

Movie Review: Smokin' Aces

Written by {ga=mitch}

Wednesday, January 31 2007 7:00 PM -

Going back to the whole creation of this website, Mitch Cyrus was a big part of the blueprint from day one. I'm a big movie buff, and there's no one whose opinion I respect on films and the entertainment industry more than Mitch. Add in the fact that he's hysterical, and a great writer, and it was an easy call. That sense of humor is on full display in his review of "Smokin' Aces", which illicit a rating from Mitch that he has never given out before in the dozens of movies he's reviewed for us.



In "Smokin' Aces", writer/director Joe Carnahan fancies himself to be another Quentin Tarantino with a hip, fast cutting, ultra violent gangster tale about a group of degenerate hitmen (and women) gunning for a million dollar bounty on a mob snitch.

Let it be known that Joe Carnahan is to Quentin Tarantino as Kevin Federline is to Sir Laurence Olivier.

This movie is the most disgusting freak show imaginable. "Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning" is High Art compared to this puerile, depraved excuse for "entertainment". If Paul Verhoeven and Joe Eszterhas of "Showgirls" fame ever decided to make a bloody mob movie, I doubt even THEY could make one this bad.

Don't get me wrong; I don't dislike this movie due to the nauseating gratuitous violence. It is

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no worse than what you've seen in other movies of their ilk. But there is a difference. Tarantino in "Kill Bill", Frank Miller in "Sin City", Robert Rodriguez in "From Dusk til Dawn", Sam Peckinpah in "The Wild Bunch" or Martin Scorsese in any of his gangster films are storytellers. The violence is a supplement to the story; not the story itself.

No, I hated this movie because I've seen deeper plots and more interesting characters in a Bud Light commercial. If you've seen even one trailer, you know everything about it. Mob snitch Buddy "Aces" Israel has a million dollar price on his head, and is holed up in the penthouse of a hotel in Lake Tahoe. Everyone is after him. The FBI, with Ryan Reynolds, Ray Liotta, and Andy Garcia; bail bondsmen Ben Affleck and Peter Berg, and numerous hit men, working together or alone. They all get to the same place at the same time, and start butchering.

Every C-List actor or rap wannabe actor shows why they are such lightweights. Alicia Keys seems to think that she's in an MTV video, and only has to stand around showing off her cleavage. Rap star Common gets probably the best role in the film, and totally puts you to sleep whenever he says more than four words at a time.

But the worst part is how many "name" actors go through the motions in this. Jeremy Piven doesn't show one tenth the skill, timing, or charisma as he demonstrates every week on "Entourage". Aces is a shallow loser, who we can't possibly root for. Ben Affleck, in perhaps his best decision, is there for what only amounts to a cameo...a totally forgettable one. Which puts him far ahead of Matthew Fox, who unfathomably wears what looks to be the same wig and fake moustache Peyton Manning used in that Sprint commercial for a three minute role as a corpse-to-be.

Even such great actors as Ray Liotta and Andy Garcia are totally wasted. It wasn't until near the end of the movie that I realized Garcia was using a muddled Southern accent. It succeeds about as well as Kevin Costner's English accent in "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves". Liotta's character is so stifled by the lame script that he has no chance whatsoever to exhibit the normal menace that has served him so well in the past, even when playing a good guy.

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But perhaps it's unfair to blame the actors, as they cannot do anything with characters that are completely unsympathetic, undeveloped, and forgettable. Carnahan's dialog is artificial and cliché-ridden. That is, when there is any real dialog. Most of the conversations are obscenities shouted while dodging bullets, or what passes as "snappy banter", which is really just quick cut blurbs that are nearly indecipherable.

There is so much that is so bad, you would think it would be hard for anything to stand out. O, contraire. One scene epitomizes this entire disaster; when a wounded survivor of an ambush crawls to a remote dilapidated house for assistance. He's greeted by a ten year old boy dressed in karate gear with thick glasses, one eye bandaged. As the suffering man is put in a bathtub by an older woman (the boy's grandmother) to clean his wounds (after she removes the dildo that's next to the tub), the obviously mentally challenged boy goes through numerous stop action take karate moves while jive talking like a rap gansta and threatening the injured man. Carnahan ends with a freeze frame showing the Ritalin deprived child gaining an erection while going through his moves.

Had I not felt obligated to stick it out for the purpose of this review, I would have walked out of the theater at that point. And trust me, I wouldn't have missed a damn thing. The "twist" at the end was completely obvious and lame, and the finale was as unsatisfactory as it was illogical.

After watching this garbage, I suddenly found myself wishing for the much higher levels of restraint and class I would have found at a Wayans Brothers movie. But it was not to be. If you are an adult still living in your parents' basement and your life is just one endless parade of Doritos, video games, and Internet porn, then this is a movie for you.

For everyone else...please allow me to act like this movie was a grenade, and appreciate the fact that I sacrificed many, many brain cells by sitting through this abomination so that you don't have to.

At least eight to ten beers once I got home made it a little better.

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My Rating: Spergon Wynn (ZERO footballs). Uber-suckitude personified