the personality-free E.T. with whom he never so much as shared a single heart to heart—or finger to finger.



If rentals were good with **THE LEGO MOVIE, GODZILLA, BLENDED, HEAVEN IS FOR REAL, THE NUT JOB, PLANES, GROWN UPS 2** and **IRON MAN 3** then you will make \$\$\$ with this one too.



10/21 1 SEX TAPE COMEDY
\$38 MILL BO 3062 SCREENS R 94 MINUTES

Cameron Diaz (THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY, THE OTHER WOMAN, BAD TEACHER, GANGS OF NEW YORK)

Jason Segel (THIS IS 40, THE 5 YEAR ENGAGEMENT, FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS, I LOVE YOU MAN)

SEX TAPE is about Annie (Diaz) and Jay (Segel) trying to regain their passion for each other after a decade of marriage and two kids. They appear to be running a pretty smooth operation, doing a decent job raising their children and managing to have successful work lives in the process. But it has come at the expense of intimacy and adventure in their relationship.

In an effort to jumpstart their sex life, Annie and Jay decide to make a video of themselves demonstrating every position in *The Joy of Sex*, resulting in a marathon three-hour session. Spent and satisfied, Annie and Jay seem to have fixed their relationship and get their groove back. Unfortunately, this is only a third of the way through the movie.

The best parts of the movie all focus on the rise, fall, and recovery of Annie and Jay's sex life. A montage of their frequent and varied couplings at the start of their relationship is very funny. The scenes in present day when they are trying and failing to have sex are amusing and also reveal a touching chemistry between Diaz and Segel.



With an hour to go, the film shifts gears when Annie and Jay realize that their sex tape has accidentally been uploaded to the cloud by a file backup app and is available to a number of people to whom Jay has given his old iPads. Then more fun begins.

THIS SHOULD RENT AS WELL AS: NEIGHBORS, BLENDED, THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN2, DELIVERY MAN, RIDE ALONG, and WE'RE THE MILLERS.



10/21 2 SNOWPIERCER SCI/FI THRILLER
\$5 MILL BO 456 SCREENS R 126 MINUTES

Chris Evans (PUNCTURE, THE AVENGERS, CELLULAR, THE FANTASTIC FOUR)

Tilda Swinton (BURN AFTER READING, MOONRISE KINGDOM, MICHAEL CLAYTON)

Jamie Bell (MAN ON A LEDGE, BILLY ELLIOTT, NYMPHOMANIAC, THE EAGLE)

A few years into the future, global warming slips out of control, and humankind inadvertently initiates an ice age in its attempt to correct it. Soon after, all that remains of humanity are the passengers of an ultra-equipped, self-sustaining train that suggests Noah's Arc as a speeding elevated bullet. Having predictably learned nothing from their travails, the train's passengers quickly assume the flawed social structure of the first world that's recently ended, with the entitled haves exploiting the enraged have-nots.

Liberals and roughly 99 percent of the world's scientists are unsurprisingly revealed to be right about global warming, and the conservatives respond to the ensuing catastrophe by scrambling to re-establish an even more insanely brutal "free market" society. Our empathy resides, obviously, with the have-nots, who live in the back of the train in cobbled-together dwellings that suggest images from both the Great Depression and the Holocaust. They're fed disgusting tofu-like bricks called "protein blocks," which they pass among one another with their cracked, muddy bare hands (one of the film's most evocative touches: hygiene's a luxury when you're starving to death). The prisoners are routinely harassed by soldiers who beat them up and torture them and occasionally steal their children for reasons that will eventually figure into the climax. Unsurprisingly, a rebellion is afoot: A sensitive stud, Curtis (Evans), has surmised that the troopers have long ago run out of ammunition for their assault rifles. The plan is to storm the gates and eventually capture the train's engine, negotiating a shift in political capital.

The movie has a wonderful evolving visual concept: Each car takes one closer to a representation of the world as it presently works. The first few cars are rendered in the distancing apocalyptic hobo ax-and-sword aesthetic that's been a cinema standard since at least the *Mad Max* films. But the latter cars are lit in expressionistically beautiful club-rave rainbow colors that reflect the escalating social privilege of a lost generation. There's a subversive shoot-out in an elementary-school car that reveals that the privileged are taught to regard the exploited as terrorists who need to be quashed. And there's a haunting recurring image that serves as the film's leitmotif: of the privileged passengers watching in stunned silence as the "terrorists" walk by them toward the head of the train.

Though they smite plenty of their enemies, as in most red-meat movies of right or left ideology, the film's massive carnage isn't informed with much sense of ambiguity or revulsion, which reduces it to yet another preachy, *Matrix*-y sci-fi movie in which people stand around in bad outfits sounding out against the Man in fashions you're signaled to congratulate yourself for seconding. *The movie* concludes on a irritatingly reassuring high note that suggests, per usual, that killing one bad man will allow all of falsely indoctrinated society to magically correct itself. The film could be a conservative parody of naïve liberal piety, if conservatives were known to exhibit a sense of humor.



THIS SHOULD RENT AS WELL AS: TRANSFORMERS: AGE OF EXTINCTION, NEED FOR SPEED, A HAUNTED HOUSE 2, TRANSCENDENCE, ROBO COP, and I FRANKENSTEIN.



10/28 **2** BEGIN AGAIN MUSICAL DRAMA
 \$16 MILL BO R 104 MINUTES

Mark Ruffalo (THE AVENGERS, IRON MAN 3, DATE NIGHT, SHUTTER ISLAND, THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT)
Keira Knightley (SILK, THE EDGE OF LOVE, LOVE ACTUALLY, DOMINO, ANNA KARENINA, JACK RYAN)

Inebriation and cinema often exist in paradoxical relation to each other. For every **BAD SANTA** there are a dozen films that view alcoholism from the outside in, observing their subjects with sympathetic but icy reserve, the camera functioning as silent, note-scribbling therapist. *Begin Again* is the rare film that, in charting the

antics of its frequently inebriated protagonist, Dan (Ruffalo), feels drunk itself. Constantly lurching forward at a woozy but rapid rhythm, obsessively revisiting certain scenes while bulldozing through others, the film has a reckless, expressionist energy that offsets the simplicity of its story and characterizations. It lives in the high and not in the comedown, even though its characters are often stalled and wallowing.

The film's true focal point isn't Dan or his demons, but the creative impulse as alchemic entity. This abstract theme finds narrative manifestation in the platonic union between Dan, a struggling music producer when he isn't on the bottle, and Greta (Knightley), a reclusive singer-songwriter healing from a bad breakup. They're united only by their shared passion for music; dissimilar not only in age and experience, but also ideology (she renounces fame while he courts it), they tread around each other with equal parts curiosity and caution. Their sense of interpersonal unease never settles, but rather ebbs and flows as they collaborate on an ambitious project, an album of Greta's songs all live-recorded in various locations around New York City.

The outdoor recording is a romantic gambit, and indicative of director John Carney's inclination toward fairy-tale storytelling. After a series of initial setbacks, things go swimmingly for Dan, Greta, and their album, with money suddenly easy to procure and personal reconciliations fueling boons of creativity. The film works better when the exultant power that the duo finds in music is somewhat at odds with their messy, thoroughly unromantic personal lives. The former's estranged relationship with his wife, Miriam (Catherine Keener), and teenage daughter, Violet (Hailee Steinfeld), is only presented in brief, broad strokes, while the latter's tumultuous past with sudden superstar Dave Kohl (Adam Levine) takes predictable turns.



Dan and Greta's album, seen through from drunken conception to completion and distribution, is the nucleus around which every scene and character orbits, and as such the story lives or dies by the quality of its original music. Written and produced by Gregg Alexander of the New Radicals, Greta's songs are immanently appealing and listenable. which works in the film's favor: Its characters are talented, finding joy in the making of music rather than in the final product itself, but the album is still absolutely believable as a career-making hit.

Original music is also carefully integrated into the fabric of the plot: A tender love song penned by Greta for Dave becomes the contested terrain of their fallout, as Dave reinterprets the song and Greta disparages him for it.

This is a well-acted film with the story strong enough to attract all fans of **-DIVERGENT, HEAVEN IF FOR REAL, HER, ABOUT LAST NIGHT, AMERICAN HUSTLE, BLUE JASMINE, and THE HEAT.**



10/28 3 LIFE OF CRIME COMEDY
\$4 MILL BO 1254 SCREENS R 94 MINUTES

Jennifer Aniston (HORRIBLE BOSSES, WE'RE THE MILLERS, JUST GO WITH IT, THE BOUNTY HUNTER)
Mark Boone Junior (LOOK AT ME, MISSING PIECES, FULL CLIP, UNKNOWN)

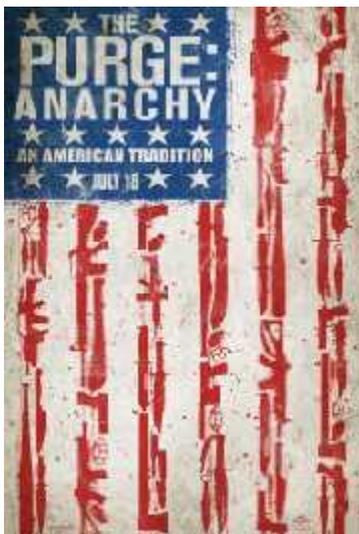
This movie plays out like companion piece to David O. Russell's **AMERICAN HUSTLE**. It's full on 1970s suburban America: the cars are big, the hair is bigger and the outfits are equal parts garish and revealing. Aniston plays the jaded wife of a dirty-dealing millionaire asshole (Tim Robbins), a husband so rubbish that his wife's kidnapping is less a cause for action and more a minor issue plaguing his vacation in the Bahamas. It's part farce, part drama and occasionally full on slapstick.

Aniston is heading up a pretty crack ensemble cast. Her kidnappers are played by Mos Def, John Hawkes and Mark Boone Junior, with a catty Isla Fisher and Will Forte in full on wuss-mode (complete with rubbish mustache) rounding out a group that's practically bursting at the seams with talent. They all put in a shift, but Aniston seems unable – even when presented with material that is all but revolutionary by her standards – to ditch the well-worn ticks she's been hashing out for over 20 years now.

To quote irritated parents across the globe, "I'm not mad, I'm just disappointed." **Life of Crime** had such promise, and I was oh-so-ready to be impressed, but the end

result was a bit of a letdown. It's not the worst film you're going to see all year by any stretch, but the heights it could have reached make the lows all the harder to endure. A promising cast, a zany concept and a lead eager to cast off her type-cast shackles.

CHECK YOUR RENTALS ON: **MOM'S NIGHT OUT, THINK LIKE A MAN TOO, BLENDED, BAD WORDS, NOAH, ENDLESS LOVE,** and **RIDE ALONG**. If customers see it, they will rent it.



10/28 1 THE PURGE: ANARCHY ACTION
\$64 MILL BO 2856 SCFREENS R 103 MINUTES

Frank Grillo (ZERO DARK THIRTY, DISCONNECT, END OF WATCH, THE GREY, HOMEFRONT)

Zach Gilford (TV—FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS, MOB DOCTOR—FILMS--DEVIL'S DUE, CRAZY KIND OF LOVE, THE LAST STAND)

Stepping up to the streets, and indulging a shift in political perspective, the sequel's plot follows five individuals thrown together on the one night of the year where the New Founders of America allow the country's populace to go on a 12-hour killing spree without fear of retribution. As the group slinks throughout downtown Los Angeles while trying to avoid the gangs of roving anarchists who thrill at the chance of "releasing the beast," their encounters with adversaries and allies alike reveal director DeMonaco's sincere interest in exploring the contours of a national nightmare that no one underclassman takes stock of in quite the same way, as well as his understanding of the rage that fuels so much of America's present-day class warfare.

DeMonaco is a cartoon satirist with no sympathy for the rich, who in their abject bloodlust throughout come to resemble expats from the grotesque horror zone of Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun" music video. These ghouls, so white and blond, and with surnames like Hearst, aren't as realistic a demography as the story's down-and-out heroes: Sergeant (Grillo), a shadowy lone wolf driven by a thirst for retribution; a splitsville-bound white couple, Shane (Gilford) and Liz (Kiele Sanchez), who hide out for safety in the backseat of his car; and Eva (Carmen Ejogo) and Cali (Zoë Soul), an African-American mother and daughter he rescues after they're pulled from their apartment building by a group of government-aligned soldiers. Shane and Liz may ultimately be nothing more than dead weight, but DeMonaco reserves intriguing shades of gray for his other characters that sometimes defy expectation. When one group of anarchists finally catches up with Sergeant and his tagalongs, a thug pulls back his ominous mask to reveal not just his face, but his complicity in supplying the rich with their human targets.

That scene is a salient, realistic expression of how the poor, out of fear and exasperation, enable the upper classes to enjoy the lifestyles they do, though *The Purge: Anarchy* also understands that the underprivileged need not bow down to such a system, as in the scene of a stock broker's bloodied corpse being dangled outside a corporate tower from which he wrecked countless lives. DeMonaco may at times overcompensate for the the original's flaws by doubly, sometimes triply, underlining the story's governing theme of social power and how it's exchanged, but the rage and lucidity of these ideas resonate in ways that the filmmaker's workmanlike images, excepting the chilling vision of a burning bus silently darting across the frame in the background of one shot, do not. And while the second half of the film may ham-fistedly proceed as a quasi-dissertation on capital punishment, the final refutation of a certain power that be's belief that America doesn't save lives subversively speaks to contemporary affairs, and in a way practically unseen in mainstream cinema since the heyday of John Carpenter.



A great sequel to a very good original. Fans of **BRICK MANSIONS**, **DRAFT DAY**, **NEED FOR SPEED**, **TRANSCENDENCE** and **ROBO COP** will have a lot of fun with this one too.